

WELCOME



This is the sixth publication showcasing scholarly activity and research undertaken by staff over the last academic year, and the second that we have produced as the University Centre Somerset.

The research and scholarly activity project was established to support members of staff in developing their research skills and becoming more research active. The aim is to feed back into the curriculum and enhance the student experience, supporting the College's aim of preparing students for further study and their chosen careers.

This academic year, we became an early adoptee of the AoC Scholarship Framework, which is part of the national Scholarship Project. The strategic aim of the AoC Scholarship Project is to support and develop a distinct scholarship ethos across national college-based Higher Education, so that colleges can adopt the Framework and learn from existing examples of best practice. The Framework will support colleges strategically, at an institutional level, in developing their scholarship ethos. It will also guide individual practitioners to help them enhance their professional practice, which can then feed into more effective teaching and learning and the overall student experience.

Reading the submissions for this publication, I am amazed by the diversity of the projects that have been undertaken, from bubble blowing and gloop to teacher wellbeing research. What shines through is the commitment to improvement in teaching and learning for all our students to ensure that they are able to achieve their best. This is a testament to the professionalism of staff who are engaging with their subject areas and with employers, in the development of teaching and learning and of new curriculum.

I would like to congratulate all those involved and thank them for their contributions to the growing culture of research and scholarship within the College.

ANDY BERRY

**Principal and Chief Executive
Bridgwater & Taunton College**

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With thanks to the library team for proof-reading support

Contents	Page		Page
Welcome	2	Matt Cox	41
Abdulkareem Karasuwa / Dr Seyed Ali Azimifar	4	Make every interaction a positive one – how our learning environments may enhance the student/staff experience to inspire students to create more commercially viable products	
An investigation into the effectiveness of the HEA's Framework for Flexible Learning in HE within FE Institutions		Matt Cox	44
Andy Howell	8	How do we provide an innovative, sustainable model for Creative Arts Higher Education delivery?	
The Contemporary Shapeshifter - developing a contextual theory reader for Media Make-up students, enthusiasts and professionals		Moya Doherty	49
Ben Williamson	10	Creative writing workshops – a Bridgwater & Taunton College enrichment activity	
Facing the interface: the Heritage Library Management system		Neil Davies / John Baglow	53
Elle Wintersgill	13	Distance Learning in Education and Training	
Leadership in Further Education		Olly Bartlett	56
Freddy Ash	16	Reducing teaching costs whilst maintaining outstanding teaching quality	
Technology and well-being – our future as educators		Dr Ruth Darvill / Dr Tink Dyer	58
Irena Hubble-Brezowski	19	Can adopting 'brain gain' strategies improve outcomes for Maths GCSE learners?	
Enhancing the profile of A-level/IB Languages		Sarah Casey	61
Jamie David East	24	Is it ever too early to get ready for school?	
Energised education – a case study: concerning the enabling of flipped and scrum learning styles for nuclear sector education		Sarah Green	64
Jolanta Peters / Pauline Osborne	30	Research into the learner journey and the wider student experience	
Enhancing research and scholarship through engagement in the Scholarship Framework		Sasha Appleby	70
Lorna Sheppard	34	Have you heard about HEADstart?	
Words, images and....action! Len Deighton's Action Cookbook (1965) as a device for learning and the changing attitude toward gender roles within the home		Dr Seyed Ali Azimifar / Abdulkareem Karasuwa	72
Maryam Abolghassemi	37	Higher Education Academy's Framework for student engagement through partnership: benefits, challenges, our current position and potential	
Word on Tour Event		Steve Kemmerly	78
		'The Future is in Our Hands' – an exploration of 'team learning'	
		Dr Susie Peeler	81
		The power of storytelling - a collaborative action research project with first year Foundation Degree Early Childhood Studies students. Can storytelling impact student and staff practice?	

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An investigation into the effectiveness of the HEA's Framework for Flexible Learning in HE within FE institutions

Abstract

Higher Education (HE) provision within Further Education (FE) institutions is becoming increasingly popular. Some of the driving factors influencing this growth include cost, proximity and accessibility. The steadfastness of the FE institutions in maintaining high standards in quality assurance and adopting the Higher Education Academy's (HEA) Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF), for instance, is leading to fully customised and flexible programmes of learning, where learners are exposed to appropriate and sufficient flexibility in their programme of learning. This study investigates the effectiveness of the HEA's framework for flexible learning, where the tenets of this framework are applied to our HE programme, targeting particularly the part-time (block release) cohorts. Interview and questionnaire methods were used for data collection. The findings show that the effectiveness of this framework will depend on factors such as awareness, planning and complete institution-wide deployment of the four areas of focus of this framework. This suggests that only full implementation of this framework will successfully enhance effective TLA delivery and learner engagement, leading to improved learner experience. This can be facilitated by dedicating customised training events for HE team members across the College.



Figure 1: Framework for flexible learning (HEA, 2015)

Introduction and Background

Higher Education (HE) provision within Further Education (FE) colleges has seen tremendous growth within the past few years, leading to FE institutions becoming strategic partners of the Higher Education Academy (HEA). Institutions have been taking advantage of innovative ways of maintaining excellence in delivery, especially the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF). According to HEA Learning Journeys (HEA, 2013), 'a fair and flexible education system is one in which no student is shut out or held back by their background or circumstances, where individuals can progress, without barriers, and fulfil their full potential'.

The flexible learning paradigm has been internationalised and cuts across all levels of provision, curriculum and levels. Peterson *et al.* (2016) have proposed a mobile application platform for children's education that supports personalised learning through flexible customisation of content based on learning objectives (LO). This offers the opportunity to blend pedagogy and technology. In the same vein, flexible learning is the key driver of online learning and distance learning education. This can be justified, for instance, by the provision of the Canadian-based educator Bates' (2018) website for distance learning, where most of the tenets of this framework have been deployed.

The HEA has put forward six frameworks aimed at consolidating excellence and learner achievement. One of these frameworks is the framework of flexible learning (HEA, 2015), shown in Figure 1. This framework is set to empower learners by providing them with the freedom to choose how, what, when and where they learn. This involves the pace, place and method of delivery. In essence, this implies that the learners will be responsible for their learning. In addition,

students will have significant influence on the planning and delivery of the entirety of the learning programme. The institutions as a whole, and the lecturers in particular, are there to facilitate and support this process appropriately in line with the regulations of the qualification awarding body.

The quest for maintaining outstanding teaching, learning and assessment (TLA) makes the complete application of this framework more than a prerequisite. However, for this ideal to be achieved, efforts must be made to ensure that the four key areas of focus are fully and consistently mobilised. These key areas are: the appropriate and effective use of **technology-enhanced TLA**, where innovative andragogy (pedagogies) and collaborative working integrate digital literacy for both staff and students. The **TLA approach** is designed to foster independent learning and the ability of learners to design their own programme of study. There will also be an **institutional commitment** to facilitate the successful rolling out of this framework, and the **partnership with employers** for enhanced flexibility at work place and to develop strong collaboration.

In this regard, it is evident that the successful implementation of the dimensions of this framework has the potential to improve learner achievement and success (HEA, 2013). This is also particularly relevant, due to the fact that the framework also caters for the inclusivity principle, where individual learners' levels of ability and experience are exploited and taken into consideration when planning, developing and delivering TLA to aid learner success.

This project is expected to enhance learner engagement, independence, success and achievement in line with the Bridgwater & Taunton College (BTC) mission and vision.

Methodology

The interviewees were selected from the BTC HE staff members. They were interviewed in order to determine their current involvement with the provisions of the HEA's framework for flexible learning in Higher Education. In addition, the second and third year learners on the Foundation Degree in Mechatronics (UWE validated) were interviewed in the early part of the year (block), and their input was taken into consideration when developing the learning materials, delivering, assessment and feedback. An innovative approach was used during the academic year based on this information. At the end of the term, the learners completed a questionnaire, which was structured to measure the effectiveness of the innovative approach. In total, sixteen (16) learners and three (3) lecturers took part in this study. The UWE staff members (module leaders) will also form part of the population slated for interview. However, this is planned for the next phase of the study.

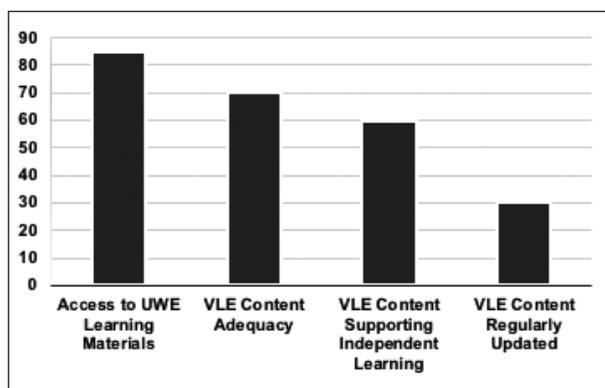


Figure 2: Analysis of Technology-Enhanced Learning (in percentages)

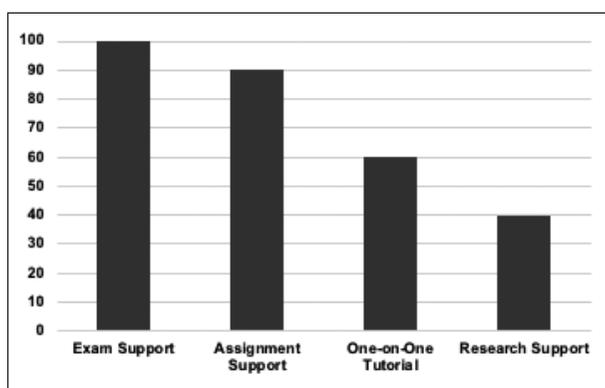


Figure 3: Popular Support Requirement (in percentages)

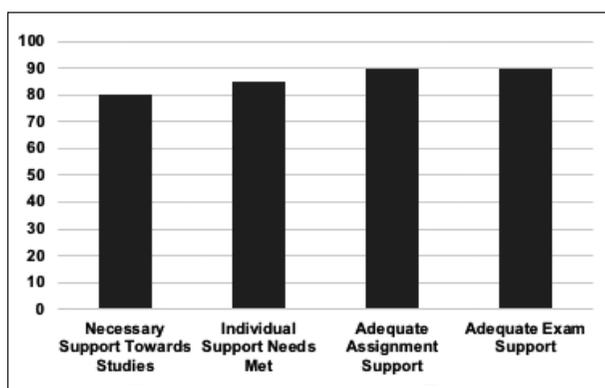


Figure 4: Satisfaction - Support Provided (in percentages)

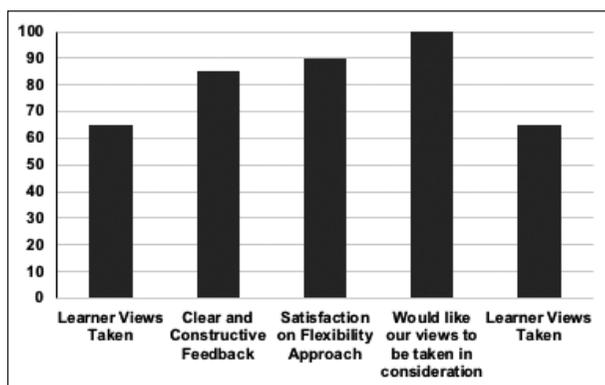


Figure 5: General Learners' Views towards Flexibility (in percentages)

Results and Discussions

The data collected was analysed, and a summary of the discussion is presented in this section. In the study, we focused primarily on the technology-enhanced learning and the pedagogical approach. The learners have their views and needs considered when planning the delivery of their own programme of learning and the content, suitability and effectiveness of the virtual learning environment (VLE), which is the main technology-enhanced learning platform. Finally, we investigated the teacher-learner partnership in the learning journey.

The results show that the learners are positive about the content and adequacy of the learning materials available on the VLE, which helps them drive their independent learning. However, learners pointed out that regular updating of the VLE content will add value to their learning journey. The pattern of their responses is shown in Figure 2.

Learners indicated their personalised preferences regarding the types of support that help them progress with their learning. For the majority of learners, the support most favoured was the generic help offered to students on a daily basis. However, they require more individual 1:1 support. Figure 3 shows some of the range of support valued by the learners, and Figure 4 shows the learner level of satisfaction with the support required.

Figure 5 shows learners' responses to a range of points about the flexibility framework. It is encouraging to see that learners are yearning to have their views taken into cognisance while developing the delivery of their programme of learning. In addition to this, the results show that we are already, as a team, doing a great deal of good work towards this ideal, as learners are positive regarding the way feedback is provided. Overall, learners are happy with the innovative way this exercise went and are optimistic that the approach will be upheld and maintained.

Conclusion and Further work

The HEA's framework for flexible learning in Higher Education has been considered in this study. A cluster of our part-time learners and the HE teaching team members were involved. Results revealed that full college-wide implementation of the tenets of this framework is more than a prerequisite for enhanced learner experience, success and progression. It is therefore arguable that this project is particularly necessary and beneficial to our set of 'block-mode' learners who study a short but intensive learning programme.

The outcome of this study shows that the tenets of this framework have the potential to enhance learner engagement, independence, success and achievement, which is in line with the BTC mission and vision. By extension, this can lead to improved customer satisfaction, with a subsequent positive influence on the College's enrolment and expansion in provision, translating into more help for the local community and humanity in general. We therefore recommend that some special staff development sessions are arranged to support the effective deployment of this framework and the other five companion frameworks.

It is intended that this study will be extended to the next academic year and the UWE students on the same programme may be involved. The aim is to highlight the similarities and distinctions between approaches to University-based HE programmes and FE-based HE programmes, leading to more effective collaboration and sharing of best practice.

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The Contemporary Shapeshifter - developing a contextual theory reader for Media Make- up students, enthusiasts and professionals

My research project aims to fill a void in my subject specialism. My goal is to write a contextual theory publication for media make-up students that delineates relevant visual culture considerations. It is my hope that, when finished, this could be submitted for publication, potentially as a book or booklet entitled *Shapeshifters and Silicone - a Contextual Theory Publication for Media Make-up Artists and Creature/Character Designers*.

Media Make-up is a relatively new subject area that is fast-growing, with new courses opening each year across the country. As a lecturer teaching Make-up Visual Culture to my students, it is very apparent that the subject has very few specific, relevant and useful texts written with the intention of providing a theoretical contextual guide. I applied to the Research and Scholarly Activity panel to support the creation of such a text, using the lecture series that I have created as a framework for my students, to extend into a text for publication. The text itself is best seen as an umbrella under which useful contextual ideas will be collated, with the purpose of stimulating and delineating possible content for students, when considering their written assignments. The thinking here is to provide a document that is easy to read, rather than an academic textbook. The rationale for this is simply to write a text which is easy to engage with, accessible to students of all levels, and which gives them ideas of topics that they could incorporate into their own research, rather than attempting to be a key text itself. The document could also be used to supplement the lecture series that I deliver on the Make-up Culture module itself.

I split the book into chapters in my initial proposal and these are listed below:

- Authenticity / Duplicity - Time Travel Etiquette
- Characterisation – Portraiture, Semiotics and Concept
- Beauty – Perceptual Aesthetics and the Western Beauty Generic



Oxum FX Studio demo at IMATS 2018

- Cosmetics, Aesthetics and Consciousness
- Identity – Who Do You Think You Are?
- Mythologies – Archetypes and Jungian Voodoo
- Unseen Worlds - The Upside Down and Magical Realism
- Modern Enchantments – The Devil and all His Works
- Prosthetics to Synthetics – The Robot Revolution
- Apocalyptic Dreaming – The End of the World, as we know it...

Each chapter represents a lecture that I deliver to the FD second year students. There are five more lectures in the programme, but I selected these as a starting point for development into text.

The key challenges for me as an author include the development of an appropriately pitched writing style, the conversion of a spoken delivery to a written one and the selection and weighting of information. The lectures are very visual and include many video resources which back up the content of the lectures. The translation of this information into a written format without the visual enrichment that lectures allow is a difficult transition to accomplish. This is part of the challenge and it has taken several drafts to get the balance right on the work that has been undertaken thus far into the project.

At the time of writing, the chapter entitled 'Beauty – Perceptual Aesthetics and the Western Beauty Generic', is close to completion. I have also started the Chapter called 'Identity – Who Do You Think You Are?' and the chapter 'Unseen Worlds - The Upside Down and Magical Realism', although there is still a large amount of work to be done on these. It is my hope that this research project can be extended into the next year, and I will be submitting a proposal to continue with this body of work.



The aftermath of a blood demo on the PAM stand at IMATS 2018



UCS student demo at IMATS



Mimi Nadim, UCS student demo at IMATS 2018



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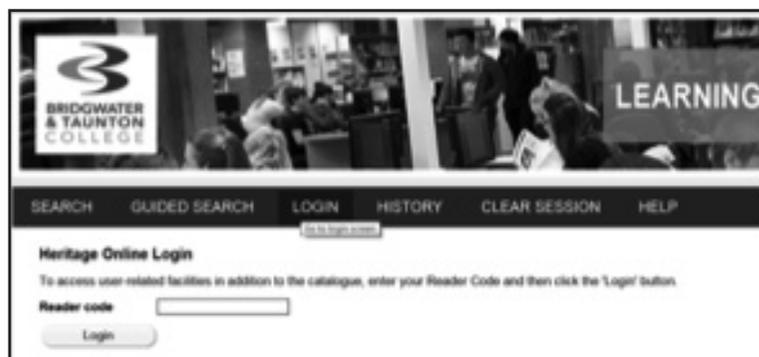
Facing the interface: the Heritage Library Management system

I attended a regional event with IS Oxford in Shrewsbury in July 2017, where the day was dedicated to discussing the Heritage Cirqa library management system. Heritage Cirqa is at the heart of the Learning Resources team's work - in addition to being a repository of data about our collections and our users, it allows us to track the circulation of books, DVDs, journals and other materials and to notify users of issues with their accounts.

Heritage Online

Heritage also provides an essential service on the other side of the counter – the Heritage Online OPAC (Open Public Access Catalogue). This is the library service's primary research tool, through which users can search for library materials across all three campuses, as well as renewing and reserving items through their personal library accounts.

Terry Peers, one of the Learning Resources Co-ordinators for Bridgwater LRC, submitted an article about Heritage to the Research and Scholarly Activities publication last year. Peers (2017) noted the potential for library catalogues to be overshadowed by online search engines, and research does indeed suggest that library catalogues are sometimes losing recognition as information-seeking tools. Pendell and Bowman's (2012) usability study of a library catalogue even found that some students may not be aware of what a catalogue entails:



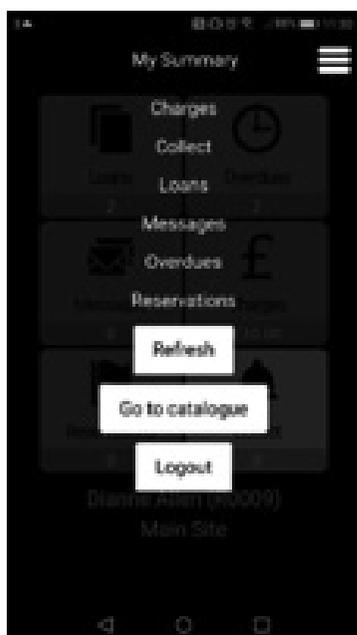
Heritage online account login page

The hesitation participants displayed when selecting the catalog option in order to search for a book was remarkable for its pervasiveness. It's possible that the term 'catalog' has declined in use to the point of not being recognizable to some users, and it is not used to describe the search on the homepage of the library's full website' (Pendell and Bowman, 2012, p. 57).

Mi and Weng (2008) also echo Peers' point about the value placed on search engines. They claim that 'services provided by Google, Amazon, and similar companies' have influenced the public's information-seeking behaviour to the point that speed and simplicity are key priorities. At the same time, however, they argue the need to ensure that OPACs evolve in line with changes in user expectations:



MyCirqa interface



MyCirqa menu

Educating users to become fluent in using OPAC search commands and rules has become less relevant as users now seldom read and follow instructions. Investing effort and energy in designing a truly user-friendly OPAC that functions intuitively to achieve productive retrieval could not be more imperative' (Mi and Weng, 2008, p. 6).

The simple search function on Heritage Online is arguably similar in design to most popular search engines: a user can type any word or phrase relevant to their information need into a single search field, and the catalogue retrieves results by matching the entered search terms to titles, author names, keywords and other item data. It was also mentioned at the regional event that the OPAC will soon be upgraded with an option for 'faceted searching'. This will allow users to perform a simple search and subsequently 'refine' their results by applying a choice of information filters (Russell-Rose and Tyler, 2012, pp. 167-169), similar in principle to searches carried out on e-commerce websites such as Amazon. In this respect, therefore, Heritage has been and is still being developed in a way that matches popular searching methods among general online technology users. At the same time, it is important that users receive support from library staff in learning to use Heritage, and this is always a key element of user services provided throughout the academic year.

MyCirqa

The regional event also discussed a recent new release from Heritage – the MyCirqa app. I found this particularly interesting, as mobile access to library services has grown to be a key expectation among users over the last ten years.

MyCirqa allows users to access all the main features of Heritage Online through handheld mobile devices. The interface consists of six main touchscreen links, which allow users to view their current loans, keep track of any reservation requests and receive notifications of overdue items, outstanding fines and general communications from the library.

In their usability study of an academic library website's mobile interface, ChanLin and Hung (2015, p. 647) noted a number of interface attributes that student participants favoured: 'easy to read', 'organized layout', 'easy to operate', 'very convenient' and 'easy to access needed information'. While it is currently unknown how our students will react to MyCirqa, the app arguably matches many of these qualities: the main functions of the app are clearly organised in a grid pattern; the different colour coding of each link allows for easy distinction between each category of information; and very few actions are required to navigate the mobile interface. This last feature is particularly important; as

Russell-Rose and Tyler (2013, p. 220) point out, 'Features must be prioritized, navigation consolidation [sic], and fluff eliminated so that mobile users can satisfy their information needs with as little friction as possible, even when using just one eyeball and one thumb'.

There are only two features of the app that may not be entirely user-friendly. First, an individual username and PIN number are required to log into the app, and creating and memorising these could prove confusing for users on top of remembering authentication details for their College accounts and other websites. The possibility of introducing a 'social login' option to MyCirqa was mentioned during the regional event. Goings and Abel (2013, cited in Gafni and Nissim, 2014) were among the first to coin the phrase 'social login' to describe a means of authenticating a website login via registration with a social network such as Google+, Facebook or Twitter. Various organisations currently have agreements with social networks, by which the company provides a login portal that enables users to access their company account using their login credentials for their social network account. However, concerns over data security in social logins have also been raised (Kontaxis, Polychronakis and Markatos, 2012), and it cannot be guaranteed whether or not this feature will be introduced to MyCirqa any time soon.

The second potential problem is that, although MyCirqa also provides access to the Heritage Online catalogue, the home screen gives no immediate indication of this feature. The catalogue can only be accessed via the side menu, which is opened from a link in the top-right corner of the screen. It is unclear whether this will cause users to miss the catalogue link. However, library staff will make every effort to ensure that students know how to use MyCirqa through library inductions and daily customer support. In addition, the 'hamburger button' that opens the menu may be a sufficient prompt to the user to explore this part of the app, particularly as this design of button can be recognised from its uses on Facebook and other websites.

The Learning Resources and IT Services teams are currently collaborating to introduce MyCirqa to the library service, and the app will be advertised to all users when it becomes available.

