

PedRIO Masters Conference
*“Masters Level Teaching, Learning and Assessment
Conference – Issues for the 21st Century”*

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Pauline Kneale PhD, NTF, (2002) PFHEA, FRGS
Pro Vice-Chancellor Teaching and Learning,
Professor of Pedagogy and Enterprise,
Plymouth University

Pauline Kneale studied at University College London and University of Bristol, and has held academic posts at Bristol University, Trinity College Dublin, Kingston Polytechnic and the University of Leeds, before moving to Plymouth in 2009. Her hydrology and teaching and learning expertise was recognised through her Chair appointment and a National Teaching Fellowship award in 2002. In 2010 she took up the PVC post, and shortly afterwards the Directorship of the Pedagogic Research Institute and Observatory at Plymouth University.

Recent research has focused on developing innovative teaching and pedagogical research particularly at taught masters level. In 2010 she led two open educational resources projects funded by HE Academy / JISC: 'The Open Fieldwork (OF) Project'; and 'Open Educational Resources for Accredited Courses for Teachers in Higher Education Educational Development'. A 2009 the British Council Education Partnerships in Africa project, 'Engendering Entrepreneurship in Ethiopia' project followed on from the award for White Rose Centre for Excellence in Enterprise Teaching, developing innovation in teaching across three universities. Current work includes an edited volume on teaching at masters level and a HEA funded project 'Evaluating teaching development in HE: towards impact assessment'.

KEYNOTE PRESENTATION

The Challenge for Enhancement in Master's Learning

Professor Pauline Kneale, Plymouth University

Graduates at this level will apply knowledge and skills to demonstrate autonomy, expert judgement, adaptability and responsibility as a practitioner or learner.

Australian Qualifications Authority 2014

At master's level, their knowledge should not be bounded by yours,

The Quality Assurance Agency Scotland, 2013, p. 5.

Taught Master's provision is under-researched and rapidly evolving. We have a very diverse student body in terms of age, motivations and ambitions. There are serious questions to grapple with.

Are we offering degrees with the right tone, and internal and external engagement to: those who want a change of direction while in work, those wanting a step up after a first degree, and those with disposable income who are newly retired - art, creative writing, U3A?

The aspirational and the instrumental student bring very different expectations and tactics to their experience. They are adult learners, are treated that way? How do we deliver on the benchmarks of autonomy, independence, responsibility and judgement?

How do we deliver effectively to international students who have travelled to learn in an international context, but then spend their time with students from their own country? What are we offering in the class room and the 'cultural' student experience that makes it worthwhile? Should there be a cultural offering for all international students throughout the academic year?

Induction is crucial. How does this need to evolve? Evolve for what?

Is there enough research? Do PGT students co-create with academics and practitioners to genuinely benefit their disciplines as well as their own understandings?

Just because a student appears to be listening and nodding, it doesn't mean they are learning and happy. A happy, engaged PGT student is one that is running round, being creative, grabbing the pen to write on the flip chart, making ideas buzz around the room, changing their thinking in front of you. What can we take from inclusive and independent learning pedagogies that will ensure this characterises our teaching?

ABSTRACTS (alphabetical by first author surname)

Dr Nick Allsopp, Professor Zoe Radnor, Ben Cole
Loughborough University

Paper (Programme Ref: Session F - F1)

Having it all: customisation and standardisation in curriculum design

This paper will consider a specific curriculum development at Loughborough University through a focus on what is often depicted as a tension between customisation and standardisation. Loughborough University has recently (September 2015) opened the doors of a completely new campus based on the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park in London. The campus will deliver taught postgraduate provision and is structured around a series of Research Institutes with direct links back to the Schools on the Loughborough campus. The curriculum design created for these taught Masters programmes is innovative for Loughborough and, it is argued, more widely across the sector. One of the key aims of the curriculum model is to eliminate the apparent tension between customisation and standardisation and to enable students to have both – customisation from a standard offering.

The curriculum is based around a series of common elements that are required for all programmes. These emphasise the interdisciplinary nature of research and knowledge creation and in so doing they also have a very clear entrepreneurial and vocational theme running through them all. 'Enterprise through the curriculum' is a defining characteristic of the programmes delivered on Loughborough University's London campus and the paper will consider the ways in which this particular aspect adds to the student experience and how it influences the credit-bearing curriculum.

The paper will focus on a description and analysis of the curriculum model offered by Loughborough University London and will seek to place this development within the context of the increasing personalisation of education in general and higher education students as consumers in particular. The paper will consider the power dynamics at play within curriculum design and will focus on the tension between the need for institutions to build upon research expertise on the one hand and for them to be seen to meet increasingly specific student demands on the other. This tension, the paper will argue, may be considered to be especially acute in taught Masters provision, especially when there is a clear strategic driver to recruit lucrative international students. The paper will therefore discuss what the University considers to be the indicators of success for itself and for the student and will link these firmly back to the decisions taken regarding curriculum design.

