Keynotes

Rethinking the Undergraduate Dissertation

Mick Healey, HE Consultant and Researcher

(9.00 – 10.00 am) Asa Briggs Hall, Checkland Building

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“For the students who are the professionals of the future, developing the ability to investigate problems, make judgments on the basis of sound evidence, take decisions on a rational basis, and understand what they are doing and why is vital. Research and inquiry is not just for those who choose to pursue an academic career. It is central to professional life in the twenty-first century” (Brew, 2007)

Final year projects and dissertations (FYPD) are a topic of interest in many countries. In the UK the final year dissertation has traditionally been seen as the gold standard for HE. It provides an excellent training ground for students who wish to continue research at Masters and Doctoral levels, as well as showing evidence of the all-important independence and critical thinking skills emphasised as graduate attributes. Effectively implemented, the outcome from undergraduate dissertations can be highly motivated students effectively empowered as independent self-learners. For many students it provides a transformative experience, yet for others the experience is less inspiring and sometimes quite negative. The traditional dissertation has come under pressure for reform as student participation in higher education has increased, there has been a growth in professional disciplines, and staff-student ratios have deteriorated. Some departments
have dropped the dissertation altogether or made it optional, but this could be seen as ‘throwing the baby out with the bathwater’. This interactive presentation will explore ways in which we can rethink the dissertation, while at the same time retaining a significant element of research and inquiry and deliver key graduate attributes. Our argument is that a more flexible approach is needed in the form, function and assessment of final year projects and dissertations to meet the needs of all students. These may include group, work-oriented and community-based projects. There can also be novel ways of disseminating the findings – via exhibitions, undergraduate research conferences and other forms of public engagement. Preparation for the dissertation needs to begin from the day students enter the university.

Mick Healey is a HE Consultant and Researcher and Emeritus Professor at the University of Gloucestershire, UK. Until 2010 he was Director of the Centre for Active Learning, a nationally funded Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning at the University of Gloucestershire, UK. He is an Honorary Professor at the University of Queensland, an adjunct Professor at Macquarie University and a Visiting Professor University of South Wales. He was one of the first people in the UK to be awarded a National Teaching Fellowship (NTF) and to be made a Principal Fellow of the HE Academy. Earlier this year he won a SEDA@20 Legacy Award. Mick is an experienced presenter. Since 1995 he has given around 500 educational workshops, seminars and conference presentations. He has written and edited around 150 papers, chapters, books and guides on various aspects of teaching and learning in HE. He is often asked to act as an advisor to projects, universities and national governments on aspects of teaching and learning in HE. He recently completed being the director of a NTF two year funded project on “Rethinking Final Year Projects and Dissertations: Creative Honours and Capstone Projects”.


Debby Cotton, Plymouth University
(3.00 – 4.00 am) Asa Briggs Hall, Checkland Building
Sustainability is an increasingly important issue for universities in the UK, and developments such as the Green League and the LiFE index have increased the level of interest in what students learn about sustainability whilst in higher education. Although many institutions have undertaken some form of ‘curriculum audit’ which explores the inclusion of sustainability in the formal curriculum, much less is known about the workings of the hidden curriculum and its influence on student learning. This session explores the concept of the hidden curriculum, the ways it may impact on higher education, and describes some research on sustainability which reveals the hidden curriculum in action. In this session, I discuss the ways in which lecturers’ attitudes influence curriculum content; explain how the hidden curriculum can be expressed through management of group discussions; and comment on the potential impact of the campus environment on student learning. I conclude with a call for more pedagogic research to help institutions and staff ‘read
between the lines’, explore the hidden curriculum, and see that the ‘overtly visible’ in the formal curriculum constitutes only a small proportion of student learning.

Debby Cotton is Professor of Higher Education Pedagogy and Head of Educational Development in the Pedagogic Research Institute and Observatory (PedRIO), Plymouth University, UK. She is a Principal Fellow of the UK Higher Education Academy, a member of the SHED (Sustainability Higher Education Developers) network, HEDG (the Heads of Educational Development Group) and the European Educational Research Association HE network. She also sits on the SEDA (Staff and Educational Development Association) Research and Scholarship Committee and is on the editorial board of five journals including Environmental Education Research; Innovations in Education and Teaching international; and the Journal of Geography in Higher Education. Debby has a doctorate in Environmental Education from Oxford University, and has published widely on a range of higher education topics. She has a wide range of research interests, covering both secondary and (mostly) higher education pedagogy. She is a popular invited speaker and has presented her research at a large number of international events and conferences. She has also recently edited a SEDA Special on Education for Sustainable Development in Educational Development (number 31), and contributed to a book on the Sustainable University (edited by Sterling, S, Maxey, L and Luna, H.). Her main research area is sustainability and pedagogy in higher education, and she has a strong interest in the impact of the hidden curriculum on the ways that sustainability is understood and communicated in HE. For a full profile and list of papers, please see: http://www.plymouth.ac.uk/staff/dcotton#

Session One (10.00 – 11.00 am)

Creating interactive multi-media cases to enhance student cognition

Gaynor Sadlo, Raija Kuisma, Josh Cameron, Paul Boyle and Channine Clarke, School of Health Professions

This session is designed to inform participants of the availability and format of new free software, SBLi (Scenario Based Learning interactive), which converts real life scenarios into online case material especially designed to develop students’ thinking. SBLi can assist teachers to set up bespoke interactive cases to provoke the development of students’ knowledge and reasoning in any particular subject or profession.