Conclusion

Not everything discussed at the regional event is likely to be used at the College in the near future. However, I came away from the event with one key message in mind: that librarians are essential intermediaries between technology providers and technology users. It is imperative that we continue to provide effective support and instruction in the use of Heritage Online, and of MyCirqa when it is introduced. This is to ensure that all library users are aware

of the information resources and tools available to them, and that confusion or frustration over forgotten passwords, unclear procedures or apparently limited system features can be minimised.

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Leadership in Further Education

Research Question and Aim of Investigation

This article is based on a much larger research project and hopefully offers a small insight into the vast area that encompasses leadership and, more explicitly, educational leadership. The main study is in its early stages but has the primary aim to investigate the impact of specific leadership styles and traits on teacher efficacy and excellence in Further Education.

Leadership and Further Education

Much research has been completed and authenticated regarding mainstream styles of leadership, such as democratic, autocratic, transactional and transformational (Gandolfi, Stone and Deno, 2017). Leadership is often described as a 'process where an individual affects other people with the purpose of achieving defined targets, successes and organisational goals' (Avci, 2015, p.2759). Considerable amounts of literature attribute strong leadership to both organisational commitment and employee performance (Shila and Sevilla, 2015). A number of studies ruminate on leadership as a process rather than a 'thing' to be possessed (Carragher and Gormley, 2016). To try and narrow down leadership styles and definitions is a sizeable task, with more than 50 different styles and approaches found in the recent academic literature linked to education (Alonderiene and Majauskaite, 2016).



Leadership wordcloud

In light of this, one of the key questions is 'why do some people seem to develop leadership skills and capacities to higher levels and more quickly than others?' Some studies have identified leaders with higher emotional intelligence, with traits such as empathy and responsible self-management as a factor in successful leadership (Parrish, 2015), not just the identification of a 'pure leadership style'. The other key question is 'can any leader really use just one style specifically?' Research now has tapped into several new leadership approaches that capture important missing aspects beyond the dominant transformational and transactional framework (Anderson and Sun, 2017) and use multiple characteristics from contrasting styles. There is convincing evidence for the positive impact of prominent levels of emotional intelligence in strong leaders, as well as self-control, conflict management skills, cultural awareness and inspirational speaking (Majeski *et al.*, 2017).

Research into exclusive Further Educational (FE) leadership is incredibly relevant (Collinson and Collinson, 2009) and continues to be an area of substantial academic interest (Jovanovica and Ciric, 2016). FE plays a crucial role in serving people, employers and raising educational skill levels within geographical areas, directly supporting both economic development and social mobility (Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, 2014). No one can dispute that the FE sector is both diverse and unique, and the challenges are vast. Leaders in FE are mainly responding to short-term market needs while trying to sustain a longer term vision, which requires innovative and inspiring leadership (Silver, 2015). Research suggests that use of specific leadership styles can contribute significantly to the effectiveness, development and overall success of an institution (Parrish, 2015), and this is deemed significant as FE colleges are continuously striving to raise standards in a both diverse and challenging sector. The consistent expansion of FE as a significant driver in the UK's learning and skills sector (Gleeson and Knights, 2007) means that FE colleges need strong leadership, not just in the varying levels of management but throughout whole institutions.

Leadership plays a vital role supporting teachers in educational institutions as the most valuable asset (Avci, 2015). The broad definition of teacher efficacy is described as the 'teacher's perception of his or her own ability to influence student learning and achievement' (Seals *et al.*, 2017, p. 137). Despite extensive literature on leadership, remarkably few studies consider employees' preferred leadership practices (Collinson and Collinson, 2009) of teachers and the links to teaching excellence, efficacy or institutional commitment. To be effective in education, leaders not only need the technical skills, but must also encompass the people skills that can motivate others with understanding, sensitivity and prudence (Shila and Sevilla, 2015). Leadership is a critical component for strong teacher performance, efficacy and ultimately student achievement

(Anderson, 2017) and the need to invest in and develop effective leadership is a fundamental priority in FE (Roberts, 2015).

The debate over the most suitable leadership model in education has previously dominated a fraction of models, mainly transactional, instructional leadership and transformational (Hallinger, 2003). Transformational leadership is frequently referred to as 'positive' leadership within education (Anderson, 2017), whereas more autocratic leadership has been found to exhibit significantly negative relationships (Fiaz *et al.*, 2017). Research shows that transactional leadership style can positively affect job satisfaction, although to a lesser extent than transformational (Alonderiene and Majauskaite, 2016). Transformational leaders can ultimately engage staff, focusing on their intrinsic motivations and confidence as a teacher (Dumay and Galand, 2012). Evidence has indicated that leadership style will directly and indirectly affect teachers' job commitments (Korkmaz, 2007), and also student achievement is positively correlated to teacher efficacy (Anderson, 2017).

There is a long way to go in the study, but so far it is clear the success of transformational leadership, linking to teacher commitment and performance, is well documented as a leadership style appropriate for today's educational institutions (Anderson, 2017). However, it does need to be acknowledged that the behaviours from different leadership styles do overlap (Alonderiene and Majauskaite, 2016). It needs to be considered that the subtle and effective use of different leadership traits from differing styles can enhance higher levels of efficacy and excellence of teachers. Educational leadership should focus on building teams of cohesive staff and sharing an inspirational vision, but also with focus on specific pedagogical work (Robinson, Lloyd and Rowe, 2008). In any context, an effective leader in education should have teaching and learning at the forefront. There is strong evidence that leadership is second only to teaching as an influence on positive learning experiences (Leithwood *et al.*, 2006) and multiple research studies confirm that strong leadership, whatever the style, is the most vital determinant of team effectiveness and organisational performance (Suk Bong, Kihwan and Seung-Wan, 2017).

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FREDDY ASH

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Technology and well-being – our future as educators

Education is often a 'hot topic' in the press, and two topics that are very much in the limelight at present are the uses of technology for learning and for staff well-being. When Wilshaw was Ofsted Chief Inspector, he described it as a 'national outrage' (The Guardian, 2014) that 40% of NQTs [Newly Qualified Teachers] leave the profession within the first five years. We are also in the midst of a 'recruitment and retention crisis' for teachers, and I have focused up to now on how to avoid the dreaded 'teacher burnout' before my own five-year mark, and thus be in a position to share my experiences. While I have not achieved five years yet, I have made some key changes that have made this year far smoother for me on a personal level.

Well-being

The mental health charity 'Mind' have cited that '1 in 4 people will experience a mental health problem each year' (2018). I have worked closely with members of our Student Well-being team at Bridgwater & Taunton College this year, and they are a superb asset to us. Many students may have only stayed on their programmes due to the team's influence because, while each student is a success story, it is not pleasant that they should find themselves in need of that support in the first place.

My main focus is on staff well-being. It is far harder to find concrete examples of staff well-being measures – and, more specifically, effective ones – put into place in educational establishments throughout the country.

During my action research project, which aimed to find out how effectively staff well-being was being covered in initial teacher training programmes, I discovered that well-being has multiple meanings and is open to multiple interpretations.

Most educational institutions covered in my research had no specific budget set aside for staff well-being. However, well-being does not have to be expensive. Findings from a DfE Delivery Unit visit at Huntington School show that they had very high praise for the well-being of staff. Some examples in the DfE's notes included:

- 1 day off per year during term, and in addition to all other holiday, as a 'family day' on full pay.
- Ungraded teaching observations carried out using IRIS observation technology
- Flexible approach to admin. time, any staff not teaching last period of the day can go home

Sean Harford (Ofsted National Director, Education) posted the following on Twitter about those notes:

I am currently reading a summary of a school's approach to the teacher workload that is thoughtful, caring and highly effective. So effective in fact that it is one of the driving forces in this school recently being judged outstanding, not despite it! It can be done (Harford, 2017).

The headteacher of Huntington School has created a blog in which he states:

Ultimately, the DfE can do very little to reduce workload – it is up to school leaders to set up a culture where staff are cared for, well-trained and valued and policies are based on common sense and the principle that we shouldn't be doing things unless they clearly help improve student outcomes (Tomsett, 2017).

Anecdotal evidence from other teachers indicates that solutions like those listed above had a far greater effect on staff well-being than short-term fixes did. Even though teachers often initially cited short term recognition measures to improve well-being, some of their suggestions changed towards ideas like those above. It also appears likely, although no definite data is yet available, that schools and colleges with robust staff well-being policies and measures would not suffer from staff retention issues of the sort that currently occur on a national scale.

Technology for well-being

Individuals working in education can (to some degree) take steps to improve their own well-being. It is not always necessary to wait for policy to change on an institutional or national level.

As a teacher in FE, I need to be able to perform different roles throughout a standard working week. I am a professional in the motor industry; I am a professional in the education sector; I am also in the strange, though not highly unusual, situation where I am the teacher and the assessor to my students. This means planning lessons to meet all of the individual needs of our students; formatively assessing our students to ascertain progress; tracking that progress regularly; reflecting on those lessons; and using the formative assessment to plan future lessons including differentiation. We also need to summatively assess those

students and mark those assessments in line with an awarding body's standards, and many of us are also then involved with the Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) process. While this often creates an intensive workload, there are ways to improve the situation.

I reviewed my workload, and I separated those aspects that were mandatory demands from those that I had the option to change. Summative assessments, for example, need to be completed and offer no room for negotiation. Formative assessment, on the other hand, is entirely under my control. I can therefore use technology to simultaneously reduce the workload, improve the impact of assessment on my students' learning and, hopefully, increase students' enjoyment of my lessons and improve student engagement.

I use several educational technology (EdTech) tools to do this:

1. Plickers

Plickers is very effective for formative assessment. Only the teacher is required to have a device, which means that no students are isolated from the lesson. It also achieves 100% student participation regardless of their confidence. The students answer using QR codes assigned to them. The app is free and automatically tracks progress in either a spreadsheet or graphs, which ultimately saves a lot of time.

2. QuickKey

QuickKey is an answer sheet where students fill in answers to multiple choice questions set by the teacher. The answer sheet is then scanned and the quiz automatically marked for you. All the students' individual answers are assigned correctly to them and are logged and tracked for you to review later on. This means that I can mark an entire class's mock exam results in under 2 minutes.

3. Nearpod

Nearpod is a presentation software that includes self-marking tests and other formative assessment tools. It can be used for both open questioning and multiple choice. It is run by the teacher, so that all students may progress at the same speed, and it encourages collaboration as well. There is also a feature whereby the students can move through the presentation at their own pace. This is a fantastic way of ensuring effective cover is in place if you need to be absent, whilst simultaneously not impacting on the day of whichever colleague is covering you.

4. Edmodo

Edmodo is an educational social media platform that bypasses the need for teachers to have work-specific Facebook accounts. I have never liked the idea of communicating with students through Facebook since they have personal information on their own profiles, even if I keep information on my work account to a minimum. Each class is in its own group on Edmodo, so that you can easily

share resources or calendar invites with specific classes, and even with parents if required. Assessments can also be set through Edmodo.

These simple changes have directly reduced my workload and consequently give me more time at home with my family, which has subsequently improved my happiness and well-being. Such tools will not be sufficient to solve all workload issues, but it represents a step in the right direction.

Discovering these new tools also inspired me to keep reinventing my lessons, if I felt they could be done more effectively. I kept the old methods where they proved useful, and brought in technology where it would improve learning. My students enjoy it, and I am excited to try new methods and innovations. To come in on a Monday morning to an automated email with all of your students' work marked for you and a progress report already typed up is a wonderful feeling.

Teaching should not be a struggle for those who choose it as a profession. If teachers support each other and focus on their personal and mutual well-being, their experience (and more importantly, the students' experience) will naturally improve.

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Enhancing the profile of A-level/IB Languages

As a linguist I decided to undertake this project at Bridgwater & Taunton College, as I wanted to ensure that Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) had a positive role to play in the A-level and International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum. All too often, MFL receives publicity in the press only when exam results are published, and when the media highlights the fact that numbers studying languages are decreasing again (Tinsley and Board, 2017). There are many factors influencing this and it is not the purpose of this project to document them.

Two College events are being planned to give a higher profile to MFL and therefore encourage students to take languages in the future. Although it is very satisfying to teach budding linguists, not everyone studying a language should see themselves as heading for a career in translating or interpreting at the UN. There are many roles in a myriad of different industries that require either some knowledge of a language, or the kind of skills involved in studying a language. These include communication, making decisions, showing commitment, flexibility, time management, leadership skills, creativity, problem-solving skills, being a team player, accepting responsibility and being able to work under pressure. There is additionally the human connection you make when you can communicate with someone in their native tongue. Promoting MFL for the wider world of work could help to ensure that languages do not become the preserve of the elite and are not seen as a purely academic interest.

Within our current offering at the College, it is possible to study French and Spanish at A-level and French, Spanish and Italian on the International Baccalaureate (IB). There are a small number of double linguists (i.e. students studying two or more languages at once). In order to maintain a higher profile at College, the MFL section has offered a number of enrichment activities, including a trip to Paris, a Bath University MFL day and some translation workshops run by postgraduate students from Exeter University. We have entered students for international language competitions, the UK Linguistics Olympiad (UKLO) and Oxford University film competitions. The success this brings, and the profile it raises, ensures positive publicity for MFL. This year, I have contacted a number of outside bodies to understand the national situation

more comprehensively. The resulting links will change opportunities for our current students, and potentially for students in the future, encouraging them to view MFL in a different way.

The two events being organised for MFL this year are as follows:

1. Languages Day – 14th June

The purpose of the day has always been to encourage Year 8 pupils to see the value of MFL just before they make their GCSE choices. The day has stayed largely in the same format for a number of years. However, the pattern of language learning in primary and secondary schools has changed significantly, especially in the last few years when national numbers of language learners have dipped (Tinsley and Board, 2017). With the impetus of this project, I have considered how we could change the format to make it more widely useful.

The first difference is that teachers are not delivering the sessions, but facilitating their students to do so. This is to prove to participants that young people, only a little older than themselves, have the ability to communicate with them successfully using another language. Amongst our target group, there are always participants who are native speakers of other languages. The event will ensure that they also see themselves as valued. The aim is to ensure that our participants take away the firm idea that they will want to pursue languages at school and later in life at apprenticeship, university and work level.

Second, regarding our current students, it was intended that they should gain experience of delivering a topic they were passionate about to other students. We have a number of native speakers, who would gain a great deal of self-confidence and self-esteem by doing this. Some students may also decide that they like delivering information to others and could consider teaching as a career (Get Into Teaching, 2018). As a result of the MFL project research, I have read about how different areas of the country are dealing with a shortfall of MFL and made contact with Tim Penn of Global Futures Wales (Learning Wales, 2018). Wales as a nation has recognised the need to stop the decline in numbers taking GCSE and A-level languages, and has therefore embarked on an ambitious programme to address the issue. Tim forms part of the plan giving regular talks and presentations about MFL and work choices. As a businessman with an MFL background, who came to education later in life, he will bring his unique view to the MFL day. He will be asking students to consider what prevents them from wanting to use MFL in their future work.

The interactive sessions run by the students will be on Polish, Afrikaans and Chinese, as well as the Morocco experience (IB students have visited Morocco this year and will share their cultural and practical experiences with the Year 8 pupils). MFL staff will be guiding the students in the preparation of these 20 minute sessions, which will be running on a carousel basis throughout the day. All sessions will involve basic language information, and this year we have schools participating outside Bridgwater, including Courtfields School, Wellington.



Paris trip

2. Oxford University MFL outreach day 19th June Why hold an Oxford University MFL Day?

It will be the first time the College has organised such a day, and the impetus for it came from the MFL project. Despite having contacts with Oxford already, I had not considered before that we might hold such a day at College. The aim is to make the idea of applying to university more accessible to our local cohorts, with the day's sessions being informative and fun. Students will see that they are not the only ones studying a foreign language, make friends and begin to consider that applying to a university like Oxford is not beyond their reach. Although plenty of students from the South-West do apply to Oxford (SDMA, 2018), we have found at the College that, unless parents or families suggest this to a student, or there is a family history of application, it often becomes a last-minute struggle to prepare such an application. Oxford is keen to increase the number of state school applicants (University of Oxford, 2018). Natasha Ryan (2018), Oxford MFL Outreach, stated that a certain number would be needed to run the day, and we would have to get over 60 participants.

As had been discovered through conversations with Outside Bodies regarding the national picture, this presented a number of challenges. These included:

- Finding the contacts in schools who might be interested in taking part
- Relying on personal contacts - e.g. asking a tutee to pass on messages to their former secondary school
- Finding out who actually was the Head of MFL, as MFL has often been absorbed into another department such as Science
- Promoting the worth of a free event
- Arranging transport for the day
- Letters having to be written home by staff in addition to their other workloads
- Extra hours in the Curriculum being taken up by Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects or GCSE Maths and English

While the annual Year 8 day has been inscribed into school calendars a year ahead, this was an untested initiative and therefore much harder to get off the ground. We do now have the required numbers, with three schools from Bridgwater and one from Street sending students for the GCSE French, German, Spanish workshops, and Truro and Penwith College sending participants for A-level workshops and talks. The day will take place after the Research Symposium and there will be an addendum to the project. I will ensure that we get feedback on our two events from the participants and the deliverers.

The bigger picture

Teaching in Further Education means that we inevitably pick up where others have left off. We cannot dictate the curriculum that students have encountered before coming to study A-level. Equally, we cannot influence the GCSE curriculum of secondary schools. I recently discovered that a local school had dropped its pre-requisite of taking a language in the first few years for certain pupils. Another school, where only one language is taught, is about to change their MFL Curriculum from French to Spanish. Of course, none of these schools is obliged to send their students to College, but, by forging links, we hope to have a greater influence over the choices made by their pupils.

Baroness Jean Cousins recently made a speech to the House of Lords (Coussins, 2018) regarding MFL and Erasmus (the exchange programme which allows undergraduate MFL students to spend their third year abroad). Erasmus, which is under potential threat from Brexit, is a vital component of MFL degrees. By highlighting this and other relevant issues for linguists, the Committee continues to keep the subject area in the spotlight.

During my research I spoke with Philip Esch-Harding, a freelance researcher for the All-Party MFL committee, who put the EBacc (Department for Education, 2018) in context. It was introduced to keep academic subjects like MFL in the curriculum and it has done so; but MFL, like other Humanities subjects, is under threat. Headteachers are having to use other comparative tools such as Progress 8 (Dickens, 2017). Some schools are using disapplication for MFL and not allowing lower-performing cohorts to study languages. There are, however, other initiatives within DfE education circles which seek to enhance MFL learning, such as creating HUB schools where expertise and innovation is shared among centres. Bursaries for those training as MFL Teachers are now substantial (£28,000) for those with 1st or 2:1 degrees (Get Into Teaching, 2018).

Bernadette Holmes is a researcher in MFL working at Cambridge University. She is chair of the MFL campaign group 'Speak to the Future'. Her current research interests are languages and employment and she is leading 'Born Global', a major policy research project engaging key stakeholders from employment and education in a radical rethinking of languages education. As recently as 2014, Bernadette, in her well-funded and wide-ranging report 'Born Global' (British Academy, 2014), interviewed a number of SMEs (small or medium-sized enterprises) to find out if MFL was a pre-requisite for their potential employees. These are some of her findings:

- 54% of all SMEs agreed that languages were as important as sciences, technology, engineering and mathematics
- Over half of all SMEs agreed that school leavers (51%) and graduates (53%) who only spoke English were at a disadvantage in the jobs market.
- Languages are useful in the job market
- 68% agreed that multilingual international graduates had a strong advantage in the jobs market and greater chances of promotion
- 58% of all SMEs agreed that foreign language skills and international experience were becoming tie-breakers at interview and 71% agreed that future executives would need (foreign) language skills and international experience
- A lack of language skills does not currently cause problems
- 78% of all SMEs disagreed that a lack of relevant language skills had resulted in operational problems or misunderstandings and the majority were unmoved as to benefits of languages for day-to-day operations.

I interviewed Bernadette in March 2018. Following the Brexit referendum, she sees it as more important than ever that we train a workforce able to use more than one language. Companies will be losing bi-lingual staff and the need to communicate remains even more strongly than before Brexit. As Bernadette reflected, 'monolinguals will be less skilled' (Holmes, 2018). It is very possible that, if someone is studying both STEM subjects and languages, they could find themselves in an ideal position for finding work in a global setting. In every setting, from diplomatic to military to commercial, as well as in our communities, we need people who understand cultures and the diversity of different languages.

Bernadette is clear that MFL should not be for 'the elite only' (Holmes, 2018). Languages have a role to play in education at all levels from pre-school to retirement. In our student recruitment, we have included new pathway information on



Languages Day 2017 - Russian taster

possible choices of A-levels and the routes these choices give for employment. Languages are included in many of them.

Bauckham (2018) states that:

Whatever their level of achievement, the vast majority of young people should study a modern foreign language up to the age of 16. There are clear educational, personal, cultural, social, cognitive, career and business benefits in being able to communicate confidently in another language.

This report also highlights important statistics regarding MFL education and the role of languages in industry. Bauckham presents well-founded research on how the MFL curriculum can assist in producing well-rounded citizens for the future. His findings should be noted by many MFL departments that may be struggling to justify their existence.

It is only a small part of the evolving scenario around MFL, and we will be looking to further enhance the study of languages in the coming year. Enrichment languages will be offered in September as part of the compulsory A-level offer.



A Level French group promoting languages

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Energised education – a case study: concerning the enabling of flipped and scrum learning styles for nuclear sector education

Introduction

This case study concerns a specific approach to teaching a Health, Safety and Risk Assessment unit on the BTEC Higher Nationals Engineering at the National College for Nuclear (NCfN). The pedagogical approach this year has been a scrum type learning style with flipped elements. The learners were a set of HND apprentices from many engineering industries, some with licensed industry experience. It should be noted that the author of this case study is new to the teaching profession and has not yet had a full academic year of experience.

Energised Education and National College for Nuclear

Energised education is an innovative delivery model from NCfN that aims to bolster nuclear sector education to overcome the current and impending skills shortage faced by the UK's nuclear industry. The government's commitment to nuclear sector education has allowed the formation of NCfN Southern Hub, which offers 'a state-

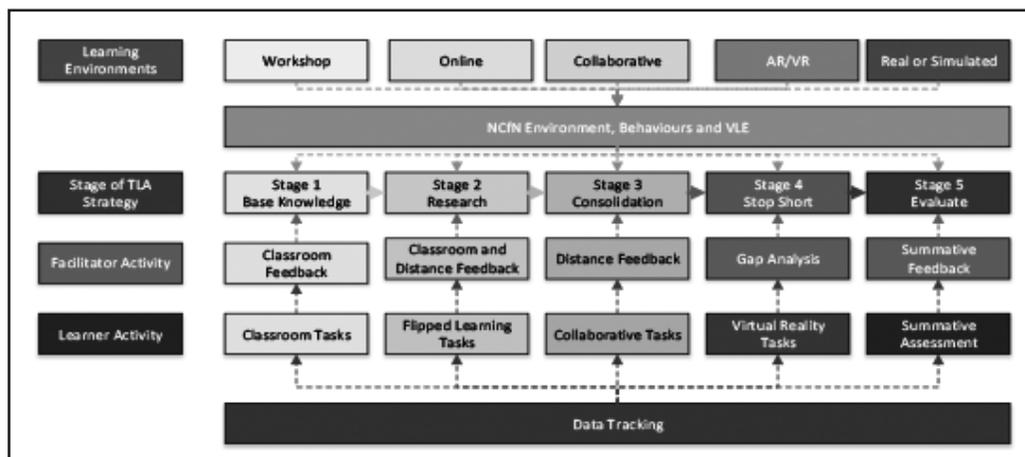


Figure 1: Diagram of the Energised Education Method for NCfN

of-the-art nuclear training facility which includes a virtual reality environment, a reactor simulator, computer-equipped training rooms, recreation and collaboration space, as well as sports facilities and accommodation' (National College for Nuclear, 2016).