Workshop (Programme Ref: Session D)

Effectively supporting part time Masters students balancing work, study and research

Balancing many roles is a critical key to success for students working at masters level. This workshop is led by staff who already teach, support and research with PGT students in health and education master's degrees, many of whom are studying part-time on top of a full time job. Key themes for the session are M level pedagogical approaches, motivation, the role of tutor working with multi professional students, and supporting student research.

We will start by discussing the common issues students bring from these backgrounds both positive and otherwise - and from there lead into thinking together about supportive frameworks that can help, especially where students research in their places of work. We trust therefore that the workshop will both share ideas and seek/ discuss possible new ways of working that will offer something useful for all attendees.

Participation of full and part-time PGT students is encouraged so we can reflect the issues they raise

World Café (Programme Ref: Setting the Research Agenda World Café)

Authentic Masters level assessment

Authentic assessment happens when we directly examine student performance on worthy intellectual tasks, when students are required to be effective performers with acquired knowledge, and when we can make valid inferences about the student's performance from the assignments presented for assessment (Wiggins, 1990). We often assess what is easy to assess, or proxies of what has been learned, rather than the learning itself. At Masters level, this tendency is exacerbated by sometimes risk-averse curriculum design, since M-level programmes are shorter and more concentrated than undergraduate ones and often function as income generators for universities. Effective assessment is highly relevant to ensuring that Masters-level graduates can demonstrate the knowledge, behaviours, qualities and attributes that are described in course outlines or programme specifications. (Brown, 2015)

Wiggins further argues that authentic assignments present the student with the full array of tasks that mirror the priorities and challenges found in the best [teaching] activities, attend to whether the student can craft polished, thorough and justifiable answers, performances or products and involve students coping with potentially ill-structured challenges and roles, with incomplete information, that help them rehearse for the complex ambiguities of adult and professional life.

Students undertaking such authentic assessments tend to be more fully engaged in learning and hence tend to achieve more highly because they see the sense of what they are doing (HEA, 2012, QAA, 2010). By contrast, inauthentic assessment is when proxies for assessment of competence performance are undertaken rather than performative elements themselves and the tasks being undertaken by students have little intrinsic value in themselves in terms of advancing students learning.

My £200,000 Assimilate National Teaching Fellowship project explored innovative assessment at Masters level and produced a compendium of assessment methods (Brown, 2012). This interactive and participative workshop will explore how authentic assessment can support learning in a Masters level context by:

- Offering highly authentic assignments, constructively aligned to programme outcomes;
- Having multiple assessments which build incrementally to final submission, rather than a single final dissertation;
- Offering plenty of feedback opportunities, giving students the chance to benefit from advice to improve performance;
- Using assignments that require teamwork and group activity as well as individual effort;
- Providing opportunities for peer-engagement and peer-feedback;
- Providing assignments that foster employability, since many students undertaking masters programmes are aiming to enhance their career opportunities;
- Engaging employers in designing, undertaking or assessing assignments, providing incentives to students and also on occasions making direct links to potential future Employers;
- Enhancing and supporting assessment through the uses of relevant technologies.

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Paper (Programme Ref: Session A - A1)

Tensions and opportunities in the relationship between assessment design at Masters level and the school improvement agenda

The Strategy for Professional Development, launched by the Department for Education in 2001, emphasised performance and school improvement in relation to continuing professional development. This was further developed by the then Secretary of State for Education, Ruth Kelly, in designing the 'New Professionalism', which she launched via the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) in 2005. Kelly's concept of 'New Professionalism' harnessed teachers' professional development to school improvement and this concept saw expression in the 2007 OfSTED report 'The Logical Chain: continuing professional development in effective schools' (2006) which stated that "the best results occurred where CPD was central to the schools' improvement planning. Schools which integrated performance management, school self-review and development and CPD into a coherent cycle of planning improved the quality of teaching and raised standards" (DES, 2006, p.4). By 2008 the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) launched the Masters in Teaching and Learning (MTL) intending to 'raise standards, narrow the achievement gap and give children better life chances' (DCSF, 2008, p. 12). The MTL was situated within a context of school performance management, where "Performance management arrangements would provide the context for identifying professional development priorities, including the selection of elective (MTL) modules" (DCSF, 2008, p.13). Some seven years on, professional development in schools is now aligned almost exclusively to issues of school improvement and performance management. The value of this professional development is evaluated in terms of the impact upon learning outcomes for children and young people. Whilst postgraduate professional development (PPD) funding for teachers to undertake Masters study has ceased, and the MTL is no longer funded by government, teachers are nevertheless still undertaking Masters level study in HEIs across the UK, many funded (or part-funded) by their schools. Programmes are sometimes designed to meet school needs through the selection of specific modules and run in school, and in this way Masters level study has been reshaped to address aspects of professional practice. This, however, raises questions in relation to the nature of 'masterly' study.

This research therefore considers the challenge of creating purposeful assessment opportunities within the Masters in Education (M.Ed) programme in one HEI in the South West of England. The professional context of the students on this programme reflects the current culture of performance management, school improvement and externally determined standards. At the same time, Masters level study must engage participants at a deeper theoretical and methodological level: "traditionally, masters' level professional development has been undertaken within an emancipatory philosophy" (Bryan and Blundell, 2013, p.10) where participants are supported in engaging critically with theory, policy and practice.

The research engages with 120 participants on the M. Ed programme through survey, focus group interviews and individual semi-structured interviews in order to reveal their views on the relationship between assessment opportunities on the programme, the professional context of school and the value of masters level studies.

Paper (Programme Ref: Session E - E2)

Using an online environment to predict student enrolment and aid transition to postgraduate education

In an increasing competitive market of higher education, ensuring a high quality student experience and satisfactory transition into the University environment is essential for any education provider. Whilst the application process for undergraduate courses is centrally controlled, applications for postgraduate courses are much less regulated with students able to apply for, receive and accept offers from several Universities. This leaves many admissions teams uncertain of which students are genuinely intending to start the course which has implications for resource allocation and ensuring a balance within the student cohort, for example considering proportions of home/EU versus overseas students. The traditional 1-year MSc course also requires a rapid transition into a successful postgraduate learning environment which may be more difficult for particular groups of students such as those returning to education or entering from a very different Undergraduate educational system.

In order to address these issues, preparatory online material was provided for the MSc Molecular Genetics & Diagnostics prior to the start of the course. Applicants were invited to self-enrol for access to the system, which was also used to host a discussion forum where the students were encouraged to introduce themselves to the rest of the cohort over the summer period. We then compared those students who registered for this system to those that commenced the course that year, with the hope that this could be used as a predictive measure for course enrolment. Students who started the course were also asked to evaluate the usefulness of the system.

The use of a virtual learning environment (VLE) for providing preparatory material over the summer prior to the start of the MSc course provides a highly useful method for predicting those students likely to commence the course. Over the past two years 91% of students who registered for the preparatory material started the course compared to a figure of 48% of students with an offer of a place. Student feedback indicates that they valued the opportunity to interact with potential colleagues prior to starting the course as well as being reassured by being able to access preparatory academic material.

As well as providing useful information for the admissions team, we hope that the social relationships formed prior to the start of the course will aid student transition into the postgraduate environment and encourage the formation of learning groups that benefit all students throughout the 1-year period. We also feel that using the same VLE for this material as used for the rest of course delivery would be beneficial in terms of ensuring that students are already familiar with the VLE by the time they start the course, meaning they can concentrate on the academic material rather than also having to learn another new system. This needs to be addressed at the Institutional level, as access to the University VLE is currently restricted to registered students only.

Paper (Programme Ref: Session C - C1)

Peer Support on a Transnational Taught Masters Programme

This paper will report on the progress of a peer-to-peer buddying system set up between two cohorts studying on a part-time MSc Public Health Promotion programme delivered in Ghana who started on the programme two years apart. The aims of the project are 1) to build and strengthen community and collegiate identity between two cohorts through a system of peer support and 2) to enhance students' existing professional networks in public health and health promotion with a view to long-term reciprocal relationships and the establishment of an in-country alumni network. The project has student engagement at its core where students are partners in the process. The rationale is to enhance support mechanisms for new students on the programme as well as to establish a community and social network of learners with a shared identity within Ghana (Wang et al, 2003). Peer support systems can help to counter the isolation some post-graduate students experience (Becker, 2004). This is even more salient for a student group who physically meet together only twice a year and are spread across a large country. The project is designed to help students to adapt more effectively to new ways of learning and their new identity as postgraduate students as well as to engender a 'sense of belonging' in a community of learners (Zadapepke & Lecah, 2005). It is anticipated that the peer support system will alleviate any potential attrition in the mentee group (Race, 2007) and will promote students learning and engagement for both cohorts. In addition, sharing experiences and learning has the potential to promote esteem, mastery and efficacy for the mentors. The project is co-facilitated by two members of the course team and two student representatives. This paper will focus on progress to date including the inception of the project, setting up the project and a critical review of how things are going from the perspectives of the mentors and the mentees.