Many of the courses that NCfN run are vocation-oriented apprenticeships, which focus on industrial behaviours, skills and progression routes. For this reason, the Energised Education model (see figure 1) is being developed to encompass and connect these elements in a coherent system. Figure 1 shows the general Energised Education Model to enable knowledge, behaviours and skills developed throughout the course. As learners progress, they use the range of NCfN environments, behavioural norms and Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) resources to take ownership of their learning and develop appropriate nuclear behaviours. These are modelled to align with the Nuclear Institute Nuclear Delta (Nuclear Institute, 2018).

Delivery Model – Energised Education Excerpt

This study does not intend to look at all aspects of the Energised Education Model. The elements covered here are the backbone of the classroom and project/product based components of the method. The following section details the flipped and scrum styles that influenced parts of the Energised Education Model.

Flipped Learning

The flipped part of the Energised Education Method is the beginning of student ownership of learning. It involves giving students the material directly and setting deadlines and tasks based on such material. The facilitator then reviews work and provides feedback in lessons as a form of instruction (Higher Education Academy, 2017; Open University, 2014, pp. 15 - 16). It is used increasingly from Stage 1 to Stage 3 of the Energised Education Model, with the remainder of instruction made up of classroom and workshops.

Scrum Framework

Scrum Framework is a series of task-based team events that are defined by four components: sprint, scrum, review and retrospective (Schwaber and Sutherland, 2017). The sprint is where the team plan objectives for a given time frame (for example, over the lesson, or over the month) to create a sprint goal. The scrum is a meeting that occurs every lesson where activities are discussed, planned and adapted, based on what occurred in the previous session. A review is held at the end of a sprint timeframe

to look over what tasks have been completed to the required quality and what actions remain outstanding. A retrospective component assesses tasks and roles and proposes improvements for the next sprint. This framework represents Stages 2 and 3 of the Energised Education Method, allowing for periods of research, consolidation and collaboration with ongoing feedback.

Aims

The aims of this case study are:

1. To determine if the Energised Education Model is applicable
2. To determine if the delivery model allows for student achievement in Higher Education (HE).
3. To determine what form Energised Education lessons take.
4. To determine what resources are required to enable this method of delivery.

These aspects of the delivery model will be examined based on:

- A. Summative feedback by students and review by facilitator.
- B. Data analysis of formative and summative student performance.

TLA Strategy

The TLA Strategy Stages are explained briefly below:

Stage 1: Two one-hour sessions in which students are introduced to the philosophy of the course and its aims in instructor-led sessions. These sessions are used to negotiate with the learners how they would like to be assessed and to reinforce ownership of learning.

Stage 2: Learners are introduced to material they are expected to produce and gradually offered additional course knowledge. Transition into a more flipped learning style occurs, where learners are expected to do research in advance, for use and review in the next lesson. As this stage progresses, less and less information is given out by the instructor until learners enter the class and start working autonomously on tasks posted on the VLE.

Stage 3: Learners are given tasks to work on in groups unsupervised. They report progress and submit material for review by email, with feedback given regularly.

Stage 4: Just before assignment submission, a series of student-led sessions take place to review and assess their project work and knowledge. This is done first by self-

review, then peer review, and finally instructor assessment. These sessions rely heavily on feedback data to inform students of their progress and targets.

Stage 5: The final session ensures that students have a 1:1 project/assignment closure meeting with the instructor and get feedback on their holistic progress before they receive feedback on their summative assessment.

Teaching and Learning

As this strategy involves a hybridised approach, the weaknesses of both the flipped and scrum models had to be remedied in order for it to be a feasible teaching method. The following subsection details how these problems were overcome.

Flipped and Scrum

According to the Open University, the flipped learning model can lead to situations where 'school encroaches on the social lives of students', if the learning is predominately done out of lessons, and that it relies heavily on 'the effectiveness of video production and delivery' (Open University, 2014). To overcome the former issue, the flipped model was changed to make all resources accessible from the outset. This allowed learning to occur both in the classroom and in the learners' own time as they saw fit. The second issue was overcome by drawing on a range of existing resources in place of creating new ones. This is a strategy supported by the workload reduction review (Independent Teacher Workload Review Group, 2016), and as Hattie (2012) points out, 'there are a million resources available on the internet and creating more seems among the successful wastes of time in which teachers love to engage' (Hattie, 2012, p.57). A third issue is that the method could be overly concerned with delivering the knowledge necessary for the assessment, to the extent that students do not feel particularly engaged with the subject. As one article puts it, a flipped learning approach can create problems if it simply 'teaches to the test' (The Economist, 2011). This issue was remedied by creating assessments that not only properly utilised knowledge criteria, but also reinforced the skills, philosophies and behaviours required for vocational application. By changing flipped learning to a less confined model and making many different resources available for engagement, as well as ensuring that assessment content was relevant for industry, the pitfalls of flipped could be avoided.

Scrum framework has to be adapted to suit a curriculum environment, as opposed to the business environment it is designed for. One issue is making sure the tasks set by the facilitator conform to the framework. This issue was addressed through robust assignment design, which

took into account the contact time students have with one another and also factored in feedback time within lessons (something not usually considered in business). Other issues include the need for preparation and organisation of team dynamics, and the need for the facilitator to transition into their role. To overcome this issue, the scrum element was phased in gradually to allow both parties to gain familiarity with its dynamic. The facilitator must prepare the curriculum to incorporate the framework carefully, factor in feedback time during lessons and transfer power from the facilitator to the learner at an appropriate pace.

Both approaches can be problematised by extensive preparation demands, technological limitations and an unclear strategy for supporting any learners unfamiliar with the learning style. To overcome the issue of extensive material preparation, the instructor must both gather and prepare materials using the guidance of the Independent Teacher Workload Review Group. This group states that 'teachers should engage in collaborative planning to develop their skills and knowledge, to share their expertise, and to benefit from the expertise of their peers [and] consider the use of externally produced and quality assured resources' (Independent Teacher Workload Review Group, 2016). This particular unit used official Health and Safety Executive resources, official industrial tools and guidance, as well as professional videos of the students' own experiences and the advice of peers.

Assessment

Formative and summative assessments focussed on eliminating unnecessary workloads around marking. The formative assessment at the beginning of the unit was conducted through Q&A sessions, self-marking of worksheets and the setting of weekly consolidation tasks. The feedback on this formative assessment within stages 1-3 of the Energised Education Method was detailed and quick, and often verbal, so that the student could maximise engagement with the facilitator while in the classroom. Once the main body of knowledge had been delivered and consolidated, the summative assessment was given to the groups. This was a large assignment incorporating an industry-related topic with room for the learners to form innovative solutions to problems through teamwork and research. By frequently checking on progress and communicating by email, a good picture of group progress could be formed. By tracking achievement in the summative assessment over time, it was possible to create personalised and per-criteria feedback, which conformed to guidance from the Independent Teacher Workload Review Group and The Education Endowment Foundation (Elliott *et al.*, 2016). This meant the feedback to assessment was of optimum quality, as well as being meaningful, manageable and motivating to the learner, with a focus on eliminating burdensome practice and reducing written marking

(Independent Teacher Workload Review Group, 2016).

Summary

This teaching and learning strategy can be a student-led programme to maximise achievement whilst reducing the teacher's workload. In summary it involves:

- Teaching
 - Initial body of knowledge and philosophy at the beginning of the course
 - Trickle and embed further knowledge throughout the course at the learner's own pace
 - Set tasks regularly that utilise taught knowledge in a vocationally relevant manner
 - Teach by providing feedback which can be utilised in further lessons or independent work
- Learning
 - Give 'ownership' of learning to the learners
 - A bank of resources available online for the learners to complete at their own pace (within reason)
 - Learning 'on the job' as they navigate through assessments and tasks – forcing the learner to research and apply knowledge as they encounter new situations
 - Provide effective formative feedback throughout the course in order to bolster learning
- Assessment
 - Formative and verbal to begin with
 - Summative and formal to end on.

- Feedback to assessment is short, of good quality and frequent to reduce workload.

Results and Feedback

The results and feedback of this study are based on:

- A. Summative feedback by students and review by facilitator
- B. Feedback from lesson observations
- C. Data analysis of formative and summative student performance

Summative Student Feedback

In this feedback we can see the positive and negative aspects of this method, as well as clear opportunities to improve. The students felt that this type of learning needed a lot of access to IT and that assignment questions were not specific enough, as well as needing more time in lessons to fully utilise the model. The students have also indicated that they enjoyed the initial phases of the course, the opportunities for working together and the online methods of feedback, and seemed pleased with the summative assessment feedback. Overall, this model seems to have worked well for this group, but significant improvements can still be made to delivery.

What went well:

- The course content
- Working together as group
- The new approach to learning
- The communication of questions and queries inside and outside of College.
- Working together as a group.
- A different approach to learning/doing work.
- Making safety a little bit fun (with the nuclear aspect).
- Good introduction to the course.
- Very good help from lecturer when it was given.
- Not chalk and talk.
- The bean bag room and large whiteboards encouraged group activities and interaction with team members.
- Good interaction with the students
- Excellent feedback and response time – even when out of College hours.
- Simple and easy teaching methods.
- I have never received feedback so in depth and returned so promptly.

- You can really tell what you've done well, and what you have achieved.
- It is the most thorough and useful feedback I have received from a teacher.

What went less well:

- During the course I felt we had limited access to IT equipment at the start and felt we couldn't make a start unless laptops were brought in.
- More clarity on the work packs when not able to ask lecturer for help.
- Limited access to IT equipment when we want to do the work.
- Sometimes felt that an hour wasn't enough time for the whole lesson. Especially when the only time the groups came together was during College [time].
- Sometimes a little vague with coursework feedback.

Table 1: Compilation of student feedback collected from the 5 responses of 22 requests. It is taken verbatim.

Observer Feedback

The feedback presented below in Table 2 is from an observed session. Although this was an observation of the member of staff delivering, most feedback is applicable to the Energising Education Method.

Formative and Summative Student Performance

The formative achievement of learners was tracked in the sheet seen below. It displays how each group was progressing per task each month (see dates on left) and was cumulative. The key is as follows:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| 1. Not Achieved |  |
| 2. Attempt/Work in Progress |  |
| 3. Achieved |  |

The table in Figure 2 (p.29) was used to track learner progress and ease the burden of summative assessment marking. The graph in Figure 3 (p.29) was created with the learners (both parties negotiated how best to represent progress) to show achievement of learners as the course progressed. We can see that students made gradual and visible progress in achievement, up to distinction level.

Evaluation

The aims of this case study were:

1. To determine if the Energised Education Model is applicable.
2. To determine if the delivery model allows for student achievement in Higher Education (HE).
3. To determine what form Energised Education lessons take.
4. To determine what resources are required to enable this method of delivery.

Feasibility and Achievement

The learners were effectively engaged in learning, and a newcomer to the teaching profession was able to implement this module so that learners could achieve their educational and work-based goals, as well as improve their overall health and safety posture in industry. The results suggest that this method is feasible for HE students with experience of a work environment, and may be conducted by a lecturer with little teaching experience if appropriate support and guidance is available from his team.

What went well:

- Spreadsheet 'tracking of progress' based on project work – graphical representation of progress, completed tasks and action for improvement. Student ownership of this process was observed.
- Target setting and time bound actions very visible in the tracking / monitoring process.
- Peer assessment activity with group A to ensure full coverage of tasks and content.
- Collaborative learning environment for HND day release learners – very specific, based on learner needs and potential dry delivery of H&S module. All groups utilised different strategies and technology packages (Excel; Word; Gant charts; folder / portfolio type work) for the same end goal.
- High levels of planning presented [for learners] – schemes of work (SOW); lesson by lesson resources, worksheets; scenarios
- All learners are engaged and working at their own pace based on feedback and progress to date.
- Holistic style of learning and assessment to develop subject and industry specific skills – project work; project planning; tracking and monitoring progress systems (individualised and student-led).
- Student ownership of learning and project / task completion is clearly visible. Students have demonstrated aspirational achievement targets, as most are aiming for distinction grades. Clear promotion of study skills (Harvard referencing) based on learner feedback.

- Group to group feedback, advice and guidance provided by the lecturer weekly
- All learners engaging with available technology – laptops; Blackboard (BB); SOW; iPads; spreadsheet tracking
- Student feedback on teaching, learning and assessment (TLA):
 - Applied health and safety to case studies, real life examples and having the opportunity to collaborate in groups is very engaging
 - Teaching style, resources and task based work is a key strength to the course compared to other units
 - All learners are clearly aware on the course and unit requirements – BB; SOW; lesson tasks; progress and tracking
 - They value and place a high importance on the industry expertise that the lecturer provides in a challenging and engaging learning environment

What went less well:

- The high energy and tempo can become a distraction. Ensure all learners are listening to instructions, so that lecturer's messages are received clearly.
- Open questions at the start of the activity. Try and utilise 'Assertive Questioning' when discussing the corporate health and safety messages at the start of the lesson.
- [Correct types of rooms for the style of learning] is an issue for some learners, based on feedback and discussions with students

Table 2: Compilation of student feedback

Lesson Delivery

This report suggests that the ‘phased, flipped and scrum’ component of the Energised Education lessons are feasible as one-hour lessons, but would benefit from longer lessons (perhaps two hours long) and extensive IT systems being available. As well as IT, the resources required should include a large VLE repository with planning documents and tracking data accessible to all stakeholders.

Future Work

In order to assess the viability of the model further, similar research should occur in groups that are:

- In Further Education
- Not on a vocational course
- In a tutorial rather than course delivery setting

Also, future works should include investigating the other aspects of the Energised Education Method:

- Behavioural impacts
- Augmented reality learning environments
- Virtual reality learning environments
- Virtual reality assessment environments

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Date	Task														
	1			2			3			4				5	
GROUP	1A	1B	1C	2A	2B	3A	3B	3C	4A	4B	4C	4D	5A	5B	
31/12/2017															
A	3	3	3	3	1	2	1	2	4	1	1	1	1	1	
B	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	
C	3	3	3	3	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
D	3	3	1	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	1	
E	3	3	3	3	3	1	1	1	3	1	1	1	1	1	
28/02/2018															
A	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	3	1	1	
B	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
C	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	1	1	2	1	1	1	
D	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	3	1	1	
E	3	3	3	3	3	1	1	1	3	1	1	1	1	1	
14/03/2018															
A	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	
B	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	1	1	
C	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	
D	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	3	2	2	
E	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	
11/04/2018															
A	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	
B	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	
C	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	
D	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	
E	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	

Figure 2: Achievement Progress Tracking Table of Learner Group

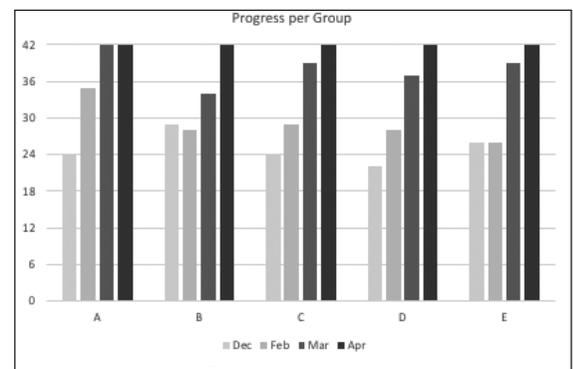


Figure 3: Achievement Progress Tracking Chart of Learner Group



JOLANTA PETERS

Research & Library Services Manager
Learning Resources Service



PAULINE OSBORNE

Head of Higher Education

Enhancing research and scholarship through engagement in the Scholarship Framework

From Scholarship Project to Scholarship Framework - background

We were honoured to be invited to present as keynote speakers at the Association of Colleges (AoC) HE Research conference in Birmingham in April 2018. This is an annual conference, which has been run by the AoC since 2015, and features keynote presentations and a diverse range of breakout sessions. It aims to celebrate the richness of research and scholarship practice in College-Based Higher Education (CBHE). We were also keynote speakers at the second AoC conference in 2016, where we gave an update on the College's research and scholarship journey and its various initiatives. Following that conference, we published an article in the peer-reviewed AoC (2017) publication and the College's annual Research and Scholarly Activities publication (Bridgwater & Taunton College, 2017).

Our presentation in April focused on two key elements: why our College considered it important to adopt the national AoC Scholarship Framework, and how this Framework will fit in with our scholarship development plans. The background of the Scholarship Framework stems from a £2.75 million national project, funded by AoC and HEFCE (now Office for Students), and aims to involve 100 FE colleges that deliver HE courses. The key output of this project has been the development of the Scholarship Framework, which can be adopted by all college HE providers.

The development of the Scholarship Project and its key output - the Framework - has been instigated by a range of academic literature and formal quality reports. These studies raised concerns and identified the key challenges that CBHE faces in relation to fostering staff engagement in research and scholarship (Young, 2002; Harwood



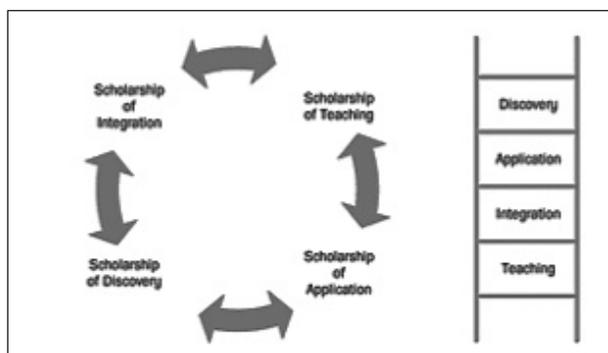
Jolanta Peters and Pauline Osborne presenting at the AoC HE Research conference in 2018



Pauline Osborne and Jolanta Peters with John Lea, the AoC Scholarship Project Director

and Harwood, 2004; King and Widdowson, 2009; QAA, 2009; Simmons and Lea, 2013; Lea, 2015). The barriers that CBHE faces, and initiatives that can be adopted to overcome those barriers, were fully explored in our literature review, which featured in last year's publication (Bridgwater & Taunton College, 2017).

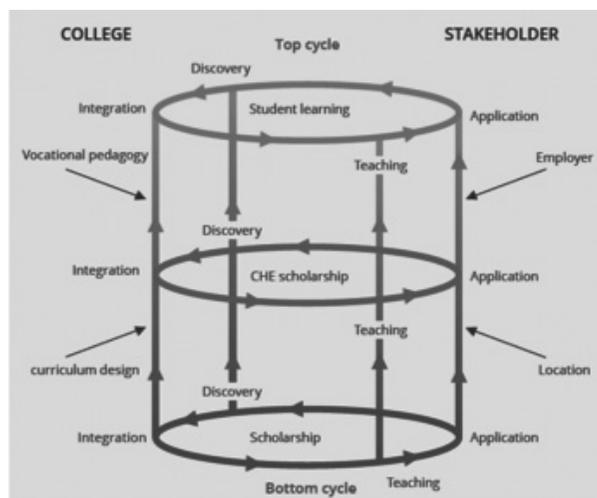
The strategic aim of the AoC Scholarship Project is to support and develop a distinct scholarship ethos across national CBHE, so that colleges can adopt the Framework and learn from existing examples of best practice in HE colleges. The Framework will support colleges strategically at an institutional level in developing their scholarship ethos. It will also guide individual practitioners to help them enhance their professional practice, which can then feed into more effective teaching and learning and the overall student experience.



Boyer's four scholarships (1990, cited in Lea, 2015, p. 2).

The conceptual depiction of the Framework is underpinned by Boyer's (1990) four scholarships – discovery, integration, application and teaching. The same theoretical approach is embedded into our College's Scholarly Activity and Research policy.

Colleges that provide a vocational and technical HE curriculum may not necessarily demonstrate frequent discovery of original or primary research, or the so-called 'scholarship of discovery' (Boyer, 1990) that leads to articles in peer-reviewed journals or authored books. CBHE sees 'a holistic and cyclical approach to scholarships, which doesn't privilege original research [...] and involves demonstrable learning gains for students – either in being more engaged learners, or as partners in scholarly activity – and subsequently more employable' (AoC, 2018). Our College signed up to become an early adoptee of the Framework in December 2017. Since then, the Framework has been designed, tested and refined in partnership with a number of other colleges. At the conference in April 2018, all the delegates had an opportunity for a preview of the Framework's repository in its current beta layout format, developed by the web design team at Big Blue Door (2018). They were also shown a newly designed Scholarship Framework logo, which, together with all the resources, is being formally launched in June 2018. The Framework is being organised into four key sections to help orientate



Developing a Framework – Conceptual Depiction (AoC, 2017)

institutions and individual practitioners in finding information on the following:

- Curriculum design, including employer engagement
- Quality enhancement
- Students as partners in research
- Professional development

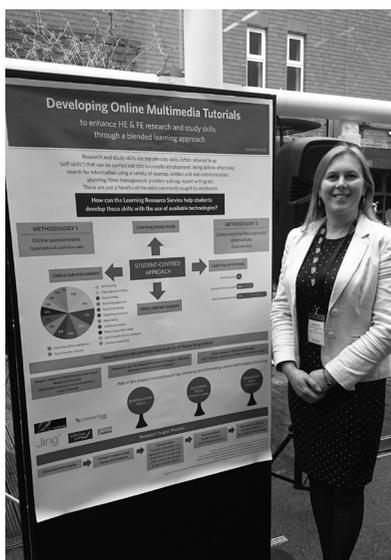
The measures within the Framework will include toolkits, guidance notes, self-assessment tools and various schemes and procedures to implement and enhance scholarship in colleges. At the time of writing, the Framework includes 26 resources, and new resources and toolkits are gradually being added to this repository.

Achieving 'Embedded-ness'

The conference's key themes included students as partners in research; colleges, employers and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) working in partnership; developing the professional and technical education curriculum; and developing college HE teachers and managers. The day saw attendees sharing information about the links between scholarship and the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF), the Annual Provider Review (APR) process and applications for degree awarding powers.

Discussions took place about adopting consistent terminology within the repository of the Framework. This was intended to improve ease of accessibility for all the colleges, as well as general understanding of the key terms. Two of the terms discussed were 'scholarly activity' and 'scholarship'. There were arguments suggesting that adoption of the term 'scholarship' would be more appropriate, as it encompasses a much broader range of engagement than 'scholarly activity'. The conference provided ample opportunities for us to network with colleagues from other colleges with HE provision, and to exchange and share ideas about advancing the research and scholarship ethos at our colleges. In addition to this, Jolanta's conference poster from her research project

was showcased, following a successful submission of an abstract. The poster was well received by the conference delegates.



Jolanta Peters presenting her research project poster at the AoC HE Research conference

Daniel Beale and Dom Thompson from Havant and South Downs College presented the 'Teacher's Takeaway' (Havant and South Downs College, 2017). This is the result of a project they have been working on, where teaching staff produce short videos (3-5 minutes in length) of themselves talking about particular teaching techniques that have worked well for them. They are keen for others from different colleges to join the project and upload their own video clips, and Pauline has noted their contact details so that this can be pursued. They are following the ideas of Fielding *et al.* (2005) in relation to 'Joint Practice Development', and have ascertained that teaching staff find it easier to engage with the video clips on the website than to attend standard CPD sessions within their college. They are using this technique to break down pedagogic solitude and the silo mentality, as well as to simply share good practice. It seems an additional helpful tool to consider incorporating into our Teaching Learning and Assessment approach. The funding for the project has been extended to explore the impact on learners of teachers trying new techniques.