Paper (Programme Ref: Session C - C3)

The good, bad and the ugly – Postgraduate students’ perspectives on participatory induction

The School of Health & Well-being, Leeds Beckett University recently undertook its first ever shared, participatory form of postgraduate induction. The aims were to create an environment which fosters inter-professional postgraduate learning and to support a participatory approach to transitioning to masters’ level and study at Leeds Beckett University. Rather than communicate academic expectations in the traditional way, the team involved 3 distinct cohorts of home and international students (n = 80) from environmental health; dietetics & nutrition and public health - health promotion who were integrated through experiential learning, student bonding and a lot of team work! Before asking students to engage with a series of workshops on masterly skills, an icebreaker activity (involving building a device to safely deliver a raw egg when dropped from a height) was used to foster partnership working, fun and a critical understanding of how to work in teams. Five workshops based on academic integrity (e.g. plagiarism and appropriate citation), referencing, critical thinking and reflection as well as professional skills were delivered using a carousel design with 5 groups of students rotating through each of the workshop activities. The induction experience culminated with a buffet meal in a multicultural restaurant and an informal tour of the city. Using a 2 phase sequential explanatory research design, initial data was collected by a vox pop method involving informal recordings of postgraduate students’ opinions and perceptions of their participatory induction and how supported they felt about their transitioning to masterly study. Informed by these initial insights, the team plan to undertake a second phase of research involving a smaller purposeful sample group so that a more in depth qualitative approach may be pursued to locate more precisely the features that characterise an effective induction process. Our research methodology is suitably informed by social constructionist concepts of teaching and learning which complement the principle aims of the participatory induction which privilege the active, reflective and relational aspects to learning. The findings from this study will ultimately help to illuminate postgraduate students’ transitioning and enable a more reflexive approach to future masters’ level induction; making the student voice central to their learning experience.

Poster (Programme Ref: Poster A)

The Fear of Never Being Good Enough: students' images of assessment

Although asking students to create or respond to images has been quite widely used in pedagogic research in schools, there is only limited application of the approach in higher education.

The Wolverhampton Portraying Assessment project is a contribution to using images in higher education. Deriving from McKillop and Brown and Wang's work on students' creation of images of assessment and Yorke et al's on art and design students' NSS responses in particular, Portraying Assessment aims to:

- Provide insights into students' reactions to their current and past experiences of assessment
- Help students to clarify their understanding of achievement in assessment, of the transparency and objectivity of marking, and the relevance of the NSS questions on assessment and feedback.
- Allow module tutors to modify their assessment regimes on the basis of more reliable and finely grained empirical evidence than is available from Module Evaluation Questionnaires.

Unlike the McKillop and Brown-Wang studies, which asked students to draw their perceptions of assessment, the project involves using the very skills and techniques the students are employing in their Photography course to generate the images to analyse their subjective experiences of assessment. Early research is providing some similarities to other research in this area in describing the overriding fear and anxiety felt by students toward being assessed, whilst at the same time showing concrete differences in that assessment is seen as a necessary but empowering process.

This paper reports on the findings of the project to date and the methodology used to analyse the data, discusses how the principles of the approach could be transferred to other subjects in and beyond art and design and explores how students might be disabused of their fear

The research has used auto drive and photo elicitation techniques, which in themselves are dynamic tools to discuss for qualitative and emotionally focussed research in pedagogy.

Paper (Programme Ref: Session E - E3)

Learning to write for academic purposes: how new Masters students learn the rules of the game

This paper will discuss the writing challenges faced by five international students and one British student as they embarked on one-year Master's programmes in Applied Linguistics at a British University, where all assessment was by writing (much in the 'essayist' tradition). All students had to learn to write for academic purposes in this new context, after time away from study in work. At the initial stage of the programme all students took the same content courses, so it was possible to compare their experiences on identical tasks being taken for credit – something few other studies have been able to do.

The paper draws on an ethnographic study exploring how these students identified and sought to meet writing requirements in this context. Focusing on first term writing experiences, the research contextualised these in the framework of the whole academic year and reflection a year after graduation. Interviews explored how these writers responded to pre-submission advice from tutors and their reactions to and use of summative feedback provided. The study also examined assignment briefings/documentation, students' meetings with tutors, feedback on outlines and on assignments, and the actual assignments themselves. Although the students were, of course, unique individual cases, themes emerged from this study of their development as academic writers in this context. These include the influence of background (such as academic, professional, discipline, linguistic), personal characteristics (eg expectations and approach to learning), and the role of literacy brokers. The implications for practice in preparing Masters students for writing will be discussed.

This paper is based upon the study I wrote up as a case study for 'Masters level teaching, learning and assessment: Issues in Design and Delivery'; the book being launched at the Conference.

Paper (Programme Ref: Session A - A2)

Teacher and student experiences of collaborative writing at Masters Level

In this paper we make the case that collaborative practices facilitate learning, teaching and assessment at Masters level. This case is made through a critical engagement with the reflections from both the 'teacher' and one of the 'students' from a three person group of part-time students who were collaboratively participating in the writing of an assignment whilst undertaking the International Masters Programme within the Institute of Education at Plymouth University. The participants in the collaborative project were each professional practitioners working in different educational sectors, one from secondary, one from further and one from higher education and their critically differentiating practices and experiences were facilitated in and through the collaborative learning processes encouraged by their tutor throughout the course of a Education Management module. From the point of view of engaging in the assignment at Masters level the students were encouraged to work from Richardson and St. Pierre's (2005) methodological stance that 'writing is a method of inquiry'. Further, the work was viewed in terms of how effectively a collaboratively written assignment could engage in the making of an argument on educational management in a time of change. In this respect the written work of the participants was viewed both collectively and on an individual basis as they were seen to contribute both to the assignment and to Masters study as a whole.