Havant and South Downs College have also created a 'skills bank', where staff record activities and techniques that they are comfortable with and would be willing to talk to another member of staff about. This is similar to work that has started this year at Bridgwater & Taunton College (BTC) as part of our HE Staff Community of Practice. It allows teaching staff to informally share good practice and find others to talk about techniques they wish to master.

Dr Nicola Watchman of Newcastle College shared the research she has been involved with concerning the development of Communities of Practice. Nicola talked about the concept of a 'tri-professional', who has industry experience and Qualified Teacher Status as well as being

a scholar. At Newcastle College, it has been concluded that the solution to academic staff's support needs is to create 'Communities of Practice'. This would align with Wenger's (2002, p. 8) ideas about dealing with 'knowledge challenges' by using internal expertise and managing knowledge strategically. They have found that the Community of Practice model gives ownership (and therefore empowerment and confidence) to those involved, as it is practitioner-centred. They have also found that it is cost-effective and brings cohesion and collegiality. Separate Communities of Practice have been set up, each with a different theme. One is focused on technology-enhanced learning, with a problem-solving methodology that enables participants to explore what they would like to do better regarding effective uses of technology in their teaching. Another community focuses on the sharing of good practice in relation to student support and wellbeing. It was very encouraging to hear how effective Newcastle College have found these communities, and this is exactly what we are establishing within University Centre Somerset.

We delivered our keynote presentation during the preview launch of the Scholarship Framework. At BTC, we already have a Research Scholarship and Ethics Committee; an annual research project bidding round; an annual publication showcasing research and scholarship; and an electronic repository to store research conducted and details of the research symposia. However, for a number of reasons, it is still important to us to be an early adopter of the AoC Scholarship Framework. This is in order to further progress our scholarship agenda; to embed a scholarship culture throughout the institution; and to provide evidence of how our HE teaching staff are able to deliver HE programmes to our awarding university partners, and as part of the Teaching Excellence Framework. Academic staff being actively engaged in scholarship (from research-informed teaching to developing new knowledge) can only benefit our students. It is important that we develop an approach to scholarship that is fit for purpose for University Centre Somerset, rather than one that simply seeks to emulate any university. We have a particular vision, mission and strategic objectives, and our approach to scholarship needs to fit these, as well as our focus on widening participation and employability as opposed to achieving blue skies research.

As a College, we expect the Framework to guide us in our areas of focus, based on scholarship activities that have already proven to be effective elsewhere. One example that we have already actioned is embedding scholarship into the appraisal process to inform Continuous Professional Development (CPD) plans. This is to support staff in their individual research and scholarship journey while enhancing their professional practice.

Other measures include embedding research and scholarship into Programme Committee Meetings' (PCM)

agendas. Curriculum area managers, programme leaders and module tutors will in this way be able to reflect on scholarly activities of the last year and on development plans moving forwards. Such an approach could also foster conversations with student reps on potential new projects and thus engage students in becoming partners in research. Neary (2014) believes that engagement in research partnership can make students producers of knowledge, as well as consumers. Furthermore, a 'scholarship' agenda item can be appreciated by our validating partners and external examiners, as well as adding evidence to an external QA [Quality Assurance] report and the TEF submission.

Examples of best practice within the Framework can be used to guide and inform our next Research and Scholarly Activity (RSA) 'embedded-ness' steps, such as involving students to be partners in research. The AoC HE Research conference featured a number of presentations from other colleges on the steps they have taken to engage students in research partnership. This is widely intended to help students become more employable after graduation. The College already has some evidence of this activity in several curriculum areas, but there is scope for further development of this and for seeking support from the Framework.

Our annual research and scholarship bidding rounds could also be enhanced to offer more flexibility and funding opportunities for our staff. In April 2018, we launched our 'revamped' annual bidding rounds, which enabled staff to apply for funding before academic time-tables are set. This was to free up time for scholarship activities and allow some form of remission from teaching and other commitments. The launch of the new bidding rounds was held via the Blackboard Collaborate online communication tool, enabling staff from various campuses to join the webinar and also engage in a Q&A session online. The Framework can help us develop ideas and explain how, through these bidding rounds and other means, we can explore collaborative project opportunities with partner Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), employers and other key stakeholders. It can also open avenues for external research funding opportunities.

Other options can include the development of programmed CPD sessions, accredited by the Advance HE (formerly HE Academy), which would lead to automatic HEA Fellowships on successful completion. The College is currently working to encourage HE staff to apply for Fellowships and demonstrate a personal and institutional commitment to teaching, learning, assessment and student experience. It acts as a badge of assured quality in our HE provision.

In conclusion, we are interested to see how the Framework and associated good practice will continue to develop over time and capture further evidence from across the CBHE sector. We are also keen to showcase and share, through

this national repository, our expertise based on the RASA initiatives that have been successful at our College, and to learn from others in return. Cultural change and the approach to RASA in CBHE is a gradual developmental journey, rather than a 'big bang' explosion, but the Framework is there now to ease that journey.

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LORNA SHEPPARD

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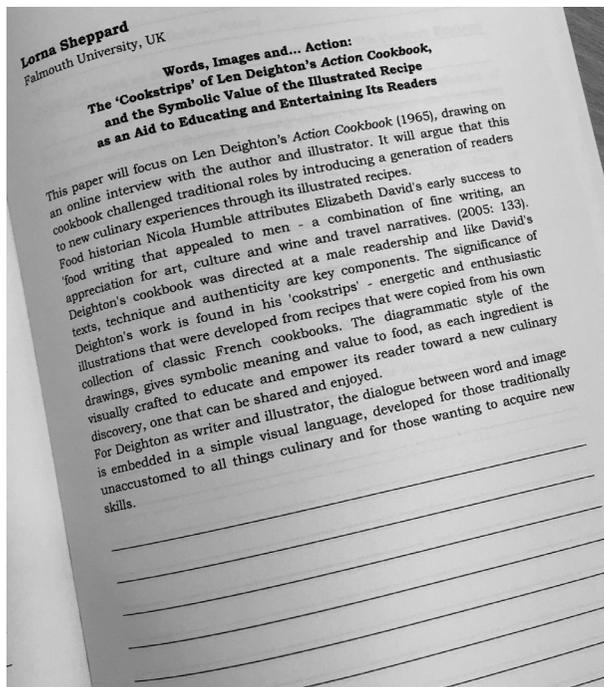
Words, images and....action! Len Deighton's *Action Cookbook* (1965) as a device for learning and the changing attitude toward gender roles within the home

I had previously undertaken part-time PhD study at Falmouth University from October 2013 to June 2016, whereafter I deferred study for one academic year. Following my supervisor's move to Portsmouth University in 2017, I was offered a two-year fee waived place to continue my study. My research focuses on British Illustrated Cookbooks from 1954 (the year food rationing ended) until 1965. My research title is *A Study of Illustrated Post-War British Cookbooks: The Interplay Between Author and Illustrator and Class And Gender Identities (1954-1965)*.

With two years of study remaining, I am now in the 'writing up' phase where I must complete a 70,000-word thesis by September 2019. With my Course Leader responsibilities for the FD/BA (Hons) Graphic Media and Communication programme, alongside Level 5 and Level 6 Visual Culture modules in the school of Creative Arts, it is imperative I organise my time as efficiently and flexibly as possible.



Sign at Krakow International Airport



Abstract page from conference abstract book

In order to raise my research profile, I have attended conferences both nationally and internationally. In April 2017, I gave a paper at the Athens Institute for Education and Research (ATINER) conference on Mediterranean Studies that took place in Athens, Greece. In October 2017, I gave a paper at the Department of History and Material Culture of English Speaking Countries at the Pedagogical University of Krakow in Poland.

The focus of the conference in Poland was how food and drink have symbolic value in a historical context. Academics from over 15 countries including the UK, Germany, Turkey, Spain and the United States gave papers on topics including: *Redefining Sugar: How the Symbolic Meaning of Sugar Changed in Interwar Poland* and *An Ethnographic Study of Third Wave Coffee Houses in Istanbul: Culture, Taste, Social Interaction and Publicity*.

My paper focused on Len Deighton's illustrated *Action Cook Book* (1965) and the symbolic value and meaning that his unique illustrations called 'cookstrips' brought to a new generation of male readers, or the 'bachelor male' as Deighton himself described. By selecting from master cookbooks such as Henri-Paul Pellaprat's *La cuisine familiale et pratique* (1955) and Prosper Montagne's *Larousse Gastronomique* (1938), Deighton devised the idea of the 'cookstrip' as a means to easier understand the more complex recipes in these books and to avoid spoiling them.

In a metaphoric sense, the simple but stylised illustrations provide a backdrop to the world in which they were created. The book was created for the time-constrained bachelor male, in his bachelor flat, small kitchen, entertaining himself, his friends, parents and partner within an exciting decade.

The instructional yet casual tone, relayed in segmented frames, is precise yet captures the nuances between French and English cooking, and above all the willingness of the reader to make new culinary discoveries.

Deighton's text and image have been developed through his own personal experience embedded in a simple visual language. Deighton's 'cookstrips' happened purely by chance but with a practical value attached. He copied recipes from his proud collection of cookery books so as not to spoil them. Deighton recalls:

...the easy way for me to do it was by means of drawings. Very simple stuff. I used to draw a saucepan as a square. I just found it easy in diagrammatic form. I could get three recipes on a sheet of paper, and that was easier than using three cookery books (Deighton, cited in Bateman, 1966, p. 89).

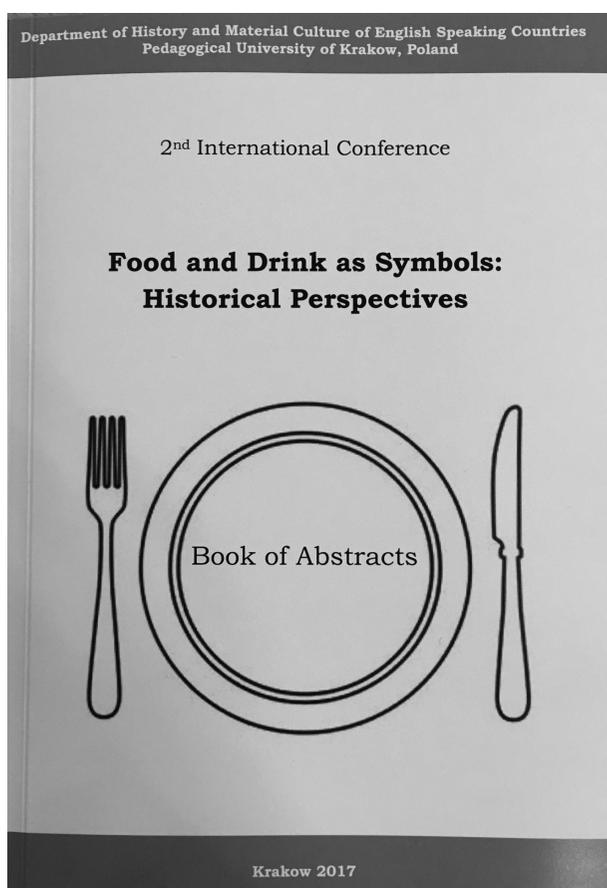
Deighton directed his recipes at people like himself, who were neither more or less intelligent, and his black and white illustrations with graphics and short explanations, according to Stummer (2014) 'demystified, distilled and democratised' lesser-known and more complex recipes. Modest in his claims, Deighton suggests in Michael Bateman's 1966 book *Cooking People* 'if people know better than me, then they won't need my book' (Deighton, cited in Bateman, 1966, p. 90).

The significance of Len Deighton's *Action Cook Book* (1965) is central to a number of key themes in my research:

- Deighton was both writer and illustrator of this book. The dialogue between word and image is embedded in a simple visual language, which Deighton developed to suit him and to suit those with a similar visual learning style.
- The *Action Cook Book* was designed as an instructional book for the bachelor male. The cookbook in this context can be seen as a pedagogical device and the dialogue that this allows is instrumental in transforming the reader's aspirational being – as a sophisticated and everyday cook.
- The premise of this book clearly reflects the changing gender roles within the home. Deighton himself identified a more pragmatic approach to food and, by selecting and testing recipes in his small cramped kitchen, he was able to share with his readers, tried and tested meals that were both nutritious and adaptable to any given time and place.
- Food writer Nicola Humble (2005) observes two very distinctive cookbooks. One is for simple cookery for absolute beginners and busy working mothers, and the other is for authentic or impressive cookery where peasant and bourgeois food could be made from scratch at the weekend. Deighton's book can be applied to both categories.

The diagrammatic style of the drawings, gives symbolic meaning and value to food, as each ingredient is visually crafted to educate and empower its reader toward a new culinary discovery, one that can be shared and enjoyed.

The convergence of my roles as both lecturer and practising illustrator have enabled me to analyse literature and works of art with a better understanding of visual methodologies and the semiotic nature of books and their accompanying illustrations. The *Action Cook Book* marks a significant turning point in the publishing of cookbooks, in printing techniques but also how the cookbook was used by a new generation of readers wanting to explore new culinary possibilities.



Abstract page from conference abstract book

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MARYAM ABOLGHASSEMI

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Learning Resources Service

Word on Tour event

On Friday 23rd February, the College hosted Word on Tour, an event organised by the Learning Resources staff in collaboration with Literature Works and South Western Regional Library Services (SWRLS). Literature Works is a charitable literature development agency for South West England, which supports and advocates access to literature and reading for people of all ages (Literature Works, 2018). The College libraries also closely work with SWRLS, the mission of which is to support resource discovery and sharing, and inter-library lending in the South West of England and the Channel Islands (SWRLS, 2018). Word on Tour is a 26-date live literature tour, hosted by libraries from Somerset to the Scilly Isles in celebration of South West writing talent. This high-profile event was funded by the Arts Council England grant awarded to Literature Works. Jolanta Peters, the Research & Library Services Manager, liaised with Literature Works and SWRLS to ensure that Bridgwater & Taunton College was included in Word on Tour's venues.

Two spoken-word performers, Byron Vincent and Nikesh Shukla, were invited to present at the College's Word on Tour event. Nikesh Shukla is a novelist, editor, screenwriter and a regular Observer columnist. His novel *Coconut Unlimited* was shortlisted for the Costa First Novel Award in 2010. Byron Vincent is a poet, writer and mental health ambassador. He frequently appears on national TV and radio, presents at conferences and literature events to raise awareness about mental health and break the stigma associated with it.

In total, 86 people attended the event in a lecture theatre at the Taunton campus. Students studying art and design, public services, sport, English, counselling and health and social care came along with their tutors to hear extracts read from Nikesh and Byron's creative works and hear about their life and writing experiences.

We received overwhelmingly positive feedback from students, who were inspired by the event. One of the creative writing tutors described it as 'an invaluable afternoon for helping students reflect on the writing process and for the way it breaks taboos around mental health', also adding that it was an excellent enrichment and personal development opportunity for the students.



Byron Vincent performing



Nikesh Shukla reading extracts from
The Good Immigrant

Byron Vincent

Byron Vincent rose from being a homeless drug addict to becoming a writer, word performer and a public speaker on mental health stigma. His talent gained him acceptance into the BBC poetry season's New Talent Choices. His renowned word performances have allowed him to become a regular at some of the country's most celebrated festivals of music and literature. In addition to his theatre and television performances, Byron Vincent is an ambassador for the mental health charities Rethink and the Mental Health Foundation (Vincent, 2018a).

Vincent was brought up in the North West of England. He began taking drugs at 13 years of age and slowly his life began to turn upside down. He left school at the age of 15 and soon found himself homeless and a drug addict, his violent behaviour partly due to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). By the age of 20, Byron had already been a victim of many gun and knife crimes, and on one occasion he was even held hostage and tortured.

Even in the face of press criticism, Vincent sought to promote the message that victims of poverty and mental illness should not be hidden away from society, but should be allowed to receive help (BBC, 2014).

Upon discovering a passion for writing, he began performing regularly as a hobby in the 1990s. His name became more prominent during the 2000s when he performed at some of the biggest UK festivals, including the Glastonbury Festival and Camden Calling. Byron Vincent made crucial decisions in his earlier life to become who he is today, but friendship was a key factor in helping him become a renowned word performer. An important person in Vincent's life has been his best friend for over 15 years, Dave McGinn, who supported him in difficult times (Couch, 2017).

Byron Vincent's view on mental health stigma

Vincent believes that the negative stigma surrounding mental health can seem insubstantial, but has a very real effect. He describes suicide as 'the real killer for men under 45 in the UK', because attitudes to mental health and illness discourage them from pursuing support. Vincent and his best friend McGinn created a new show 'Live Before You Die' to try and encourage men to talk openly (Vincent, 2018b). Vincent himself has a diagnosis of bipolar disorder (more formally known as manic depression), which can cause people to have severe mood swings and suffer episodes of manic behaviour. Vincent's own episodes have seen him undertaking flamboyant amounts of shopping and bringing homeless people back to his house. Depression is the next stage of bipolar disorder and it can take from a couple days to a few weeks to overcome it. Vincent was also diagnosed with PTSD, apparently as a result of his upbringing, during which he experienced poverty, violence, homelessness and drug addiction. He described those years as 'tumultuous'. In 2011, Vincent was suffering from severe depression and he was extremely close to committing suicide. He subsequently decided to go public about his diagnosis and describe his experiences to the nation (Sexton-Brown, 2017).

Bridgwater & Taunton College supports learners with mental health issues as one of their main responsibilities and as part of providing a safe and secure environment for children and vulnerable adults to study (Bridgwater & Taunton College, 2017). It was therefore a wonderful opportunity for the College to host the event with Byron Vincent, and to hear his views on mental illness as an ambassador for Rethink and the Mental Health Foundation.



Nikesh Shukla and Byron Vincent at Bridgwater & Taunton College

and its views on racial attitudes to immigrants.

Conclusion

Thanks to the input of Byron Vincent and Nikesh Shukla, the Word on Tour event has effectively covered many of the outcomes embedded in myBTC Advantage (The Bridgwater & Taunton College Advantage Scheme). These include encouraging students to be better communicators, to show mutual respect and tolerance, to take creative approaches to their learning and to manage their personal wellbeing as well as possible. Both talks were so inspirational that several students' feedback included comments such as 'It was really interesting, a real eye-opener. Might even consider writing now' and 'Really excellent session... makes me feel like I need to do more with my life!' Students and staff thoroughly enjoyed the event and asked for similar enrichment events to be organised again in the near future.



myBTC Advantage at Bridgwater & Taunton College

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MATT COX
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Creative Arts

Make every interaction a positive one – how our learning environments may enhance the student/staff experience

This is an information design project which has allowed me to investigate how we can inspire our learners and staff in creative and positive ways in our buildings. My intention was to extend the College-wide aim to 'make every interaction a positive one' and extend it to the environments that our learners and staff engage with every day.

The focus for the project was the Creative Arts department on the Taunton campus from Level 2 to Level 6 in Further and Higher Education. Primary research was conducted with staff and learners through a series of focus groups and surveys.

Working closely with the student engagement team, I used the skills and attributes in the recently updated BTC Advantage - a College promotion of the soft skills that are so highly thought of by employers and universities. These skills include:

- Higher aspirations
- More confident
- More effective learner
- More community-minded
- Better communicator
- Safer, healthier and happier.

In addition to these, I investigated a number of emerging themes from staff and learner forums through the year. These were: sustainability and environment; employability skills; safe environment; mental health support; English and maths; resilience; creativity; progression options; staff communication and attendance/punctuality. Of these, employability skills and progression options were considered the most important to promote in our College environments by both learners and staff.

There were some common areas in the feedback from both staff and learners, but it was clear that confidence levels varied between the groups. It was important to consider that learners are transitioning from school, building relationships with new people and places, and understanding how their course is run and what they need



Inspiration from a visit to Plymouth College of Art

to do to succeed. Information design work is needed to support students during this transition. If the environment is welcoming and positive, I hope students will feel comfortable, enjoy being here, attend well and give our staff a better chance of supporting them to achieve good results. It was clear my designs needed to address this lack of confidence.

As an information design project, I was able to use understanding gained from advertising, signage and branding. Sit in a café or restaurant chain and the brand values will seep through, often subconsciously from the environment. These could be sustainable, ethical or health values, although it was acknowledged that it is difficult to promote them all well.

The best signage is in the right place, at the right time, considers the viewer, and is neither overly repetitive nor demanding. In fact, the best signage seems to take on an air of invisibility. It's there, but it is taken on and taken for granted (Calori and Vanden-Eynden, 2015, p.32).

As staff and students make their way around the campus, I was interested in the messages they receive both consciously and subconsciously. The influence of subliminal advertising and the power of the subconscious mind in decision-making was worthy of consideration. A study published in the psychology journal, *Emotion*, (Nasrallah, Carmel and Lavie, 2009) viewed the subconscious mind as much more receptive to a word or an image subtly or swiftly presented. However, the research suggests that negative words and images have resulted in a more powerful emotional response than positive ones.

Staff remarked on how difficult it is to communicate with our students. Frustrations include emails unread, notice boards unnoticed, signage ignored, spoken words forgotten and social media being a minefield. My work considered solutions to help with these issues. Forums highlighted that social media is a preferred method of communication and supports a need for instant communication. Technology can play a part in this, and the Sedao Information TV system, currently based in reception areas and other communal spaces, can be utilised in a wider variety of ways to include the design work developed. One other area of feedback, common to both the student focus groups and the staff surveys, was that vibrant imagery and colours were deemed important.

As we are in a people-centred sector and organisation, I feel people need to be at the heart of the information. In his lecture, *The Untapped Power of Smiling*, Ron Gutman (2009) explains the benefits of a smile to students' mental health, ability to perform and enjoyment of their experiences. He states that it is important that the smile is

genuine. This quantifies my staff survey which discussed a negative impact from 'corporate' or 'staged' imagery. Gutman concluded three things: 1. When you smile, you look good and feel good. 2. When others see you smile, they smile too. 3. When others smile, they look good and feel good, too. I felt this was key to generating a positive environment.

A visit to Plymouth College of Art added weight to the smile theory by providing an insight into an educational institution that used people to inspire its learners. The use of stylish photographs depicting both staff and industry practitioners to promote their values in posters around the college, gave credibility to the staff and a clear link to the end goal. It allowed consistency in the message and a 'coming together' of education and industry to provide employability – arguably Bridgwater & Taunton College's main aim. This helped to develop an area of design development using our own staff.

Learners also highlighted the positive influence of their friends. With this in mind, I developed opportunities for students and their work to have a bigger influence on their peers in our spaces. However, the strongest of all influences in the feedback were industry practitioners. I felt it was important to harness the respect and credibility the industry offers and an additional element to the project was added. Ex-students who are now practising creatives



Plymouth College of Art

were asked to provide an inspirational, creative poster or artwork. The artwork was based on what they would tell their younger student self as a college student, to help inspire them to achieve great things. The next steps for this project will result in the production of outcomes, as well as re-engaging with alumni.

To be able to motivate staff and learners, I felt it was important to avoid the traps that may unintentionally demotivate staff and learners. Staff considered imagery and words that are 'corporate', out-of-date and information unrelated to subject areas as elements to avoid. Students also acknowledged that for many, it is sometimes 'cool' not to try. It is better to side step the challenge than be seen by peers to try and fail. This cements the belief that they cannot achieve, often established after low GCSE performances at school. It appears confidence is often low. Anxiety and mental health issues are often high.