Paper (Programme Ref: Session F - F3)

Redesigning curricula for professional development masters: is the future more important than the present?

This paper focusses on masters for professional development, such as MBA's and masters in management. Even before the crash of 2007-8, many were questioning the educational relevance of present-day professional practices, and their underpinning pedagogies (Mintzberg, 2001). There are strong arguments that the nature of professional knowledge is changing, even that the professions themselves are threatened by technological and social changes (Susskind and Susskind, 2015). In her recent work on uncertainty, Nowotny (2015) poses a most elegant question which is at the heart of our own paper:

“How good are we in educating young people for uncertainty, while continuing to train them for certainty?”

In our view, it is as important to educate professional masters students for a shifting and uncertain professional future, as to train them with what appear to be immediate professional certainties. Post 2007, and in line with employer advice, we began to increase the emphasis on pedagogies which drew out individual intuitive qualities rather than transmitting general rational principles (McGilchrist, 2009).

Somewhat to our surprise, it became clear that the 2007 crash had another impact – making some students much more concerned about risk taking in their own education. Modules which were perceived as challenging the traditional pedagogies based on certainty, began to be actively criticised by a significant minority of students. This was even where:

- (a) The modules had been running for a number of years without complaint
- (b) Employers, directly to the students themselves, emphasised the importance of these modules in the post-crash context.
- (c) The module was a “capstone” component at the end of a course, explicitly preparing for the transition to employment

Our observations suggested that the minority of students who resisted pedagogic innovation appeared to be a group whose natural inclination was to deal in certainties, and that typically one of these certainties was a belief that their own attitudes to innovative pedagogy were shared by the entire cohort.

When we created in parallel an innovative masters wholly based around developing intuitive qualities, and with only a minimum emphasis on rational principles, we found the opposite applied. Students recruited to intuition-dominated signature pedagogies reacted negatively to use of traditional pedagogies.

Although it is quite common to identify faculty as barriers to innovation, our experience involves students as barriers. Our current work is on experimenting with more diverse methods of learning intuitive skills. We are particularly focussing on the online roleplay simulation. This possibly looks and feels like a rational approach, but beneath that allows for and encourages the more intuitive dimensions.

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Paper (Programme Ref: Session C - C2)

Suitability of Peer-Assisted Learning (PAL) scheme for Master's students

Increasing numbers of master's students in the UK are international and/or mature who may require support both academically and within the social environment. For a small number of students undertaking certain master programmes perceived lack of academic and social support may be a contributory factor to non-completion or academic failure of the programme of study. The transition to master's education is currently been managed on an ad hoc basis and there is no organised processes within in the university to facilitate this transition Therefore a holistic procedure and process for managing transition of students undertaking a master's education programme is required utilising the valuable experience of past and current master students.

The aim of this research is to report the experience of master's students and also potential master's students who participated in several PAL sessions at Plymouth University. This is a pilot study with master's students at two faculties and also potential master's students who intend to join in the university after their pre-master programmes in PUIC. More specifically, four research objectives were sought as (1) to understand the reasons for participation of PAL sessions; (2) to evaluate the usefulness of PAL sessions to their study and social integration; (3) to assess suitability of PAL for master's students.

Mixed data collection methods were used:

- (1) five semi-structured interviews were undertaken with the students who involved in the PAL sessions. The students were from different subject areas;
- (2) Five focus group discussion were organised with the peer mentors regarding their experience. Framework analysis was adopted to analyse the interview scripts and records of the focus group discussion.

The research reveals that better adaptation to the master's study is the main reason for attending PAL sessions by the students instead of social integration. PAL sessions were perceived to be useful to better understand requirements of coursework and also preparation for exams. But PAL sessions were not perceived useful for social integration. In order to successfully carry on PAL session at master's level, three factors should be addressed: right time for the sessions, right student mentors to lead the sessions, and right mix of students to improve learning efficiency. These three factors cause concerns in suitability of PALs for Master's students.

Poster (Programme Ref: Poster B)

Supporting Post-Graduate International Students: Longitudinal Induction

This paper will report on a project on longitudinal induction for post-graduate international students. The project is designed to provide continuous support from acceptance of a place, to arrival, through the first week, first semester and beyond to completion. Based on the scaffolding concept (Wood et al 1976), the objectives are to involve existing students in the induction programme and to continue the induction process and pastoral support throughout the year by providing regular non-credit bearing seminars, social events, ensuring students receive support throughout the entire course. Post-graduate courses consist of one-year intensive learning. International students can feel anxious leaving their job, friends and family, doing a course in a new environment with different teaching and learning styles and a different system. Traditional induction has tended to be an information giving exercise with the danger that students are overloaded with information. Post-graduate courses also tend to be intensive and demanding. Our experience is that students who come to UK to do a Master's degree arrive the week before the course, go straight into an information heavy induction week and start intensive studying straight away. The project provides gradual and continuous support for students throughout the year will improving integration and retention, student engagement, socialisation, sense of belonging and identity, celebrating diversity, improving student satisfaction, providing a Community of Practice environment (Wenger 1998) and promoting learning in a supportive environment. The project uses a range of methods to encourage communication and a sense of community including Facebook, the virtual learning environment, bi-weekly seminars, social activities and field trips. This paper provide a background to the project and will draw on student evaluations to demonstrate how it has made a difference to their learning experiences.

Dr Marina Orsini-Jones, Shooq Altamimi, Noof Alhamed, Srevidya Midanamura, Zoe Gazeley-Eke
Coventry University

Workshop (Programme Ref: Session B)

The trouble with transition: international students' troublesome encounters at Masters level study

Based on some of the themes covered in the case study included in Masters Level Teaching, Learning and Assessment - Issues in Design and Delivery (Orsini-Jones et al 2015:97), this workshop will invite participants to reflect on the troublesome academic practice knowledge that international students encounter when coming to study in the UK.

Drawing from threshold concept literature (Meyer and Land 2005) it will be argued that with reference to the generic skill of 'critical thinking', the trouble with 'what is Masterly' for postgraduate international students studying in the UK presents some similarities to 'what it is to become a university student' for UK first year undergraduates. The journey towards Masters level is challenging both at an epistemological level (new language, new knowledge, review of known 'tacit knowledge') and an ontological one ('becoming a Masters student'/'believing in being a Masters student').

The workshop, that will be jointly run by staff and international students, will be based on the learning experience and reflections on such experience of students on the MA in English Language Teaching (ELT) at Coventry University. These are students who have been involved in a course review with staff as part of an innovative approach to course design that is being piloted at Coventry University in a collaboration that includes the Vice-Chancellor's Office (Student Experience), the Student Union and the Course Directors involved in Masters provision.

The workshop will first of all illustrate how staff and students worked together to identify both generic and subject-specific 'Masterly' conceptual barriers encountered by international students. It will then discuss what actions were taken (and will be taken) to support students in overcoming barriers to their understanding of fundamental concepts relating to 'becoming a Masters student'. Participants will be invited to share their thoughts on the troublesome knowledge encountered by the international students reading on Masters degrees in their own institutions.

Participants will then be invited to discuss and evaluate the activities and tasks (including e-tasks) that have been designed to cater for the issues identified at CU.

Students on the MA will also participate, three from Bahrain and one from India: Shooq Altamimi, Noof Alhamed and Srevidya Midanamura. Another colleague, Zoe Gazeley-Eke will attend too.

Reference:

Meyer, J.H.F. and Land, R. (2005) Threshold Concepts and Troublesome Knowledge (2): Epistemological considerations and a conceptual framework for teaching and learning. *Higher Education*, 49: 373-388.

Poster (Programme Ref: Poster C)

Using ecological models for curriculum design

I outline a new Masters Programme in Arts & Ecology, recently validated by the University and to be offered through partner Schumacher College with its first intake in September 2017.

Arts & Ecology is a metadisciplinary field of study and practice encouraging artists to practice with a deep and meaningful engagement with the world around them. This postgraduate programme is aimed at artists with an established practice who yearn for new connections and conversations, require time out for intensive study, reflection and refreshment, and who wish to interrogate and challenge their work in order to foster a creative practice fit for the ecological, social, and ethical challenges we all face.

Students are encouraged to develop or deepen an eyes-wide-open practice that pays attention to integration rather than alienation and which is open to or led by dialogue, inter-relationships, and an ethical imperative. This course supports the development of a fundamentally rhizomatic, creative ecological practice open to the wonder, enchantment, and richness of the world, attuned to and in sympathy with ecological systems and sensitive to the threats they might face.

Essential to the learning experience is the context of Schumacher College where emergent and rhizomatic ecological models lie at the heart of its teaching philosophy and approach. The residential experience intertwines learning and living in a process of immersive co-creation that blends classroom, kitchen, home, and garden.