When asked what suggestions learners have to create positive learning environments, many were keen that inspiration could possibly come out of the pages of books and the Internet and on to the walls in classrooms to support context and research in their subject area. I wanted to use this feedback to create an environment, where they are encouraged to achieve while expanding their vocabulary.

While staff have a wider curriculum outlook, it did appear that learners often have a rather limited routine within the college environment and therefore a more narrow view. When questioned, knowledge was generally limited in what options were available to them. Many learners did not know the difference between a Foundation Diploma and a Foundation Degree, an Apprenticeship or a BA (Hons) Degree. Of course, the College prospectus and

website provide this information, but suit those who know their next steps - the bigger picture is not clear. The piece of information designed to address this issue was based around a large format flow diagram design – linking higher aspirations and progression themes that did not end at College, but continued through to exciting careers based on actual jobs previous students have obtained.

This investigation in Creative Arts has resulted in a series of recommendations with further design proposals being developed in the final phase of the project, due to be unveiled at the College's Research and Scholarship Symposium in June 2018. I am hoping these will be considered with potential to be rolled out in further development stages across the Taunton campus and wider across College.

The designs developed around the theme 'Your World' emphasise the three key areas that were so significant in the staff and learner feedback: an individual approach; progression opportunities and environmental considerations.

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Plymouth College of Art



MATT COX
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How do we provide an innovative, sustainable model for Creative Arts Higher Education delivery?

After a period of immense change for the College, the curriculum delivery in Higher Education has evolved in many ways. Against a backdrop of rising tuition fees and a competitive market place, prior to merger, both colleges faced challenges in recruitment and this continues in the new University Centre Somerset. The aim of this project was to work with Creative Arts Higher Education Course Leaders to review and implement innovative change in line with the HE strategy to stimulate growth. The majority of the Creative Arts Degree courses are due to be revalidated within the next two years, so this was an opportunity for an action-based research pilot in preparation for these.

The intention of the project was to provide a fairly new staff team with the opportunity to engage in bite-size investigative projects that can make a significant and positive difference to the College, while engaging in a culture of research within their roles.

Central Saint Martins School of Art undertook a series of events to debate 'What's the point of art school?' (University of Arts London, 2015), which helped to frame my investigation. Professor Jeremy Till, pro-vice chancellor at University of Arts London, acknowledged that recent years have been a difficult time for the arts:

We need to stand together on this. There's a divide and rule thing, where students are described as consumers, and so all they can do is complain. At a time of crisis of capitalism, the values of the business school... have found to be spectacularly lacking (University of Arts London, 2015).

However, Mat Hunter, Chief Design Officer at the Design Council (Hunter, 2014) feels that creative designers will be sitting around boardroom tables in the future, as the skills developed on Arts Degrees are becoming more and more in demand. This was supported by Jason Lancaster, a Global Insight and Innovation Manager, in a guest lecture at University Centre Somerset. He encouraged students by emphasising that experience is becoming less important and fresh, creative, innovative thinking is much more integral

to a whole range of businesses he works with in a unique and innovative business model. Subsequently, a number of our Graphic Design students were able to work on projects with Jason and his team in non-traditional ways to test these possible new career paths.

There were challenges faced in these projects. Not helped by the competitive market place that Higher Education finds itself in, Higher Education applications were down 5% in 2017 (UCAS, 2018), and it has meant that collaborative relationships with universities have been more difficult to instigate. Staff were faced with a reluctance from some institutions to share good practice.

The introduction of the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) with a clear focus on teaching and learning has meant many traditional research-based universities have seen HE in FE colleges challenging for those applications with renewed vigour (The Times Higher Education, 2017). Following the College's own submission to the TEF, I was able to use the TEF Gold criteria as a platform, allowing time for staff to visit a Higher Education institution and also an industry setting, relevant to their subject area. This allowed staff to develop contemporary module content ideas in response to the visits undertaken. It also enabled collaborative working within the Creative Arts team to develop more efficient and effective systems of teaching, learning and assessment. I have looked into three of the bite-size projects in more detail in this report.

As part of her bite-size project, Molly Rooke, Course Leader in BA (Hons) and Foundation Degree in Fine Art, embarked on a visit to Glasgow International, one of the largest Arts Festivals in Europe to inspire her course content:

Fine Art bite-size project – Molly Rooke

Experiential learning theory has been defined by Heron (1999, p. 13) as 'knowledge gained through action and practice [...] through the process of being there, face-to-face, with the person, at the event, in the experience'. It is the encounter with the experience, rather than learning through a computer or a book, that has a greater impact not only on students but staff as well. A fundamental theory of education, experiential learning, is mentioned in most, if not all, teaching and learning textbooks (Fry, Ketteridge and Marshall, 2003; Armitage *et al.*, 2007; Cross, 2009; Petty, 2009; Avis, Fisher and Thompson, 2010; Gould and Roffey-Barentsen, 2014). The most well-known model of experiential learning is that of Kolb's experiential learning cycle, in which he proposes four stages of learning: 1: concrete experience; 2: reflective observation; 3: abstract conceptualization and 4: active experimentation (cited in Avis, Fisher and Thompson, 2010, p. 93). It is this 'concrete experience' that becomes the core foundation of Fine Art education. As course leader for Fine Art, it is imperative

for me to maintain a contemporary knowledge of national and international art practice that allows me to develop innovative and relevant course and module content.

'Given the benefits of experiential learning outcomes [of] gaining first-hand experience and relating theory to actual practice' (Goh and Ritchie, 2011), I attended Glasgow International; the largest festival for visual art in Scotland. Over one weekend I visited 36 exhibitions, from the sound and installation-based work 'War of the Corners' by Torsten Lauschmann at Glasgow School of Art, to Nadia Myre's 'Code-Switching & Other Work' that explored the history of clay tobacco pipe production in Glasgow. James Pfaff's 'Alex & Me' was particularly inspiring as it not only related heavily to my own artistic practice, but also opened up discourse around different modes of display for two dimensional works of art.

Experiencing such a range of artworks only served to heighten my awareness of increasing use of digital technologies in Fine Art practice, and most shows included some form of screen or sound. Even in the Laurieston Arches, empty spaces under the railway line from the main station, artists have managed to install ambitious large scale projection works, such as 'Between preservation & immanent decay', a site-specific response to the location as a post-industrial, 'post-purpose' space.



Installation view of 'Alex & Me' by James Pfaff.
(Photo by Molly Rooke.)

The festival was also consequential in helping me to develop and maintain industry links for the course, meeting with Turner Prize nominee Ciara Phillips, who I had previously met at 'We the People are the Work' in Plymouth and who was exhibiting 'Show Me Your Glow' at Glasgow Print Studio; Kirsty Hendry, artist and engagement officer at Glasgow Sculpture Studios and her artistic collaborator Ilona Sagar; archaeologist Daniel Lee and artist Jasper Coppes who were launching their publication 'Flow Country', a collaboratively written piece of ficto-criticism published by Glasgow-based publishers 'My Bookcase'; and further discussing Fine Art education with Steven Paige, Programme Leader for Fine Art at Plymouth College of Art. This experience has already had a positive effect on teaching and learning on the Fine Art programme, as my knowledge of a wider range of artistic practices can be used instantly to help students to expand their research. I hope this will also enable us as a department to plan and develop residential trips for students to share in this wealth of experience.



'Between preservation & immanent decay', Marion Ferguson, Jennifer Wicks, Belinda Gilbert Scott and Ruth Switalski.
(Photo by Molly Rooke.)

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Media Production bite-size project – Alan Hardcastle, Course Leader, Media Production

Alan Hardcastle, Course Leader of Foundation Degree Media Production, visited the School of TV and Film at Falmouth University and also Film@59, a TV Production Company in Bristol.

The School of TV and Film at Falmouth University includes Games Design, Animation and VFX, as well as TV Production and Film Production. The Penryn Campus is shared with Science rather than Art. This gave Media a different focus to some colleges – Creative Industry rather than Art. This gave Media a different focus to some colleges – Creative Industry rather than Art. Investment from Exeter University was evident on site. Student numbers per year group at 80 for TV and 100 for Film made for a very different set of challenges and methods for delivery in the programmes.

All workflows in the projects are based on industry standards with a clear focus on the student being proactive. It was acknowledged that the industry is currently in a "golden age" of new jobs – although students cannot be fully trained for the jobs of the future due to the pace of change, they can be skilled to adapt to the changing job market and create their own future within it. The programmes are designed to follow industry economic

predictions. The results were impressive with 86% of graduates employed. There was a strong focus on how that is achieved, even beyond the course, with alumni continuing in the year after graduation to get access to equipment to build their career as freelancers. It also allows the University to keep in touch with alumni. They are also often used as crew for other productions. Falmouth University also invests in external productions to attract companies to work with the University. This may be a cash sum or a link with skilled staff.

A key part of life for a TV or Film student is using the industry standard kit. Resourcing is wide-ranging, with progressively complex full production kits and rooms accessible to students, based on training and experience. Workspaces are bookable and flexible for a variety of production needs.

The Falmouth courses have a major focus on production, industry and creativity - all underpinned by academic rigour. This leads to nominations, for example, Best Promotion, Best Video Essay, etc. Dissertations are also becoming more practical, for example, some students did a pitch for a TV show that they could then use in industry.

Students are assigned a mentor, typically from the year above them, to guide them through the course. They meet with their mentor on the first induction day. Being part of the crew for other students' projects is mandatory in specific modules and also helps teamwork and social skills.

The staff team were all professionals from the industry. There is a big focus on employing academics with real world experience and this crossover of skills is essential. Associate lecturers are used extensively, and must be practising in industry. Hours are negotiated for the year, and then utilised around industry commitments. Visiting lecturers are paid for an amount of hours over a semester, although the actual times of lessons / workshops are negotiated to enable them to keep working in industry. These lecturers are used regularly to supplement delivery, with travel and accommodation being paid for, often for a Friday talk, so they can then have the weekend in Cornwall. There is also a 'Critic in Residence' to enhance the rigour of the work.

Links to production houses helped with funding the resources with equipment having been purchased from completed productions (the lighting and multiple props in the TV Studio were used in the Aardman film 'Curse of the Were-rabbit'). No course subsidises another, i.e. if the course does not recruit sufficient numbers, it does not run. Funding generated by the course stayed linked with that course. Students retain all Intellectual Property Rights to any work created at the University. This helps students to sell work while on the course and keep the profits to supplement their studies.

Students across year groups worked together and the peer support was clearly evident. There was a workshop-centred approach to the programme delivery. All students need to pass a practical assessment to gain access to the studio booking system.

There is a specific focus on the course to build resilience. Students learn how to fail and recover. By experimenting and taking risks, they can develop the level of their work. The workflow is professional. All courses and projects are expected to operate as though in the real world in terms of recruitment and process.

Recommendations from the visit include:

- Innovative timetabling - consider front-loading teaching on modules and explore Associate Lecturer utilisation at specific points in modules.
- Consider a base room with mainstream facilities and a workshop-centred approach with practice-based development.
- Assignments to recognise production crew roles as a stipulation to encourage industry skill development and collaboration across year groups.
- Potential for students to monetise their work within the course.
- Allow access to equipment and spaces for alumni in return for technical support.
- Encourage cross-disciplinary working with other courses, e. g. Media Make-up, Music Production and others to utilise resources.
- Potential to create a production company to fund student films from a proportion of fees, selected from student pitches.
- Investment in specific professional equipment, including HD studio facilities with lighting and sound to differentiate the course.
- Investment in Professional Films, offering equipment, space and students to companies as part of funding packages.

Fashion, Textiles and Surface Design bite-size project

Natasha Thornton, Course Leader in Fashion, Textiles & Surface Design, instigated an industry strategic forum at the College with creative practitioners, such as Paulo Gabrielli, former Creative Director at Clarks and Puma; Rebecca Coutts, Fashion Industry Consultant; and Ian Willmott, former Course Leader in Surface Design at London College of Communication (part of the University of the Arts London).

The forum enabled an excellent insight from an industry perspective with recommendations from the experiences of the University of the Arts London. The key areas for further consideration and development were:

- Degree structure – to look into fast-tracking which may be appealing to candidates to complete in 18 months. Certain modules could be made available online to suit those wanting to study from home and could cut costs/fees.
- Formalise a clear work placement module - students should be encouraged to find their own as this builds resilience - a key trait to have in the industry.
- Develop collaborative feeder initiatives using a model similar to the 'Academy' at Clarks, where graduates develop the skills required to be successful in the organisation. This relationship with industry cannot be an onerous one, so the benefits to industry have to be evident reasonably quickly.
- Potential to develop a leather focus in Fashion, using links to Pittards, Mulberry and Clarks to capitalise on the industry and expertise in the region.
- It is important to emphasise the 'skill of hands'. Many other courses focus on 'design', not 'design and make', so those handskills used in the construction of garments in our workshop-centred curriculum need to be promoted further.
- Cross-fertilisation of staff knowledge will enhance the student experience and broaden creative output.

This series of bite-size projects have fulfilled the aims of engaging many of the course team in research activities and enabled course leaders to develop an insight into how their courses may develop in the coming years. It has become certain that our relationships with industry must be clearer and closer in the future and how this is implemented will be key to their success. I hope this pilot can be a catalyst to engage more staff in action-based research to grow the curriculum in the coming years.

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MOYNA DOHERTY

Learning Resources Assistant
Learning Resources Service

Creative writing workshops – a Bridgwater & Taunton College enrichment activity

The Learning Resources teams in the College are very keen to promote literacy. Literacy is defined by the National Literacy Trust (2017) as the 'the ability to read, write, speak and listen in a way that lets us communicate effectively and make sense of the world'. We are constantly searching for funding to enable us to increase the opportunities currently available to students to improve their standards of literacy. In response to the New Reader Development Project, which was promoted by Literature Works and funded by South Western Regional Library Services (SWRLS), a bid was made by Jolanta Peters, Library and Research Manager, for such funding. This ultimately successful bid was based on the concept of a creative writing initiative, comprising a series of workshops run by a published author with experience in giving creative writing tuition.

Literature Works is the strategic literature development charity for South West England. They are a National Portfolio Organisation of Arts Council England (Literature Works, 2018). South Western Regional Library Services is a charitable organisation, funded entirely by membership subscriptions, and exists to act as an advocate for libraries and promote cooperation between libraries across all sectors in the South West (SWRLS, 2018). The funding was provided by SWRLS on the understanding that we would provide performance measures. It was proposed that we would ask the participants to sign in on a registration form and then complete pre-session and post-session feedback sheets for each session.

The purpose of this writing initiative was manifold. The primary intention was to offer an enrichment activity to all the students on all three campuses of Bridgwater & Taunton College. We aimed to give the participants the opportunity to develop confidence in writing, to expand their vocabulary and to improve their understanding of grammar. After meeting Beth Webb, our chosen workshop leader, the vision developed into something more inspiring, light-hearted and enjoyable. The wider aims of the workshops, in conjunction with improving literacy, were expanded to include having fun with words, increasing confidence, improving communication skills and helping the students to think laterally. The students were to be empowered with

clear problem-solving skills and a relaxed and creative use of words. Creative writing is such a popular hobby that the staff and general public were also given the opportunity to attend. Every participant was encouraged to begin to write at the very first session, with the aim of producing a piece of work that they could be proud of by the end of the final session. Subsequently, we decided to develop a second set of workshops that would have a therapeutic dimension. These would be provided for the Introduction to Further Education (ITFE) students.

Selection of author and marketing

Beth Webb was chosen to teach the workshops, because she is very well respected in the South West as a writer for young people and a teacher of creative writing skills. She has published fourteen books and is also an accomplished storyteller and illustrator. She visits schools, universities, festivals and events with her many talents (Webb, 2015). She was happy to design two different sets of workshops tailored to meet the disparate needs of two separate groups of our students.



Beth Webb (MA) - author, illustrator, storyteller and workshop leader



Poster design by Ben Williamson, Learning Resources Co-ordinator at the College

Beth Webb led six creative writing workshops at the Taunton campus. Three of these, the 'open' workshops, were advertised to students and staff across all three campuses using posters and the College Virtual Learning Environment. The event was also promoted at the Freshers' Fair. Posters and flyers were sent to local public libraries, including Taunton, Bridgwater, Wells, Burnham, Wellington and Weston-Super-Mare. Two bookshops in Taunton - Brendon Books and Waterstones - were also very happy to support our initiative by displaying and disseminating promotional materials.

The open workshops took place in a lecture theatre. The other three workshops were tailored for the ITFE group. These workshops were not advertised to a wider audience. Beth Webb worked very closely with the teaching staff responsible for this group, and these workshops took place in the students' own teaching spaces.

Details of sessions

Each workshop, in each category, was around 90 minutes in duration. They ran once per week for three consecutive weeks. The first open workshop included activities with bubble-blowing and Gloop, which allowed the participants to relax and stimulate their imaginations. Beth Webb also brought several pairs of shoes to the first session, and the participants were invited to consider who might have worn these shoes. They were then immediately encouraged to write a short piece, using one pair as inspiration. For homework, every student was given a balloon and they were encouraged to give it to someone they did not know (inside or outside of the session), and to write a short piece about the reactions of the recipient.

Some of the feedback from the student participants included: 'great fun - thank you'; 'learning is fun'; 'enjoyable, fun, great presenter'; 'I liked the bubble idea. When I next have a block, I'll use this'; and 'very interactive with the audience. Makes you think in a different perspective of



Beth Webb teaching in Lecture Theatre

life and in ways in which we can/should think creatively'. Some of the staff feedback included: 'Beth was extremely engaging: her delightful interplay with activities and participation was fantastic to be a part of'; and 'Really enjoyable and informative; love the fact Beth got us writing in the first session!'

At the beginning of the second open workshop, the participants were encouraged to read their work from last week and their 'balloon pieces'. Beth Webb then introduced the idea of the Story Stair structure, using *The Fall of the House of Usher* by Edgar Allan Poe to illustrate her points. She gave a thrilling shortened performance of this gothic tale, analysed its plot and plotted each character's journey on a graph.

She examined how the Story Stair approach not only helps us understand story construction, but can also be used as a tool to help identify the holes and weak points in a story's structure. There followed an activity where everyone had the opportunity to work on their own Story Stair. Beth encouraged everyone to analyse the previous week's work using this tool, and then to rewrite their stories, filling in any gaps and improving on weak points. Everyone was given more homework involving more writing, analysing and restructuring of a previous piece of writing. Some feedback from students included: 'Wonderful telling of the story. I want to read that story myself. Very helpful with structured visualisation; the explanation is brilliant. Wish I had printout notes from presentation'. Feedback from members of staff included: 'Very interesting and encouraging, thank you very much, loved the presentation on the House of Usher and reminder of how interesting it is to read Poe and the 1836 era. Very enjoyable. Something I would like to pursue at a later date'.

In the third open workshop, participants were given advice on how to write a short story. This answered the feedback of a student at the second session: 'If someone starts to write a story, is it better to write a short story or is it possible to write a long story first time. Some advice for amateur



Beth Webb teaching creative writing

writers please'. Beth Webb suggested having one main protagonist and a sidekick. One rule was KISS –'Keep it simple stupid'. Everyone was encouraged to think laterally. They had to refer back to their earlier work and then place their main characters in three different locations: the desert, on a sinking vessel and in a cave. Focus was also given to writing about the interaction between the two characters. In this way, Beth Webb was teaching the participants about characterisation, role play and how the setting changes the story, and giving extensive advice about writing techniques throughout.

Feedback for this session included 'Extremely helpful in improving in my writing skills and developing of my creativity' from a member of the public. On their pre-session form, one member of staff hoped to develop their creativity and to 'gain some inspiration to pass on to [their] GCSE resit students in order for them to improve their creative writing'. The same member of staff gave post-session feedback as follows: 'Personally, very inspiring with lots of relevant activities to take back into the classroom'. Another member of the public wrote: 'Excellent – very informative and well presented. Met all my needs'. 'Thoroughly enjoyed the session. Very helpful', - came from a student. 'I thoroughly enjoyed all the sessions ...I really enjoyed working with words (adjectives, verbs), plotting and creating characters in different settings. I will now develop my character and the story that I started at the sessions in my own time at home...'; - wrote another member of staff.

The ITFE workshop was held in a closed environment suitable to the needs of this group, many of whom were suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. Creative writing can also be described as therapeutic writing if the writer chooses to use the writing as a cathartic experience. The power of therapeutic writing was summed up neatly by Pollard (2002), who compared the merits of therapeutic writing with mainstream therapy. He also quoted the respected writer Gillie Bolton, who wrote of her own experiences:

I couldn't trust a therapist the way I could a piece of paper. Paper's always there to reread or rewrite. Once you've said something you can't unsay it, but with a page of writing you can. You don't ever have to share it. You can burn it if you want' (Bolton, quoted in Pollard, 2002).

For this reason, Pollard suggests 'proponents of therapeutic writing argue that while the process may bring up difficult issues, the writer is always in control of them, which is not always true of talking therapies'. Gillie Bolton is an international freelance leader in the field of reflective writing. She has lifted reflective practice from being a requirement of academic courses to an integrated creative part of ongoing professional development. The ITFE workshops were not devised primarily as opportunities for therapeutic writing,

but rather as opportunities to learn tools that could be used later for therapeutic purposes.

Concerning the first workshop, Beth Webb wrote:

It was a real pleasure. I think it went well. I was particularly pleased when one young lady who sat almost with her back to me, and very curled in on herself, by mid-session had actually turned around and laughed, wide eyed and engaged. I explained an easy way of structuring a story (my 'Story Stair') as a way of organising ideas. (Useful for life as well as creative writing). The students had a go at working on their own story stairs. I think the students 'got' what I had to say, and responded to it by spending quite a long time (15-20 minutes) silently working on their ideas (Webb, 2017).

The next workshop taught how to start a story (setting, character, establishing what they want or need, and motivation). The students were encouraged to start to write a story, drawing on what they had learned about openings in the first workshop. In the final workshop, characterisation and plot were further developed and another opportunity was given for the students to write.

All the ITFE students fully engaged with Beth and asked for her return. She marked some of the students' own work and was very impressed with their storytelling and composition. One student stated: 'She inspired me to start writing again, - something I used to do to relax and lessen my anxiety'. This remark gives just one indication of the positive effect of Beth Webb's creative writing workshops on these very vulnerable students.

Numbers

A large number of students, staff and members of the public attended the open workshops. There were 123 attendances in all. Some of this number attended all three sessions. The first session attracted 72 participants. This number included 63 students, 2 members of the public and 7 members of staff. The second open workshop was attended by 45 participants, including 39 students, one member of the public and 5 members of staff. The student numbers in the third and final workshop were much reduced because of several factors, including timetable rescheduling. The workshops were scheduled on Friday afternoons, which meant that many Access to Higher Education students could attend. A large percentage of this group of students attended the first two sessions and only one attended the final workshop. Two members of the public and three members of staff also attended this session.

The ITFE group was much smaller: the total group comprised 8 students. The nature of the group was such that it was likely that the numbers would increase and decrease between sessions depending on the state of health of the participants. As it turned out, the group responded very well. Attendance ranged from 5 to 8 people in each session. The lecturer was delighted with the degree of participation and especially the improvement in the self-confidence, self-expression and writing skills of the participants.