Assessment and Curriculum

Such an approach to teaching and learning must fully embrace praxis: unifying creative practice and written theory. Lacking an appropriate structure, we had to seek an Exception to Regulations in order to do this. We have now validated an award of two parts: the first part contains all the formal taught modules, as well as a negotiated module of 30 credits that sits 'underneath' the taught modules, which are delivered intensively across the first six months of the programme. By the time students reach the end of part one, they have completed their taught modules, and have worked with their tutor to negotiate the shape of the second part of their study. This will comprise a single large, or a body of creative output, linked to a significant piece of writing that embraces the theoretical but may which become a creative output in its own right. Crucially, this is all taught within a single, 90-credit module.

Weighting between written exposition and creative exposition is entirely designed by the students, with the understanding that each must feature in the final negotiated design.

The 90-credit module allows the student to free-flow along his or her negotiated path with a single tutor, rather than working separately with creative output and dissertation writing. We know arts students frequently stumble with this thing called 'dissertation', but by designing this with an organic - an ecological - framework, the writing and the theoretical exploration and the practice become fully intertwined. This is Guattari's 'praxic opening out'.

World Café (Programme Ref: Setting the Research Agenda World Café)

Learning to be Masterly?

In this workshop, which will touch on all the conference themes, we'll be looking at the learners' side of Masters level studying. Some of the questions we'll pose – and share our experience trying to answer – include:

- What are the three most important differences between working towards a Masters qualification and undergraduate study?
- What are the top five skills which a successful graduate needs to acquire to be equipped for Masters level?
- Which attributes can really help, and which can get in the way?
- What principal kinds of evidence, at the end of the day, do Masters level assessments (in their various forms) actually measure? (And how can we help learners measure up?)
- What are the most important things we can do to help learners gain Mastery?

This will be a busy workshop, with participants working in groups (reshuffled at least twice) with lots of post-its in different colours to think onto. We will aim to share everyone's experience, and then prioritise answers to questions such as those above.

An aim of the workshop will be (with everyone's permission) for Phil to write up the outcomes of the workshop, and publish it (with everyone's names) on the Pedrio website and elsewhere as appropriate.

Paper (Programme Ref: Session F - F2)

A portfolio of skills for today's performer

The MA Performance at Chichester has been devised for today's musician, preparing them with a portfolio of skills and experience for their professional lives. Musicians today need more than technical performance skills and book knowledge. Gaining employment and staying in a discipline today requires a broad spectrum of skills, from instrument-specific proficiencies to organisational, metacognitive, and interpersonal skills (Pegg, Waldock, Hendy-Isaac, & Lawton 2012). The curriculum of the MA Performance gives students an opportunity to develop their skills and challenge themselves to explore aspects of the roles they may encounter during their professional lives. Throughout the degree students study different aspects of performance and musical listening, learning, and communication across the four taught modules and the recital module.

- In Portfolio Experience students adopt the role of the critic, exploring music from the listener's perspective, analyse professional performances, and communicate ideas through writing. Students engage in primary research and learn writing through a practical voice.
- The Lecture Recital module teaches performance in a different way, students manage musical performance, presentation skills, and develop skills as engaging verbal communicators.
- Repertoire Exercise challenges students to develop through music and offers performance as an option. Students either submit an essay or a musical compilation them performing, as a sonic essay, to demonstrate their argument as an essay in words would. Students defend their work in a viva voce exam.
- Written exercise (Performance Practice) hones research and analysis skills and develops scholarly writing. Students explore the specialist practice within their own discipline, relating this to relevant musical literature and drawing upon their own experience and that of other professional performers.
- The recital double-module focuses on individual performance. Students prepare for a public performance that represents the culmination of their studies. Students perform regularly to one another, across instrumental specialisms, learning to peer assess and self-reflect through their routinely recorded weekly performances.

The aim of the curriculum is to enable students to develop to the best of their capabilities as musicians, providing opportunity and balance that forwards their lives as professional musicians.

Pegg, A., Waldock, J., Hendy-Isaac, S., & Lawton, R. (2012). Pedagogy for employability. York: Higher Education Academy. Retrieved from: http://oro.open.ac.uk/30792/4/Pedagogy_for_employability_170212_1724.pdf.

Paper (Programme Ref: Session A - A3)

Preparing Final Year Masters Students for the workplace using an Interdisciplinary Design Project Industrial Case Study based approach

For several years Plymouth University, in partnership with the Royal Academy of Engineering, has delivered two very successful Interdisciplinary Design Modules to more than 2300 first and final year MEng, MSc, BEng, and BSc Civil, Mechanical, Marine, Robotics, and Electronic engineering students.

Although this paper focuses on the final year MEng module taken by Civil, Mechanical, and Marine students there are several similarities between the two modules.

The modules have largely been developed, managed, and taught by industrial practitioners.

The modules were designed to give students an opportunity to acquire the knowledge and personal, interpersonal, technical, and management skills appropriate for the workplace.

Both Modules adopt a case study approach using common industrial projects and practices which the students are likely to experience both during placement and when they finally graduate.