In conclusion, it appears that the creative writing enrichment activity achieved its objectives of encouraging students to increase their standards of literacy while having a very enjoyable time. We were very happy that the members of College staff and general public who attended also had useful and enjoyable experiences, as evidenced in their positive feedback.

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NEIL DAVIES

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Distance Learning in Education and Training

Aim of the project

As a result of the success of the Level 3 Award in Education and Training 'Blended learning' and 'Express' models, we have embarked on developing a Distance Learning (DL) programme that will plug a gap in our current education and training provision. Providing a distance learning pathway will increase the 'flexibility of learning' in the curriculum offer and challenge our Teaching, Learning and Assessment (TLA) pedagogy to ensure the best outcomes for Bridgwater & Taunton College (BTC) learners. Another key aim of the project is to develop a reliable online system for the micro-teach assessment that fulfils both internal and external (Pearson Education) quality assurance requirements.

Potential impact

A successful distance learning programme has the potential to:

- Increase recruitment in education and training at Bridgwater & Taunton College
- Provide access to a wider UK and International market for recruitment
- Increase the flexible learning opportunities for Bridgwater and Taunton College students
- Influence TLA pedagogy for the higher level education and training curriculum
- Provide further income for Bridgwater and Taunton College

Methodology and progress

The rationale behind this project was to advance the existing Level 3 programmes by using a range of diverse and contemporary learning resources (including modern technology) to maximise learner engagement. Blackboard

(BB) will provide the VLE platform, with Blackboard Collaborate Ultra providing a virtual classroom and video conferencing facility for programme delivery, progress meetings and discussion forums. A number of actions had to be taken to progress with the project:

1. Contact the awarding body for clarity on using modern technology to record or live stream the compulsory micro-teach, and to gain approval for a Distance Learning model
2. Gain consent from our overseas learners as willing volunteers for this pilot project
3. Use on-line tutorials to establish accessibility issues to BTC VLE platform and online learning materials before commencing the programme
4. Provide access to an online enrolment and payment system via exams and MIS
5. Update existing course materials and develop new learning resources and provide our subjects with full access to the course Blackboard page
6. Explore a variety of learning technologies to support the distance learning model of delivery – Padlet; Socrative; Nearpod; Kahoot; video conferencing; online resources; Blackboard (BB) Collaborate Ultra; e-books and BB course pages
7. Devise a set of guidelines for students, so that they can record or live stream their micro-teach and submit assessment evidence via BB
8. Deliver, assess and certificate the learners based on successful completion of the programme
9. Establish what features might make the DL course an attractive learning programme to the College's Erasmus partners and market the programme accordingly.

Significant progress has been made regarding project administration, enrolment and access arrangements. Course delivery and assessment is now well underway and will enable our two overseas learners to complete the full qualification (including micro-teach elements) by the end of the 2017/18 academic year.

Applying theory to practice

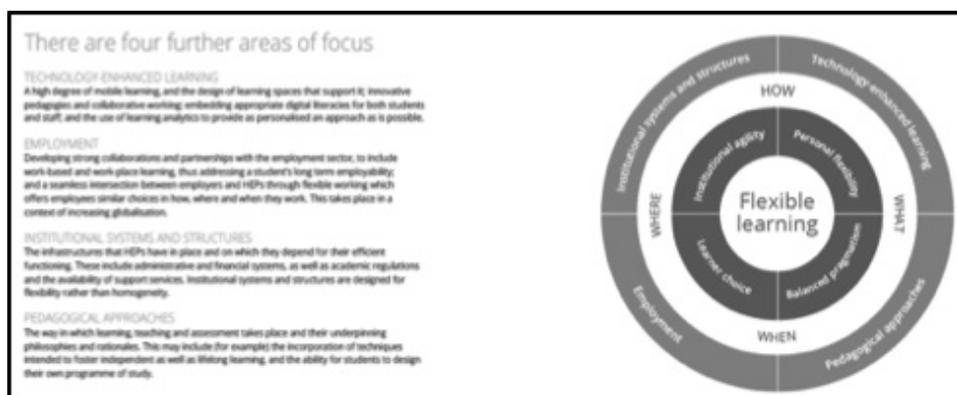
In 2014 the Education and Training Foundation developed a set of professional standards to inform all forms of Initial Teacher Education. The Level 3 award provides the first steps into teaching for most FE lecturers, so it is essential that these professional values, knowledge and skill areas are a key reference point in any curriculum development.

A distance learning programme will provide a 'flexible learning' pedagogy that will offer greater choice when it comes to taking those first steps into teaching (Level 3 Award), or whether you are pursuing a higher level study in education and training (Level 4 Certificate or Level 5 Diploma) or academic initial teacher education (e.g. Certificate in Education or Postgraduate Certificate in Education).

Using 'technology-enhanced learning' alongside the flexible mode of delivery that a distance learning programme provides, demonstrates Bridgwater & Taunton College's commitment to the pedagogy of a higher education institution and the initial teacher education professional standards.



Professional standards for FE teachers (ETF, 2014)



Flexible learning framework (HEA, 2018a)

Professional Standard:	Statement:
Professional values and attributes	'Reflect on what works best in your teaching and learning to meet individual needs...' 'Be creative and innovative in selecting and adapting strategies to help learners learn...'
Professional knowledge and understanding	'Apply theoretical understanding of effective practice in teaching, learning and assessment drawing on research and other evidence...'
Professional skills	'Plan and deliver effective learning programmes for diverse groups or individuals...' 'Promote the benefits of technology and support learners in its use...'

Table 1: Examples of the ETF Professional standards applicable to the rationale for developing the distance learning Level 3 Award in Education and Training

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OLLY BARTLETT

**Head of Operations
Civil Engineering**

Reducing teaching costs whilst maintaining outstanding teaching quality

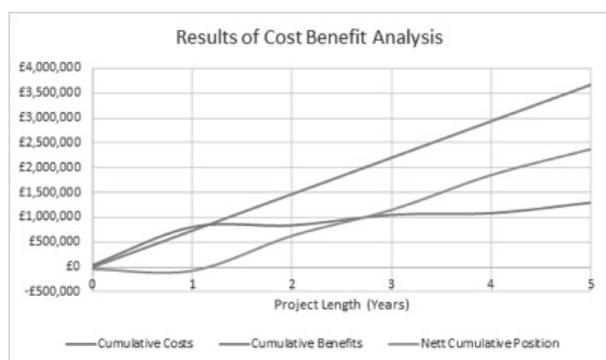
Abstract

The primary reason for this project was the reduction in government funding for study programmes, which has caused a number of education providers to become insolvent. As recently as four years ago, ASCL (Association of School and College Leaders) suggested that 'funding for sixth form education is now a little over a half (58%) of what it was when today's 17 year-olds were born' (ASCL, 2014). This reduction in income, with little changes in the required qualifications, has led to the National Audit Office warning that 'more than 1 in 4 further education colleges could be bankrupt within a year' (Cassidy, 2015). In order to mitigate this risk, Bridgwater & Taunton College needs to investigate alternative teaching methods.

The stakeholders that would be affected by the project were identified using the CATWOE model, which is a system used to ensure everyone is considered. Examples of its components are the C, which represents the Customers (in this instance, the staff who currently teach the students), and the A, which represents the Actors, or the people implementing change in an organisation. Once identified, the stakeholders were categorised into an impact matrix to ensure the effect on them, and their potential resistance to the upcoming change was considered. This matrix was used to develop a larger Recommendation and Implementation matrix in order to mitigate foreseeable occurrences.

Following thorough research of current teaching methods within and outside of the College, a combination of teaching methods was proposed. This involves blending theory and practical while developing interactive distance learning modules, which once developed would require far less direct input from teachers. These were then analysed using FMEA (Failure Mode and Effect Analysis) to show potential failures. The proposal was then modelled through a cost benefit analysis to indicate its potential financial savings, which resulted in a saving of over £2.3M over 5 years (including development costs).

In summary, the research and analysis was successful in that it provided a tangible solution that met the aims of the project. The proposal has the potential to yield savings of £2.3M (over 5 years) and, most importantly, would not compromise on quality due to its method of implementation. In fact, by developing and delivering one module per study programme at Level 1 and Level 2, students could be offered the option to work at their own pace and not risk receiving a lower quality teaching method if they should be absent for any reason. The proposed savings are not excessive, because there is a great deal of development time required initially, as well as an administrative role to support staff, share good practice and report back into the business.



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Can adopting 'brain gain' strategies improve outcomes for Maths GCSE learners?

Literature review

Maths learning in FE colleges is notorious for negative experiences and outcomes and it is common for people in general to have a barrier to learning the subject (Oie and Fujii, 2017). Part of the reason for this may be because students come to college with a 'fixed mindset' (Elliot and Dweck, 2005) developed over many years.

The aim of the current research is to develop a unique training platform to train lecturers of maths in the basic science behind neuropsychology (brain knowledge), and in the adoption of 'growth mindset' (Elliot & Dweck, 2005), with some adjustments made for FE students, to try and address these issues and un-learn these negative attitudes (Friere, 1970).

'Growth mindset' was first coined by Professor Carole Dweck, a psychologist who believes intelligence can develop and that outcomes can be impacted by changing attitudes in learners (Elliot & Dweck, 2005). Her research suggests that adopting a 'growth mindset' can improve the educational and personal life of students, improve employability and in turn have a positive impact on local communities.

Neuropsychology is a scientific understanding of the relationship between the brain and neuropsychological function. In recent years there have been advancements in developing educational practices using the science of neuropsychology. As an emerging field of study, neuroscience and education combines cognitive and developmental neuroscience with educational psychology: technology and theory that will lead to a greater understanding of the mental processes involved in learning. The Royal Society (2011) stated that this collaboration of study, 'suggests a future in which educational practice can

be transformed by science, just as medical practice was transformed by science about a century ago'.

The focus of the current study is to evaluate if teaching 'Brain Gain' [how the brain works in learning (brain knowledge) alongside the adoption of 'growth mindset' in the classroom] can positively impact outcomes for maths learners at Bridgwater & Taunton College.

Dweck (Elliot and Dweck, 2005) has shown that adopting a 'Growth Mindset' approach in the classroom can lead to raised achievement. Results from studies indicate that students who receive a study skills training and growth mindset program increase their maths attainment scores (Blackwell, Trzesniewski and Dweck, 2007). Dweck emphasises the importance of building students' belief in their ability to improve their intelligence and performance at any stage, to alter achievement outcomes.

However, much of the work carried out on 'Growth Mindset' has been with young learners aged around 10 years old. FE has its own set of problems, and the current study sets out to build knowledge that might address these particular problems and provide answers as to why attainment in maths in FE colleges is so notoriously poor.

The study

The term 'Brain Gain' was coined to represent the conjoined ideas of teaching simple 'brain knowledge' (neuroscience) alongside the adoption of a 'growth mindset' environment in the classroom. 'Brain knowledge' is defined in this study as giving students knowledge about the brain and how it works in learning, including an understanding of the plasticity (malleability) of the brain, and the adoption of a 'growth mindset' environment to encourage students to move away from their fixed mindset outlook (I can't do maths) to a more 'growth mindset' outlook (I will be able to do maths, if I try and challenge myself).

It is hoped that 'Brain Gain' in the classroom will lead to students taking more responsibility for their own learning, and understanding that anyone can learn maths if they want to and/or need to.

Materials

The pilot trial involved the creation of a workshop training course of about one hour in length (delivered on PowerPoint slides), alongside a set of resources designed to help the participating maths lecturers deliver the 'Brain Gain' knowledge and gather the 'Brain Gain' score of each student. A further 4 slide resource of Maths GCSE 'Tips

and Tricks' were included in the resources as a means of promoting growth mindset in the classroom.

A Maths Attitude and Mindset Scale was adapted from a standardised instrument (Tapia and Marsh, 2004) and further developed in order to capture the base level of attitudes and mindset at the start of the trial. The scale will be repeated at the end of the 5 week period to explore any changes in attitude and mindset.

The Maths Attitude Scale will also be given to a number of non-participating maths learners, who are otherwise not involved in the 'Brain Gain' trial. These non-participating students will act as a control group and complete the Attitude and Mindset Scale twice, at the start and end of the trial. Their data will be compared with that of the 'Brain Gain' participation group in order to inform the outcome of the study.

The resources include:

- PPT slides of initial workshop
- PPT slides for the teaching of 'Brain Knowledge'
- 'Brain Gain' Score Sheet
- Maths Attitude and Mindset Scale
- PPT slides of Tips and Tricks for Maths GCSE

Protocol

Six maths lecturers attended the workshops and were given the resources to deliver the teaching on 'Brain Gain' and asked to adopt and encourage a 'Growth Mindset' environment within their own classrooms for the length of the trial. These lecturers asked their students to complete the 'Maths Attitude and Mindset Scale' prior to delivering the 'brain knowledge'. During the delivery of the 'brain knowledge' resource, teachers asked students to complete a 'brain gain' score. This was part of the learning to illustrate to the students that depending on the percentage that they 'wanted' or 'needed' Maths GCSE, would depend on their likelihood of achieving it.



Tink delivering trial material resources

On the 'brain gain' score sheet it becomes clear that the percentage scores add up to 90%, leaving a clear lesson to learners that the teacher is only worth 10% towards the likelihood of the students improving their grade in maths. This lesson is designed to help students gain additional resilience and take more responsibility for their own learning and achievement and change mindsets from 'fixed' to 'growth'.

Following delivery of 'brain knowledge', lecturers will adopt a 'growth mindset' environment within the classroom, changing language to support mindset change within the classroom. For example:

1. Praising for effort and not results
2. Avoiding praising results that required little effort to achieve
3. Focusing on what can change about their approach to do better next time
4. Model 'growth mindset' growth, promoting positive language and discouraging the use of negative language in the classroom
5. Praising effort, strategy and progress

At the end of the trial we will gather in the data and explore any pattern changes in scores that could show attitude change within the learners. We will also ask lecturers who participated in the trial to comment on their experience, any changes they noticed in the classroom and how delivery of the Brain Gain training and growth mindset adoption could be improved in the future.

Anticipated outcomes

It is hoped that working on a change in attitude in the classroom will lead to progression in grades in Maths GCSE. With such a short trial, it will be difficult to assess whether the study protocol did in fact impact GCSE

grade levels. A further trial over a longer period of time (September – June) would be a better test of whether the combination of 'Brain Knowledge' and 'growth mindset' adoption from the start of the academic year could positively impact overall progression grades and attitudes to maths through the year.

However, the current trial will help inform a longer trial and, if successful, will give lecturers a toolbox of resources and personal knowledge that will help deliver improved maths results in the future. Once established, this method could provide new knowledge and best practice to be shared within the educational community to improve other areas of learning across all curricula.

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Tink delivering trial material resources



SARAH CASEY

Learning Resources Assistant
Learning Resources Service

Is it ever too early to get ready for school?

Setting the Scene

It is not a sight you typically see in the Learning Resources Centre (LRC) – a string of four-year-olds holding hands in pairs as they walk past bookshelves twice their height. They are followed by the bemused gaze of our FE students. These are some of the College's youngest learners from the Childcare Centre at Bridgwater Campus.

Every Monday and Tuesday morning, Early Years practitioners from the Childcare Centre accompany two groups of eight to ten children to the children's area of the LRC - a beautifully crafted space adorned with rainbow mural, a diverse selection of children's literature, and child-friendly furnishings. Last year, this room was an office. With the artistic flair of a talented Learning Resources Assistant, Paula Durston, it has been transformed into a bright, colourful and inviting space. Yet the rationale behind this transformation has led to more than an aesthetic ambition or a place to simply shelve our children's book collection. This newly created environment has provided the opportunity to forge links within the College and engage with children from the wider community.



Paula Durston, Learning Resources Assistant

'School Readiness'

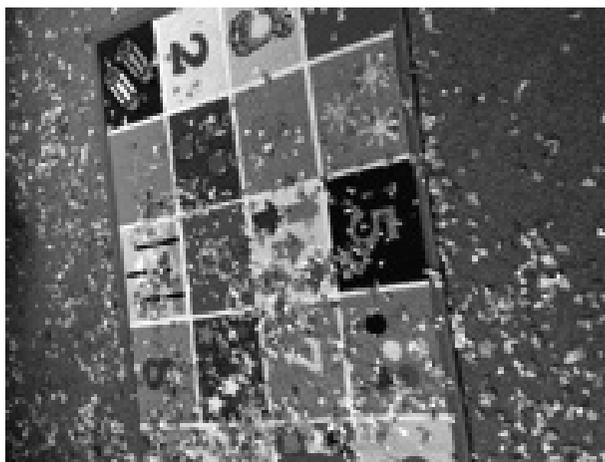
The preschoolers' weekly visits to the LRC, and the adult-led sessions they experience, respond to a request from Amanda McMurren, Early Years Teaching Centre Co-ordinator, who envisaged the LRC as an environment that could help foster 'school readiness'. The LRC's brief was to 'provide an activity or learning experience based on areas where it had been identified the children needed additional input and support to further their learning and development'.

According to a report by Parkes (2018), 'nearly a third of children are not arriving 'school-ready' for their first days at reception class.' But what does this mean? The Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) acknowledges that the term 'school readiness' features in many reviews of education and statutory guidance (Ofsted, 2014). However, the precise characteristics of school readiness and the age

of the child to which it applies are interpreted variously by the Early Years providers Ofsted visit. Despite there being no nationally agreed definition, it is generally perceived as 'a measure of how prepared a child is to succeed in school cognitively, socially and emotionally' (Public Health England, 2015).

The Childcare Centre team envisaged the library sessions as a way of providing tailored support for school readiness, as well as creating additional opportunities for children to experience new and interesting areas of learning and development. Each week, sessions tap into a cultural or seasonal topic and offer links to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum. Recent examples of topics covered include life cycles and Africa. The sessions are planned and led by a Learning Resources Assistant or Co-ordinator, and supported by Childcare Centre staff who have the opportunity to observe children and record evidence of developmental goals. These observations form part of a child's iConnect Learning Journey record which demonstrates progression whilst at the Childcare Centre.

Some sessions offer craft-based activities, such as Mother's Day bookmarks. Others involve music, video or photographs to explore differences and commonalities in communities and traditions. What experiences does the



Mother's Day bookmarks

Maasai girl that stands outside her mud hut share with a child living in a tower block in Bridgwater? If you are thinking 'tomatoes', you must have walked past the children's library at a key moment of debate. The sharing of ideas, making observations and starting to think critically are characteristics of effective early learning.

At a more fundamental level, the change of environment provided by the LRC allows children to experience new people and areas within their local community. Such exposure increases children's confidence when interacting with others and expands their ability to adapt to the different expectations that come with learning in a more formal setting. Respondents to a research report into school readiness from The Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years (PACEY), believe that 'cognitive and academic skills such as reading and writing are not as important as children being confident, independent and curious' (PACEY, 2013). By creating opportunities to promote these qualities, children are better prepared for the transition from preschool to the more structured learning of reception class. In a recent review of Early Years good practice, Ofsted found that a precursor to school readiness saw how 'all providers increased the proportion of adult-directed group sessions over the course of the academic year' (Ofsted, 2014). The adult input from Learning Resources staff can only complement the many ways practitioners at the Childcare Centre are furthering children's preparedness for school.

The Library Experience

The children's library sessions are neither overly-formal nor prescriptive. Leading and observing each group, it becomes apparent that the children are choosing to engage in ways that are meaningful to them. Some are keen to explore our children's book collection and look through books independently. Others enjoy communicating with a fresh audience and enthusiastically share their experiences with me. For a few, simply absorbing their surroundings and internalising this new experience is, I hope, cementing positive perceptions of both learning and the world around them. And, of course, learning should be fun and afforded a level of spontaneity. How can I forget the hundred tiny pieces of coloured tissue that literally took flight as children initiated a sensory explosion of 'confetti' during the crafting of butterfly bookmarks? For me, this is a wonderful example of privileging the process over the end product, and how some of the best experiences are often found off-plan and 'in the moment'.

What about story-telling, you might ask, that traditional hallmark of children's library sessions? Be assured that The Hungry Caterpillar is as hungry as ever, and the book illustrates lifecycles as beautifully as it did in its first publication in 1969. Undoubtedly, reading with children is

one of the most significant ways we can enhance a child's literacy skills. Yet libraries are finding increasingly innovative methods to engage with a younger audience. Bridgwater's own public library supplies a range of children's services. The provision of Lego clubs, and code clubs for making games, animations and websites, responds to the growing requirement for technical literacy. Equally, town trails and treasure hunts offer the benefits associated with outdoor learning. There is certainly much we can learn from our local libraries and other stakeholders and embed in our future practice.

Benefits

Back at the Childcare Centre, during the times the library sessions take place, Early Years practitioners are able to undertake additional group work and interventions with other children needing specialist targeted support. It seems that there are many beneficiaries to this ongoing project, no more so than the Learning Resources staff themselves who organise the sessions. Laetitia Delaleuf, Learning Resources Co-ordinator, feels that developing children's activities and planning resources is certainly a skill she can continue to build on. I, too, would agree that this opportunity has been an enabling experience that has allowed me to embrace the 'have a go' approach we so eagerly encourage in children. The freedom to design sessions has pushed me to think creatively and reflect on the types of services we can provide.

This drive to deliver innovative projects is promoted by the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) whose 'Policy Inquiry into the Further Education Sector and FE Library Services' advocates:

The work of FE librarians is proactive. Thought is given to new activities which add value and not just to new ways of delivering existing interventions. This innovation is especially visible around initiatives to enrich the overall teaching and learning experience of students and of the teaching staff. This often involves reaching out to stakeholders not necessarily considered to be traditionally theirs (CILIP, 2018).

The LRC is continuously looking for new ways to ensure we offer a diversity of learning experiences and resources, and that our services are accessible to all user groups. From Amanda McMurren's point of view, the library sessions are making 'a positive difference to the Childcare Centre, the children's outcomes and practitioners' professional experiences'. The continuing development of our relationship with the Childcare Centre demonstrates the ease in which inter-college links can be established and our reach extended. As much as the LRC is the domain of students in tertiary education, we should be mindful that 'school readiness at age five has a strong impact on

future educational attainment and life chances' (Public Health England, 2015). To this end, it makes sense to work collaboratively and invest early in the outcomes of our future cohorts.

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HE Quality

Research into the learner journey and the wider student experience

In 2015 a Government Green Paper set out the future of the regulatory architecture for Higher Education in England. The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) would cease to exist and in its place a new regulatory body would be formed, the Office for Students (OfS).

The new OfS, established by the Higher Education and Research Act 2017, would bring together the regulation of all Higher Education in England with a more student-centric vision. As of 1 April 2018 all Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in receipt of non-private funding would be required to register with the new OfS.

The principle areas of focus for the OfS would be access, information, quality and protection of interests and, whilst the OfS would not form part of central Government, it would report to Parliament through the Department for Education.

In terms of quality, the Office for Students (2018) outlined its primary monitoring and regulatory function as 'ensuring students get a high-quality education that prepares them for the future, to include, great teaching, learning and wider educational experience that gives them the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in employment or further study'.

Changes in the HE landscape

When HEFCE was formed in 1992 public funding still played a measurable part in an HE institution's income. In 1980 just 13% of young people were in full-time Higher Education and were largely privately funded and by 1999 this had increased to 34%. However, at the same time as student numbers doubled, public funding per student halved (Greenaway and Haynes, 2003). By 2015 the provisional Higher Education Initial Participation Rate (HEIPR) was 49% (Department for Education, 2017), and only one quarter of university funding was received from direct government sources (Universities UK, 2016).

The creation of the OfS reflects the changes in the funding structure of HE in England today, clearly with the student

as the sector's primary funder, whether through the Student Loans Company or via direct self-funding, a clearer mechanism was needed.

The new OfS is multifaceted, working with both providers of Higher Education in England and the primary consumer of Higher Education, the student. The new OfS website sets out the requirements of Higher Education providers through four primary regulatory objectives and conditions of registration, yet its website is entirely student-facing. The content is written in a student-friendly language, is easy to navigate and simple to understand. This represents a significant shift in the image of an organisation from regulatory to a regulatory/competition authority, representing the interests of the student as the primary funder of Higher Education in England.

Key Themes

This research project aims to inform the University Centre Somerset (UCS) on the 'wider educational experience', a theme identified by the OfS under the Quality aspect of their scope. Our project aims to develop this theme within our institution and forms part of the 'learner journey' project, launched by the Vice Principal, Louise Rowley. The term 'wider educational experience', also known as the 'wider student experience', is a broad term that can be developed to help us understand the motivations and concerns facing students today. It is a term that encourages us to look outside the classroom and consider the environmental and social aspects of student life and how these might impact on learning. Through our research we hope to establish clear quantifiable data on areas that are often less reported within the student voice itself, drilling down into those important factors that make the 'wider student experience' a positive one.

Data Collection

The majority of internal data collection on the student experience currently rests within the mechanisms of the Programme Committee Meeting (PCM), Student Perception Questionnaire (SPQ) and Student Parliament. Held biannually in the autumn and spring terms, the PCM collects information on each individual course and includes feedback by a student representative from each year of the programme.

Themes of the PCM include student feedback on the teaching, structure, resources, organisation and management of courses, and also cover College facilities. The PCM will also consider the opportunities for Personal Development Planning (PDP) and elements of equality and diversity.

Typically the student representative will engage with the committee meeting by offering feedback on these individual areas and will often refer to a bullet-pointed list of specific issues they have been asked to raise by their cohort.

The autumn PCM seeks to capture information on induction and enrolment and also draws on the results of the NSS from the previous academic year. It is slightly retrospective in its approach in comparison to the spring PCM.

While the PCMs allow us to gain much insight into the students' views on structure and running of the course, we hypothesised that students might be limited in their discussion by such factors as the scope of the agenda, the formality of the event, time restraints and those present.

In addition to the PCM, the SPQ is an annual survey that takes place in the January of each year and is open to all students ineligible to complete the National Student Survey (NSS) or University of Plymouth SPQ. The Survey is anonymous and based on the same question set as the NSS. This year's SPQ had a response rate of 84%. The SPQ provides good quantitative data but has a number of limiting factors including its inability to survey University of Plymouth and Pearson students, a considerable female dominance in the number of respondents (74%) and a question set, which has in the past been confusing for students.

The Student Parliament is the final learner voice of the year, taking place in May. It allows those student representatives that attended the PCMs to feed back their views directly to the Senior Management Team.

Key Themes identified from the current data

We commenced our research project by drawing on the quantitative data available from the SPQ. Results identified that students were generally happy with the teaching and learning on their courses. Students agreed that staff were good at explaining things (93%) and staff had made the subject interesting (92%).

Areas of dissatisfaction included resources (12%), marking criteria used in assessments (8%) and not feeling part of a community of students (8%).

Areas where dissatisfaction rose the highest surrounded the student voice. Only 26% of students felt they were aware of how their feedback had been acted upon, and 40% were unsure as to whether the Student Union represented their academic interests.

To understand the quantitative data further, we analysed the comment boxes positioned throughout the SPQ survey and combined them with the qualitative data extracted from the

PCM minutes. It was clear from the data that a number of emerging trends could be identified.

These trends were drawn from statements produced by students across multiple disciplines, with the exception of point three that only concerned the Arts courses.

In summary:

- Students identified that they would like resources for HE and FE separated;
- They identified that some course-specific resources were lacking;
- On some courses students wanted their course fees raised to cover more materials;
- Students identified issues with timetabling and rooms to match the resource requirements for lessons;
- Students felt they would like more involvement with events and to receive better communication;
- They asked to have more suitable HE Common spaces;
- Those new to the College would have liked a more formal induction to the facilities;
- Students enjoyed the varied learning opportunities, practicals, group work, collaboration and guest lectures and wanted more;
- Students asked for more support over the summer, both in relation to summer mailing and also tutor contact when referral work was due in.

The data summaries provided an initial focal point for our research. We identified a number of areas for development that would help inform the wider student experience.

Including:

- Application and enrolment
- Induction
- Resources
- Facilities
- Engagement with UCS life

We considered a number of data collection methods, including surveys, interviews and focus groups.

Surveys

We discussed the possibility of sending out a student survey, however we felt that the response rate could be low given the recent engagement with the NSS and SPQ.

Visits to student groups

We considered interviewing students within the classroom setting, however we identified a number of scheduling issues - for example, timetable restraints, the sheer number of cohorts and travel times between multiple sites.

Focus Groups

We considered the option of combining representatives from cohorts. We were concerned about the likelihood of student engagement with the focus group and the amount of qualitative data a focus group would generate.

It was decided that a combined approach would be most practical, using the focus group as a launch pad for the topics of discussion, followed closely by an all-student questionnaire to help quantify the data.

Invites to our focus groups were sent to 1st year students and top-up students via the student enrichment officer and these invites were followed up via course leaders. Invites fed through to a Doodle poll that allowed students to select their preferred campus and their preferred time and date. We then analysed the polls to select a date that was the most popular in each campus.

Why use Focus Groups

We decided that using focus groups would allow us to develop hypotheses and use a more natural setting than some techniques (surveys/participant observations). 'By allowing opinions to bounce back and forth and be modified by the group, rather than being the definitive statement of a single respondent, the group interview would allow you to elaborate on statements made and realise the indexical nature of many statements made by respondents' (Morgan, 1993, p. 24). Providing a set of open-ended questions and discussion points encouraged participants to develop ideas within the group setting. It was noted by Witzel and Mey (2004) in an interview with Cicourel, a renowned ethnomethodologist and exponent of group research, that researchers should seek to identify their own organisational constraints when undertaking group research. We hypothesised that the current student voice, captured through the mechanism of the PCM was quite rigid and may constrain or under-report the views of students. The focus groups hoped to address this by providing a more natural setting, enabling participants to relax and talk freely about their student experiences at UCS.

Results from the Focus Group

Our focus groups were made up of students from a wide variety of disciplines including Social and Professional Studies, Sports, Technology, Engineering and the Arts.

We held three focus groups, two in Taunton and a third in Bridgwater. Our Cannington focus group was cancelled due to a lack of engagement from students at the site.

Feedback on the wider student experience varied greatly across the two campuses and was broad in its scope.

Trends in the feedback given included:

- Lack of information on the induction and enrolment process, including dates and times of induction (summer mailing)
- Lack of distinction between FE and HE
- Issues in access to IT, slow load times for applications
- Need for improved layout of rooms and areas, and resources to match student needs and timetable requirements
- A positive recognition of the quality of teaching and contact time received, and the difference between UCS and traditional universities
- Lack of engagement with students outside their own cohort

The feedback from the focus groups was communicated to the Senior Management team. We were informed that a separate working party had been established to look into enrolment and induction to ensure a smoother communication strategy for 2018-19. It was clear that, overall, students were very happy with the quality of teaching and learning and, due to the large amount of data available from the NSS and SPQ, we would not seek to develop this point further. The Head of HE agreed to speak with the operations teams about timetabling and we would continue to develop the remaining points, notably the relationship between FE and HE, student engagement opportunities and resources for HE students.

Results from the Student Questionnaire

We ran the initial survey for two weeks and collected 122 responses from across our three main campuses.

On the subject of engagement, we identified that students across all three sites felt engaged with their learning group. At Taunton, 92.31% agreed they felt engaged; at Bridgwater 78.37% and at Cannington 100%. When asked about the wider HE community, only 38.46% of students at Taunton felt they had opportunities to engage, 16.22% at Bridgwater and 33.33% at Cannington.

When students were asked why they chose to study at UCS, most identified the location over all other factors. Fees was also a notable consideration. There was a spike in respondents in Bridgwater that selected their employer as the primary reason for study and this related to the high HN Engineering provision at the site, particularly our contracts with the Ministry of Defence (MoD).

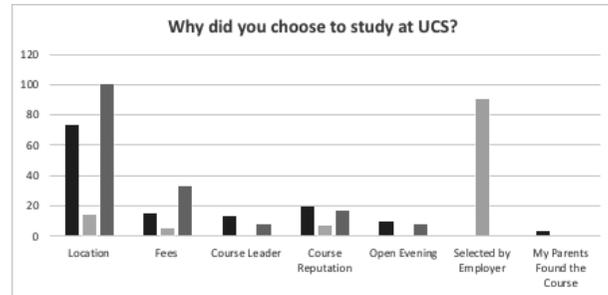


Figure 1: Percentage of students by campus
Taunton ■ Bridgwater ■ Cannington ■

When asked about the commute time, the majority of students travelled between 30-60 minutes to reach their campus, which suggested that 'local' did not necessarily translate into walking distance.

When asked whether they identified themselves as a BTC or UCS student, 94.34% of Taunton students, 36.96% of Bridgwater students and 30.77% of Cannington students identified with UCS over BTC. This feedback suggested that the branding message had been most successful in Taunton, the central hub for UCS, and less so at the other campuses.

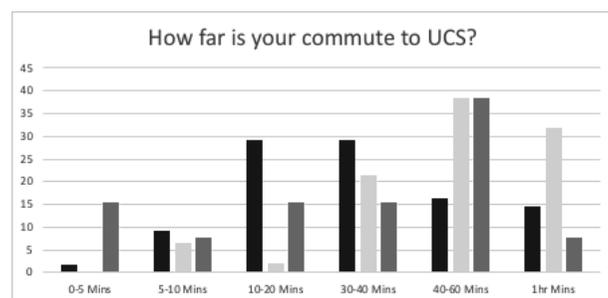
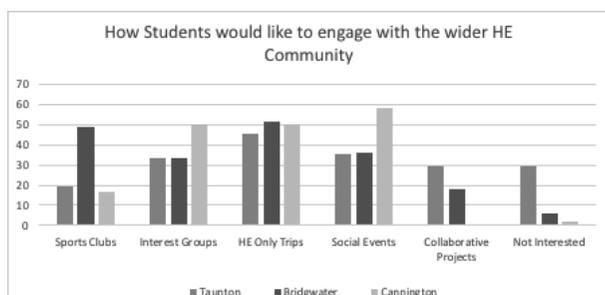


Figure 2: Percentage of students by campus
Taunton ■ Bridgwater ■ Cannington ■

The feedback also showed that 47.06% of Taunton students, 69.23% of Cannington students and 0% of Bridgwater students felt like a university student. This suggested a considerable gap in the types of experience students are gaining across the campuses, particularly in Bridgwater, where much L4 and L5 provision is delivered as HN BTECs and not as Foundation Degrees.

When we asked students how they envisaged they would like to develop the wider HE community, we identified that across all three sites HE-only trips and social events proved most popular.

We provided comment boxes at strategic points within the questionnaire to allow students to develop their ideas. They included organised trips to theme parks, cities, museums and shopping centres. Social events included BBQs, pub nights out, stand-up comedy nights and themed cinema nights.



It was noted that students completing the questionnaire in Bridgwater were more interested in the establishment of sports clubs compared to those at the UCS's other campuses, which may be due to the male dominance at the site. Ideas included climbing, go-karting and football. Students at Taunton site also considered a graduation ball.

The arts students were most keen on collaborative projects providing a range of ideas, including music videos, fashion shows and photo shoots.

There were also course specific ideas from Cannington, such as a Zoological Society for Animal Management and Conservation students. Bridgwater HNC students suggested small engineering projects for HNC students to work on during free time.

The creative students were most keen on the idea of the collaborative project to create a hoodie; across the sites only 27.73% of students would be interested in purchasing a hoodie with a cost price of £20-£25. It was noted that the figure was brought down by the HNC/D engineering students that associate more with BTC and studied as part of their job requirement. When we looked at non-HN students, 38% stated that they would be interested in purchasing a hoodie at that price.

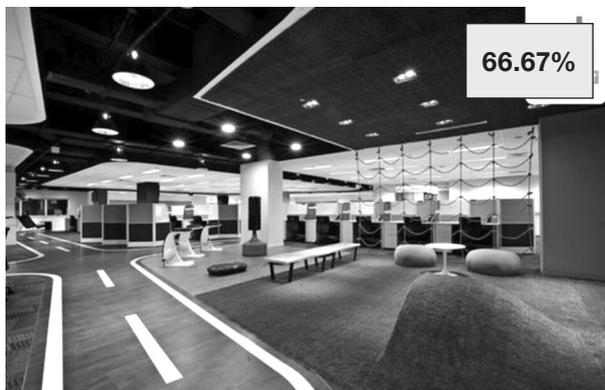
The majority of students recognised the necessity to fundraise for their activities. Ideas for fundraising included bake sales, car washes, raffles, pub quiz, charity football, fetes, bingo nights, car boot sales, sponsored run/walk, BBQs, book sales and sponsored pub crawl.

It was noted from our research that a number of our validating partners would support students in their fundraising efforts. Oxford Brookes University supports their own students by offering 50p in every £1 raised. We asked students how our own Student Union might motivate

their fundraising. Our questionnaire confirmed that 9.24% of students would be motivated if the Student Union were to support their fundraising activities by providing an additional 10p for every £1 raised; 23.53% would be motivated by 25p per £1; 39.49% would be motivated by 50p for every £1 and 27.73% would not be motivated to fundraise.

In light of the varied feedback across the sites on HE dedicated spaces, we also questioned students on the types of social spaces they would utilise. The HE dedicated social spaces they identified most with were relaxation areas with comfortable seating, quiet study areas for reading and computer-based work, ideas rooms for brainstorming and outside social spaces.

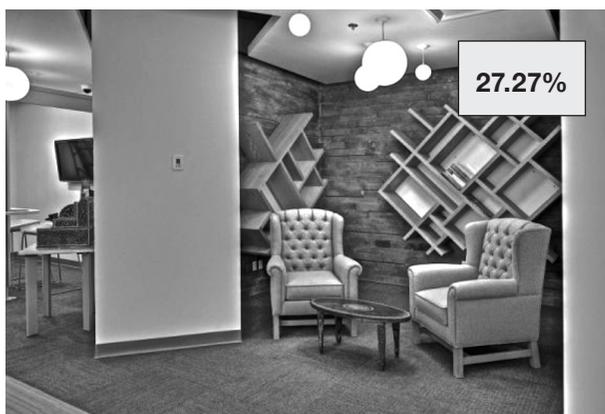
Our full analysis of research will be made available throughout the College, and we hope that it helps to inform the 'wider student experience' and our commitment to the new OfS, putting the student voice at the heart of everything we do.



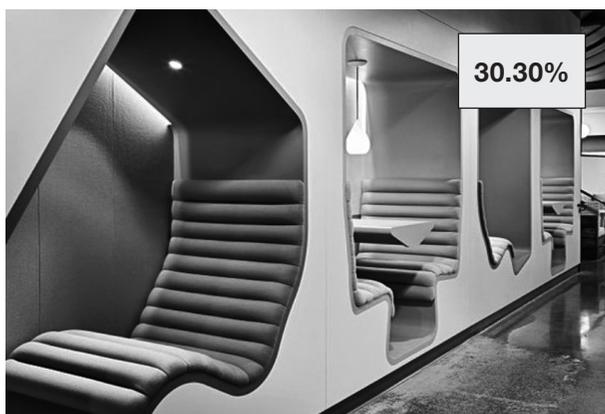
Breakout space designed by SCA Design for SingTel Singapore



Ideas space created for students at San Jose Campus



Innovative reading spaces



Work pods designed for Google's California offices

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Have you heard about HEADstart?

Last November I attended a UKSG (United Kingdom Serials Group) conference entitled 'FE supporting the transition to HE'. This is a subject that has interested me since I started working at the College three years ago. At the conference I networked with a large group of librarians from various colleges. It was interesting to hear about practice in other colleges and developments which could be adopted at Bridgwater & Taunton College (BTC). It also made me reflect on our own HEADstart scheme, which is designed to help Further Education students through their transition into Higher Education.

Students can find the move from FE to HE courses very difficult. The pathway to independent learning is not something that all learners find easy. There are advantages and disadvantages for students that choose to continue into HE whilst staying at an FE establishment. The two biggest problems about staying on at an FE college are that the student often remains at the same location, and is taught by the same tutor. This can be both a help and a hindrance to learning. But the learning ethos has changed completely. The change to independent learning can be very disorientating for many students. Leese (2010, p. 247) concludes that supporting students through this transitional period is important for building student confidence, and it is also arguably important to the college in terms of retaining long-term students. A happy, supported student is likely to have more confidence to continue the course, and these factors provide the background for the development of the HEADstart programme.

The HEADstart programme started in the 2013/14 academic year. The original list of units covered was more extensive than it is currently. The units were:

- Getting started with Microsoft OneNote
- Blackboard basics
- Time Management
- E-resources for your courses - an introduction to your University portal
- Understanding copyright
- Understanding plagiarism
- Referencing skills
- Skimming, scanning, reading

- Note taking
 - Assignment skills
- (Kirby, 2014).

Very different to the programme provided today! There was an attendance booklet for students to fill out, which was intended to allow them to reflect on the sessions. The sessions were led by library staff and involved student interaction and discussion. The overview report indicates that it was very much a learning process for students and library staff.

The interim review and next steps outlined in the scheme's first year (Kirby, 2014) indicated that developments were needed to carry the programme forward in 2014/15. These included focussing on core units and reducing the number of these from ten to six, since ten one-hour sessions is a huge commitment for both students and staff. There is also an acknowledgement that 'Effective search strategies are being considered as an additional unit' (Kirby, 2014). Employability and transferable skills were identified as directions for development, and involving partner universities more closely was also mentioned. Some of the HE courses had close connections with their partners whilst others had very little connection. It was thought that this could be important for making students more aware of partner universities and more engaged with the HE landscape.

It was at this point that I came into post in January 2015. As my background was in public libraries, it meant a steep learning curve for me. After much discussion, it was decided to follow the recommendations and pare down the modules to a core of six. Since then, these have been as follows:

- Blackboard and LRC resources
 - Partner university portal and resources (not applicable for HND, HNC or Open University)
 - Referencing
 - Plagiarism
 - Research skills 1 - Planning your search strategy
 - Research skills 2 - Resource selection and evaluation
- (LRC, 2017).

These sessions have remained at the core of the HEADstart programme, with the option for tutors to request more tailored sessions. Another important element of HEADstart is to introduce students to the Learning Resources Centres, and to staff that can help them. The networking generated from these sessions can provide students with additional support to help them through the transition from FE study to HE.

Moving forward, there is a need for Level 3 students to be provided with some of the skills communicated in

HEADstart. A 'mini HEADstart' would be invaluable for students wanting to progress to HE courses. Even for students not wanting to continue, there is a lot to be learnt from evaluating websites and sources – this could be offered through a session entitled 'How to spot Fake News'!

Some universities and colleges are already running schemes like this. A SCONUL conference review from 2011 highlights a skills workshop being presented to a group of pre-university students from West Herts College (Collins, 2011). The University of Cumbria encourages prospective undergraduate and PGCE students to take part in an online virtual course, called (spookily enough!) Headstart. This covers a lot of the same ground as the BTC HEADstart programme. Universities are increasingly moving towards online tutorials to prepare students for their courses of study. Perhaps BTC students will even be receiving HEADstart from a 'virtual' librarian in the near future.

Please contact your campus LRC or library for details on HEADstart sessions, including how to make bookings for 2018/19. If you teach FE and are interested in some introductory sessions for your students, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

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Higher Education Academy's Framework for student engagement through partnership: benefits, challenges, our current position and potential

Abstract:

The Higher Education Academy (HEA) has developed a strategic framework for student engagement through partnership. This framework has been used by many Higher Education institutions in recent years because of its evidenced advantages. This framework fits within a majority of the strategic aims of the college for this academic year. In this research, we have used this framework flexibly, creatively and according to the strategic aims of the college. We have extended the application of this framework to suit our priorities and needs. For example, employer engagement through partnership is added to the framework. Current position and potential for improvements are measured and discussed using reflective questions in semi-structured interviews. The results show that there is a significant potential for improvement in student and employer engagement through partnership. In addition, the challenges and benefits of this framework are discussed.

Introduction

Higher Education Academy's Framework for student engagement through partnership

Engaging students as partners in teaching, learning and assessment (TLA) has shown evidenced benefits for students, staff and HE providers (Jarvis, Dickerson and Stockwell, 2013), and it has therefore been a very attractive HE research area in recent years. For example, University of Lincoln, University of West London, University

of Roehampton, University of Westminster, Ulster University and HEA have funded recent or ongoing projects on this framework.

The HEA's framework for student engagement through partnership is used for this research. In this framework, 'partnership is understood as a relationship in which all involved are actively engaged in and stand to gain from the process of learning and working together to foster engaged student learning and engaging learning and teaching enhancement. Partnership is essentially a way of doing things, rather than an outcome in itself' (Healey, Flint, and Harrington, 2014).

The HEA has suggested student engagement through partnership framework as shown in Figure 1. This conceptual model shows four overlapping areas:

- Learning, teaching and assessment
- Subject-based research and inquiry
- Scholarship of teaching and learning
- Curriculum design and pedagogic consultancy (Healey, Flint, and Harrington, 2014).

This framework provides a structured mechanism and plan to develop partnerships between staff and students, and between students and HE providers. In this framework, effective mechanism is used for teaching, learning and assessment (TLA) to ensure open and continuous dialogues with students (Healey, Flint, and Harrington, 2014).

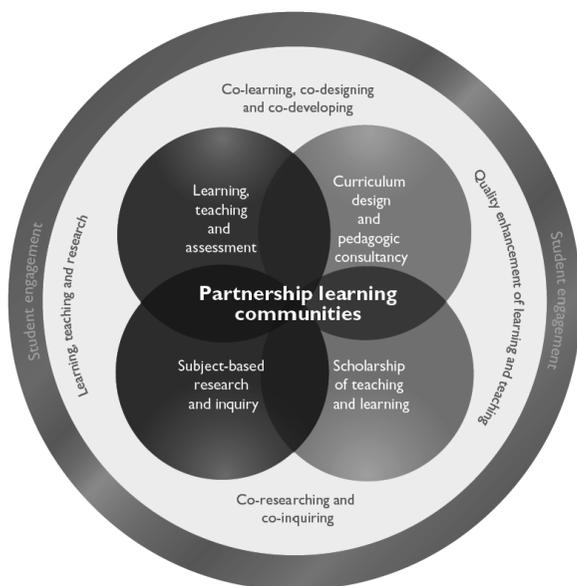


Figure 1: HEA's engagement through partnership frameworks (Healey, Flint, and Harrington, 2014).

The partnership between Higher Education (HE) providers and students is a way of engaging students; however, not all engagements are a partnership. For example, getting feedback from students or listening to them engages students, but it does not necessarily create a partnership. The National Union of Students (NUS) and the HEA have suggested four levels of engagements as shown and defined in Figure 2. It can be seen in Figure 2 that the engagement through partnership is the highest level of engagement (Healey, Flint, and Harrington, 2014).