The modules have both been a considerable success from a number of different perspectives; for the MEng module these are:

Very high student satisfaction results (>85%)

High average marks (>70%)

100% pass rate

Very positive response from external examiners (cited for providing several examples of excellence)

Extremely positive response from Industrialists who have supported student designs

Employers at interview with many students reporting that their description of their MEng projects got them a job

A wide variety of assignments give students experience of:

Completing a major industrial based project

Working in groups on an engineering project

Working with disciplines other than their own

Addressing the big picture and the detail

Solving complex multi-faceted design problems

Adopting an Holistic approach – full life-cycle considerations

Understanding and meeting the needs of a broad range of stakeholders

Applying Design, Implementation, and Management processes and standards used in industry

Addressing Environmental and Sustainability considerations

Planning the execution of their projects in detail

Risk, Change, and Quality Management

Using industry standard 3D CAD software and Virtual Reality techniques to enhance visualisation of designs

Various methods of communicating project outcomes (videos, reports etc)

Critically evaluating personal and group performance for a range of assignments, conducting lessons learned, and suggesting improvements for next time

The practical application of elements of their academic study.

Assessments comprise:

Presentations

A project execution plan report

A detailed design report including a business plan

Production of a marketing video

A Personal Reflective Log

Comprehensive guidance notes are provided for each of the assignments.

Student support is also provided by conducting weekly review meetings which address a broad range of issues – planning, forecasting, performance monitoring, design reviews, issue resolution, mentoring etc. Extremely detailed feedback is provided for all assignments.

The paper details the framework of the MEng module, methods and tools used, outcomes produced, support mechanisms required for success, and the positive response from students, employers, and industrial partners.

It is anticipated that the framework for the MEng module could be applied across a number of different academic areas, not just in engineering.

Paper (Programme Ref: Session E - E1)

'Technologizing' the postgraduate classroom

The MSc Biomedical Science award like many other awards at Masters Level attracts students from a range of undergraduate studies as well as a large number of international students. Transition from undergraduate to postgraduate learner is challenging for most students. For those who have studied on generic UG courses or those with non-UK degrees, this transition is potentially more difficult, and students often struggle with the specialist context of this award.

An introductory module on the MSc Biomedical Science award (Principles of Integrated Biomedical Science – PIBS) has often been viewed as a 'problem' module for students. It covers the five main pathology disciplines and is delivered by a range of specialists. Students find the scope of topics and the depth of understanding required for each topic a challenge. Added to this are the diverse academic backgrounds and experiences of the students on the module making it difficult for tutors to ensure that appropriate support can be provided for every student for all topic areas.

This paper reports on a study which evaluated the use of two current technologies available to support learning and teaching to enhance the student experience on PIBS. Panopto software allows lectures to be captured by tutors and watched by students outside of taught sessions (flipped). This provides more time during class to focus upon application of knowledge, to address more complex topics and for students to benefit from peer and tutor support during contact time. Socrative enables the use of instantaneous questioning and feedback of students' responses using mobile devices. It provides the tutor with an insight into levels of understanding, as well as allowing students to evaluate their own progress. Discussions and collaboration in-class can be used to address problem areas and support targeted learning and teaching.

These two technologies were adopted by two of the five tutors delivering PIBS; the other tutors delivered their topics via the traditional approach of lecture sessions and tutorials. Evaluation and comparison of the non-traditional vs. traditional delivery was undertaken via questionnaires and individual interviews with students. Questioning focused upon the role of these two technologies in supporting student transition, promoting effective learning and enhancing student engagement with the module content to enable a deep approach to learning by all students.

Initial data analysis suggests that students appreciate being able to watch lectures in their own time providing more time for focusing on application of knowledge in-class with peer and tutor support. In-class testing and feedback with the provision of targeted support for highlighted 'problem' areas greatly enhanced their understanding of the subject area and enjoyment of the topic.

Poster (Programme Ref: Poster D)

Developing higher-order thinking skills by teaching and assessing using academic posters

In 2014/15 the assessment of my master's level law course on Victims' Rights and Restorative Justice was moved from a 5000 word written essay to assessment by academic poster with associated oral presentation. This was done in a bid to build practical skills elements into the module and to encourage student engagement in taught sessions. While those objectives were successfully achieved, a by-product of this move was that students also had to work hard to develop their higher-order thinking skills in order to successfully complete the assessment. Of particular note was the development of the students' ability to synthesize large volumes of research in order to coherently present this in an A1 sized academic poster. As a result students became more engaged in taught sessions, were more likely to think broadly across the taught materials connecting concepts from related sessions, and ultimately achieved higher grades in their assessed work than previous cohorts. This poster will outline the main advantages of assessing masters level students by academic poster with a particular focus on the higher-order thinking skills that can be encouraged. It will draw upon my own experiences and reflections of using this approach in my module as well as the empirical data that has been generated as a result of research conducted with the first student cohort.