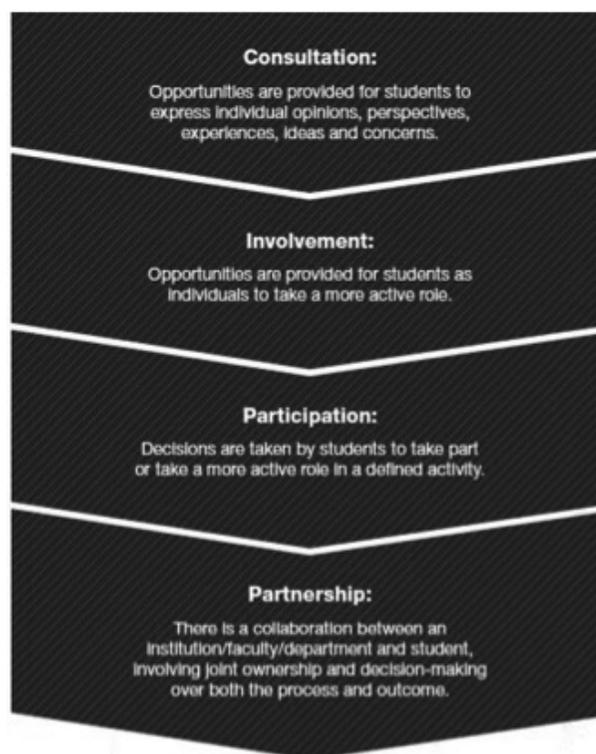


Figure 2: Four levels of student engagement (Healey, Flint, and Harrington, 2014)

Benefits of the framework

Cook-Sather, Bovill and Felten's (2014) research showed that this framework increases motivation of both staff and students for learning and success. In addition, SooHoo (1993) findings showed that this framework improves learners' passion and enthusiasm for learning.

The HEA's framework presents a structured mechanism to ensure open and continuous dialogues with students (Healey, Flint, and Harrington, 2014), hence it helps to have more information and data about our students and employers and what they need.

With the increase in tuition fees, students invest for future employment. Students and their families are looking for immediate employment after graduation. In addition, employers are looking for deep knowledge, adequate skills and attributes, as well as personal development of our students. Previous works showed that a partnership improves learners' personal development, learning experience, employability and attitudes (Healey, Flint, and Harrington, 2014). This framework can potentially help us to keep and develop our contracts with employers and attract more students to the College. This will have a long term impact on the financial success of the College.

This framework fits within a majority of the strategic aims of the College for 2017-2018, however, to the best of our knowledge, there has not been any research about the HEA's framework at our College. By applying this framework we want to improve our TLA and to keep and develop our contracts with employers and attract more students to the College.

Research Methodology

Semi-structured interviews are developed to understand our current position and the potential for improvement in the partnership with students and employers. There are different understandings and definitions of the partnership, so each interview starts with a short definition and an explanation of the framework and its four areas to make sure interviewees have a similar understanding of the conceptual model. This also improves awareness about the framework at the College. After that, each interviewee gives a score from 0 to 10 for the current position and available potential, which creates quantitative data. Then the interviewee explains the scores and reasons for the gap between the current position and the available potential, which creates quantitative data. Key points that are repeated by a majority of the interviewees are discussed in this publication. The statistical analysis and the diagrams are prepared using Microsoft Excel and Microsoft PowerPoint from the quantitative data.

HEA's (2014) self-evaluation questions are modified and adapted according to the College's needs and priorities. For example, engagement of employers is added and some questions are added to the interview questions according to our quality assurance system. These questions covered all four areas of the framework: learning, teaching and assessment; subject-based research and inquiry scholarship of teaching and learning and curriculum design and pedagogic consultancy. The semi-structured interviews are developed and improved according to preliminary interviews and interviewees feedbacks. All interviewees (nine in total) were selected from management and course leader positions. Although staff are normally very busy

marking in April and May, none of them refused an interview – it shows their interest in the topic.

Result and discussion

Statistical analysis

Figure 3 shows the average score for the current position and the potential of each area of the partnership. It can be seen that the College's potential is higher than its current position.

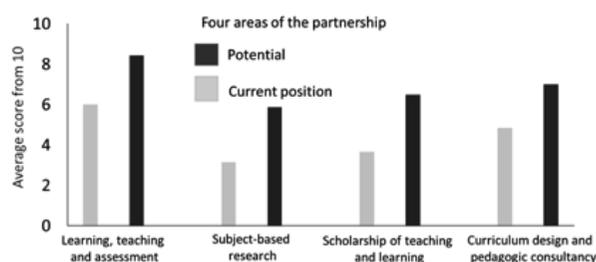


Figure 3: The average score for current position and the potential for each area of the partnership. Scores are from 0 to 10.

Figure 4 shows the percentage of the potential that we have achieved. It can be seen that our current position is almost as good compared to our available potential and we have already achieved more than 50% of our potential for all four areas. For learning, teaching and assessment, as well as curriculum design, we have achieved more than 70% of the potential.

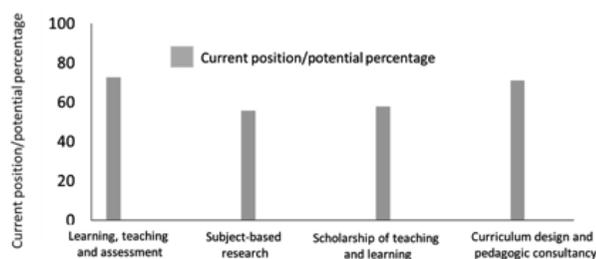


Figure 4: The current position/potential percentages

Figure 5 shows the average gap between the potential and our current position. For all areas it can be seen that the gap is significant. The scholarship of teaching and learning gap is greater than other gap.

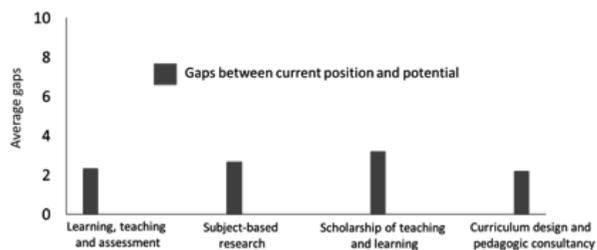


Figure 5: The average gap between the current position and the potential for each area of the partnership

Figure 6 shows the standard deviation of gaps among interviewees. The standard deviation represents how different interviewees think about gaps. The higher standard deviation shows a more different opinion. It can be seen that overall the standard deviation is not significant and interviewees have almost the same opinion about gaps.

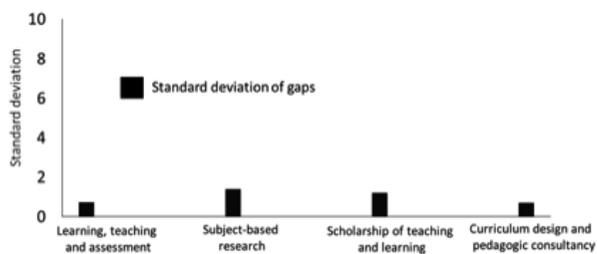


Figure 6: Standard deviation of each gap among interviewees

Our current position and potential

Our current position is good, although the potential is greater than our current position for all four areas of partnership as discussed above.

Figure 2 shows four levels for engagement: consultation, involvement, participation and partnership (Healey, Flint, and Harrington, 2014). We can compare our current situation with this model. This model only applied to students, however, we extended it to both employer and student engagement.

Partnership with students

Consultation is fully and actively applied in the College, as there are many opportunities for students to give feedback, opinions and concerns. This is fully facilitated by College

culture and policies. There are potential opportunities for students to take a more active role of “involvement” (Figure 2). However, students are not using their potential power or opportunities, mainly because of the lack of interest and time, especially for HE part-time students. This creates a gap between the current position and the potential.

Partnership with employers

For employers, the level of the partnership and engagement is mainly dependent on the number of their apprentices. For all employers (both small and large), consultation level is fully and actively applied at the College, and there are many opportunities for employers to give feedback and express their ideas and concerns. Employers provide us with work experience for students, product lines and test equipment for teaching. The College has also provided equipment for employers on some occasions. A trainer assessor can act as a channel of communication for partnership between the college and employers. Generally, big employers with a large number of apprentices have influence in decision making, teaching and learning process within the constraints that are imposed by awarding bodies. Therefore “involvement”, “participation” and “partnership”, as described in Figure 2, are observed for large employers with many students in the College. Smaller employers also have levels of influence when a group of them can provide enough students for a programme. Some employers see the College as a service provider rather than a partner. The lack of interest and time is responsible for the gaps between the current position and the potential position. One of the interviewees suggested that our website and online resources need improvement, so employers can find the information they need easier and faster. This may potentially be responsible for part of the gap.

Sharing good practice for partnership

There are many activities which aim to create partnership among staff, students and employers. Some of the interviewees mentioned that these partnership activities are not clear in the College and therefore they are not recognised and rewarded. In addition, because the partnership activities are not clear, the effective methods for partnership are not shared across the College. This creates a gap between our potential and current position.

Challenges

The limited time of staff, employers and students

Many interviewees mentioned that applying this framework needs time that is not available for staff, employers and

students at the moment. The limited time of staff, employers and students is one of the most important challenges for this framework. In order to overcome this challenge, a partnership that saves the student, employer and staff time can be developed. For example, the National College of Nuclear is developing oral exams or viva using a panel that includes employers. Considering awarding body requirements, a percentage of the questions are provided by an employer. This partnership can benefit students, employers and staff. Employers can directly see performance of their apprentices and recognise and award them. Students are more prepared for their job and they get the assessment results quickly. Staff can save considerable time because they do not need to mark written assignments and writing reports for employers. In addition, the presence of the employers motivates students to learn the subjects better.

The limitations that are imposed by awarding bodies

The limitations that are imposed by awarding bodies can be a challenge for this framework. These limitations decrease the allowed flexibility for applying it. However, there is substantial level of flexibility available that can meet the requirements of the awarding body, especially in the delivery, learning and assessment.

Motivation

A culture that motivates partnership should be established among employers, staff and students. This can be done by advertising and publicising the benefits of the partnership for students, staff and employers. When they see the benefit, they become more motivated to apply it. More responsibilities may give rise to more work for employers, staff and students, therefore their contribution should be awarded and recognised. There are many activities that can in some way facilitate partnership with students and employers, however these activities are not clear for all at the College. These activities should be clear, recognised and awarded. In addition, the good ideas should be shared with others.

Key Performance Indicators (KPI) for this framework

As part of this project, we are working on Key Performance Indicators (KPI) for the framework. If we can find effective KPIs, we can use them for monitoring our performance and developing improvement plans. This part of the research is continuing.

Impact of the research

As a result of the project interviews, awareness about this framework across the College is increased and the National College for Nuclear is interested in applying this framework next year.

Conclusion

- The application of the HEA's framework for student engagement through partnership is extended to suit the colleges' priorities and needs. Particularly, employer engagement through partnership is added to the framework. In addition, the benefits of this framework are discussed.
- Statistical analysis on the results of interviews showed that the College's potential is significantly higher than its current position for this framework. Our current position is good compared to our available potential and we have already achieved more than 50% of our potential for all four areas of this framework. For learning, teaching and assessment, as well as curriculum design, we have achieved more than 70% of the potential.
- The results suggest that our current partnership with employers is better compared to our current partnership with students.
- The gaps between current positions and potentials are created by the lack of interest and time, especially for HE part-time students and some employers that consider the College as a service provider rather than a partner. In addition, the effective methods for partnership and "what works and what does not work" for the partnership are not shared across the College.
- The challenges for applying this framework are the limited time of staff, employers and students, as well as the limitations that are imposed by awarding bodies and finding a way to motivate staff, employers and students. These challenges are discussed and solutions are suggested.

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‘The Future is in Our Hands’ – an exploration of ‘team learning’

Introduction

‘The Future is in Our Hands’ is a project funded through the ERASMUS scheme and will take place between September 2017 and August 2019. The project will be in partnership with three other countries - the Netherlands, Finland and Spain – and its main purpose is to put peer-supported and academic or career-orientated learning into practice with students from across Europe. The core pedagogy is Finnish in origin and can be translated as ‘Team Learning’. This is part of a global academy of Team Learning, with institutions based as locally as Bristol. Team Learning encourages autonomy in the students with the progress of the activities driven by the students themselves. This pedagogy can be placed under the umbrella of problem-based learning, with teachers undertaking a coaching role and assisting in creating the structure to explore a concept (Ellis *et al.*, 2003).



Teachers attending the initial training in Finland

The aim of our involvement with the project is primarily to increase our knowledge and experience of a new pedagogical approach, which we hope will add value to our students and give them an advantage over others when entering their chosen industries. We are now preparing them for roles that might not exist, but which may be needed to tackle problems that are not occurring yet. Problem-solving skills are arguably very important for this generation and for future generations of students. Students will also be able to take what they have learned from the Future Labs, apply these skills to their education and ultimately achieve higher grades. It is hypothesised that the Team Learning ethos will create a greater autonomy in the learner and therefore give them greater problem solving skills and ultimately be more successful in their prospective future career paths (Roberts *et al.*, 2007). In contrast to this, other studies have suggested that minimal guidance delivery does not provide additional skills and learning for students and can actually hinder their progression and development of knowledge (Clark, Kirschner, and Sweller, 2012). The results of this project will help us to make an informed decision on how not only Bridgwater & Taunton College (BTC) students, but also those across Europe, react to minimal guidance delivery.

Methodology

The project will be split into four 'FutureLab' weeks, taking place over a total period of two academic years, and each week will involve each country selecting five students to participate in the week's events. Every participating country will host one 'FutureLab', and each will have a theme for the student study to focus on – Logistics (Finland), Demotics (Netherlands), Recruitment (England), and Global Communication (Spain). Prior to the start of each week, the students will research how the topic may be affected in their country in the future and report back on this through the submission of a video outlining their research. This will allow the students to acquire background knowledge to take into the week's activities.

The intended format of a 'FutureLab' week is as follows (although this is likely to change based on lessons learned from each project week):

- An individual from a chosen industry is to present the students with 'a problem'
- In groups, the students are to solve this problem and, by the end of the week, present this back to the employer
- The students may take vocational visits throughout the week to help provide an insight into the industry
- The students have complete freedom to present their project back to the employer by any means they choose
- The teachers are there as guides to discuss progress with students at certain points, and will use questioning

to help students determine the next steps required to complete the project.

Student Selection and Team Organisation

Students were selected through an individual application, created by a member of staff using a mix of traditional and 'Belbin' style questions. These are questions that identify where a person's strengths are when performing in a team, highlighting behaviours rather than personality traits and helping them understand their role within a team (Belbin, 2000). Such questioning techniques were intended to help identify those students who appeared likely to achieve the most from the week. Out of the applications, seven students were interviewed, and five of these selected to attend the first 'FutureLab' in Helsinki, Finland. A panel of three members of staff were recruited to interview the students and justify their selection. Questions put to the students focused on the pedagogy to be trialled through the week and how the student might cope with the autonomy expected of them, as well as their own work ethic and what they were expecting from the project.

Once in Finland, all the students from the participating countries were split into five teams of four students, each team comprising one student from each country. This group size seemed ideal, based on the Ringlemann effect and on evidence from studies carried out by Ingham *et al.* (1974), where individual performance levels plateau in groups of between three and six participants. The students were placed into teams based on their responses to a 'bingo-style' questionnaire, where the students identified the experiences they had undertaken of those that were outlined in the categories provided. An example of this would be 'Have you ever been bungee jumping?' or 'Would you like to own your own company in the future?' Each team was thus comprised of students with similar upbringings and shared interests. The work of Ellis *et al.* (2003) would suggest that learning is in fact negatively affected when teams are comprised of individuals who are in high 'Agreeableness', but as it is the 'softer' skills (for example, problem solving, communication, and leadership skills) that are being measured, this may not have an impact on the overall project success.

Results

The results thus far mainly consist of anecdotal evidence taken from the staff and students who attended the first week. The students also completed a survey comprised of questions modelled on the myBTC advantage. This survey was completed at the start and at the end of the project to see if there has been any change in the 'soft' skills of the students based on self-evaluation. The results of the

surveys are yet to be released and information on this will be updated throughout the project, along with survey results from future project weeks.

Overall, the students from BTC found that the project provided them with a multitude of new experiences. These came not only from the pedagogy that was being studied, but also from the manner in which the project was undertaken using the ERASMUS project. Students were interviewed upon their return from the project week, where they stated that the project allowed them to experience different cultures and gain a further understanding of the developing world around them. All students said that the project helped them to improve their confidence. This resulted from being placed into groups of students that were not their immediate peers or nationality, which gave them the motivation to communicate with other students they did not know. One student brought this motivation back to the classroom, stating that she has finally had the courage to speak to members of her cohort that she has not spoken to for the entirety of the programme thus far. This type of result is exactly what is wanted from the project, and it is hoped that the students can use these experiences and skills within industries to make them more successful in their careers.

The following project weeks will provide further insight into the pedagogy and a clearer idea of whether it should be implemented into areas of the College. It is ultimately hoped that, by using this method, students will not only have heightened social and emotional skills, but also more autonomy allowing them to be better learners and overall have greater academic success.

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The power of storytelling - a collaborative action research project with first year Foundation Degree Early Childhood Studies students. Can storytelling impact student and staff practice?

Introduction

'If we are to make authentic connections to ideas and ideals, we must bring in people's dreams, fantasies, and personal narratives' (Paley, 2009, p. 131).

It has long been recognised that young children start to order and make sense of their world through fantasy play and storytelling. Wells (1987) suggests that it is a very basic human necessity to construct and share stories together. Vygotsky (1896-1934), an early childhood theorist and pioneer, presented the example of two children who were sisters holding hands and pretending they were sisters walking down the road. He suggested that by engaging in this sort of imaginative storytelling children start to make connections about the world by setting out scene by scene their thoughts as they occur (Paley, 2007, p. 637). Paley (2004, cited in McNamee, 2005) suggests that practitioners should put away theories and learn to become storytellers and anecdotists themselves in order to support fantasy play in their settings.

Indeed, Paley (2009) sees storytelling as the 'academic precursor' of all learning and suggests that storytelling should not be limited to use in a pre-school because it frees the individual to visualise new options and possibilities that rise above convention. Paley (2009) warns that the current focus on academic expectations could squeeze the time available for fantasy play and storytelling and that will leave children and society less enriched as a result.

Jerome Berryman (1937-) first developed the idea of Godly Play in the early 1990s to allow young children to explore the bounds of their own faith through creative storytelling. He was strongly influenced by the work of Montessori

(1870-1952), particularly in the use of sensory materials to help develop language around faith and making meaning in their lives, mostly in relation to the Christian faith (Hyde, 2011). Berryman believes that play is fundamental to being human and drew on the work of Huizinga (1955, cited in Hyde, 2011, p. 345). Berryman contests, in the same way as Paley, that play allows children to confront reality, but has a deep belief that the creative process is intimately linked to the spiritual (Berryman, 1997). More recently Gregory *et al.* (2012), in research with multifaith children in inner city London, suggest that by combining and recreating faith narratives together children are able to extend the limits of their language and their world.

The Godly Play approach has been used in churches and parishes since it was first developed (Berryman, 1991), but now is also used in some primary and pre-school religious education (RE). Grajczonek and Truasheim (2017) have critiqued the use of Godly Play within the mainstream Australian education system since, in their view, it is not consistent with the way in which young children learn. They contest that when used in parishes Godly Play is concerned with faith formation but RE lessons should focus on knowledge gathering. Grajczonek and Truasheim (2017) believe that children are active constructors of their own learning (Malaguzzi 1993; United Nations, 1989). Furthermore, the Effective Provision of Pre-school Education (EPPE) and Effective Pre-school, Primary and Secondary Education (EPPSE) projects conducted in the U.K. (Siraj-Blatchford and Sylva, 2004) concluded that purposeful dialogical interaction was fundamental for successful learning. They also suggest that children need to be actively internally involved in order to learn and suggest that the Godly Play technique does not allow for this.

In contrast, Keeble and Burton (2013) describe a small study where they assessed the impact of reflective storytelling (using the Godly Play techniques espoused by Berryman) on engagement in year five children. They found that compared with a traditional story book model of imparting bible stories, reflective storytelling resulted in learning that was engaging, meaningful and memorable for the children.

Berryman (1997) argues that we are all searching for meaning in our lives and religion's fundamental function has been to enable people to cope creatively with the troubles they encounter in life (such as death, isolation, freedom and the need to seek meaning) and to celebrate instances of survival. Moreover, Moon and Fowler (2008) suggest that in the field of higher education there are multiple ways to use story in our own practice to develop reflectivity in students. Although widely acknowledged as an important basis for reflective journal writing (Bolton and Delderfield, 2018), Moon (2006 cited in Moon and Fowler, 2008) stresses that since stories are learned and stored in the memory differently from other knowledge, using story could be a

more effective teaching and learning tool than the imparting of isolated facts.

The reflective storytelling technique explored in this study has been developed by a local primary higher level teaching assistant (HLTA). She has renamed the technique 'Time to Wonder' and has written new multifaith stories in order to teach RE to primary school children of all ages. The technique involves the use of a few simple hand held props and figures. A quiet space is created in the room and children are invited to come in and sit in a circle around the storyteller. Whilst telling the story the narrator moves the props as required but does not make eye contact with the children. The aim is to create a very calm and gentle atmosphere. The story is not read but told without notes. It lasts about ten minutes. The storyteller then poses several questions such as 'I wonder how the story made you feel? I wonder which of the characters you liked the best?' A discussion is then encouraged. After this the children are asked to respond creatively to the story by using a range of art materials in the room. They can then share their creations with the group and have photographs taken of them.

Methodology

The purpose of the study developed over the course of the exploration. Initially, I set out to ascertain the impact of the previously described storytelling activity on first year BA Early Childhood Studies students. The intention was to empower students in their creative practice when on placement in Early Years settings. However, in the true spirit of action research (McNiff and Whitehead, 2005) as a higher education (HE) lecturer, I became increasingly interested in using students' views on storytelling to shape not only the future curriculum content but also my own pedagogical approach. Essentially I wanted to challenge myself about the idea of using story in teaching at this level (Moon, 2010). Given that telling or reading stories is an important part of Early Years practice, I wanted to explore with students ways in which they could be helped to feel more confident in this area. Since I was interested in student views about using story and the impact of story on HE practice, the action research approach was thought to be most appropriate (McNiff, 2010). I regarded the students as active collaborators in the study. McNiff and Whitehead (2005) highlight the importance of focusing on and evaluating our own learning as teachers and not just investigating social practice as by doing so we are engaging in informed morally committed action rather than just activity.

The research took place over the course of an academic year. To begin with, I conducted a focus group with the first year student group (twelve participants) in order to explore how they felt about using storytelling with children

and what their past experiences of reading or using stories had been. The students then went on their first four week placement in Early Years settings. A few weeks after their return the reflective storytelling activity was carried out with the students (see introduction). The students then went on their second four week placement. On their return, they completed questionnaires about their general confidence levels and to what extent they had used stories with children whilst at placement. The students were then invited to take part in individual interviews to explore experiences further. Additionally, I kept reflective journals during the study in order to reflect on personal aspects of story use.

Initially, students were emailed a letter to explain the study and the voluntary nature of the research was made clear. They were made aware that their identity would be kept anonymous by changing all names to pseudonyms. All data collected was kept securely on a password protected computer and it was emphasised that they could withdraw from the research at any stage if they wished. All students in the group chose to take part.

At the present time most of the data has been collected and analysis has started, although one interview is yet to take place. I will be updating this report at the Research and Scholarship Symposium in June 2018.

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