Following a demonstration of the case-building process, participants will have an opportunity to experience being a student using an SBLi case, supported by a tutor from the School of Health Professions (each are members of a project group supported by a Higher Education Academy Teaching Development Grant). Such material meets every learning and teaching aim of the university's new Strategy, including curriculum sustainability.

SBLi is currently used to enhance the aims of problem-based learning programmes within the School of Health Professions but could be used wherever real-life case material is used to increase learning engagement.

References:
Sadlo G 2011 Learning through Problems: perspectives from neuroscience.  Procedures from the International Conference of Problem-based Learning, Coventry University.

The early evolution of a complex systems learning tool

Jim Price, Brighton and Sussex Medical School and Phil Haynes, School of Applied Social Science

The Brighton Systems and Complex Systems Knowledge Exchange project, funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) was completed in 2012, the output was a toolkit based on complexity principles which we are now attempting to pilot in practice and evaluate its utility.
The workshop will describe the progress of the project to date, introduce participants to the toolkit in a workshop format, and discuss possible collaboration in implementing the toolkit in more diverse educational contexts.

References:
http://www.sustainabilityinstitute.org/pubs/Leverage_Points.pdf
69-77 www.hbr.org

Supporting your professional development: the new University of Brighton scheme

Juliet Eve and Gina Wisker, Centre for Learning and Teaching

In response to the sector wide increased emphasis on the professionalisation of teaching in higher education, the University of Brighton's Strategic Plan 2012-15 states that:
'By 2015 all academic staff will have, or be working towards a university teaching qualification or institutionally recognised equivalent, with an embedded digital literacy component.'
The Centre for Learning and Teaching has been piloting a professional recognition and development scheme over the last few months, with a view to having the Scheme accredited by the Higher Education Academy (HEA), and rolling it out across the University over the next few years. The scheme is being designed to support all staff with a role in learning and teaching to develop their practice, as well as providing an opportunity to plan and record professional development in order to submit an application for recognition at one of four levels of Fellowship (which map to the four HEA levels of Fellowship). The UoB Scheme is based on the HEA's UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF), requiring applicants to present an evidenced account of their practice which maps to the three dimensions of the Framework: Areas of Activity, Core Knowledge and Professional Values.
This session will provide an overview of the rationale for the Scheme, as well as details of the implementation process. Participants from the pilot groups will describe their experiences of working towards Fellowship, focusing on how to evidence aspects of professional practice that support the three dimensions of the UKPSF as described above.

By the end of the session, you will:
- Have an understanding of the rationale for the UoB Scheme;
- Have an overview of the UKPSF and what it covers;
- Know what you need to submit for a Fellowship application in the UoB Scheme;
- Hear some experiences from colleagues who have completed the process;
- Seen some example of what an account of professional practice might look like

Values-based indicators for assessment of group learning processes

Gemma Burford, School of Humanities and Elona Hoover, Sustainable Development Coordination Unit

We will briefly introduce the principles of values-based assessment, and then present a case study from a third year undergraduate geography module. The students were asked to (i) co-develop a learning contract; (ii) select values-based indicators from a shortlist; (iii) work collaboratively in small groups on a variety of literature-based and problem-based learning tasks; and (iv) use the indicators to reflect individually and collectively on their learning processes, through successive self-assessments. The case study highlights some of the challenges faced by teachers/facilitators who choose to adopt participatory approaches, as well as important findings from the project.

The second part of the session, structured as a 40-minute interactive workshop, will be a broader exploration of the use of values-based indicators for assessing and enhancing group learning. Participants will be invited to discuss and revise the indicator shortlist and self-assessment sheets in small groups, relating them to their own experiences and interests, and will suggest modifications or additions that they regard as potentially useful. The output of the workshop will be a draft toolkit which could serve as a basis for further pilot studies.

The metamorphosis of family law module using problem-based learning (PBL)

Zoe Swan, Brighton Business School

The session will highlight findings of a scoping study carried out in 2011/12 into the use of Problem-based learning (PBL) in a final year law module and how these findings were used as a basis for informing a change to the teaching and learning strategy on this module from 2012. The session will explain what PBL is and how it differs from traditional teaching, for example lecture, seminar, problem solving questions and how PBL has been used to engage students in the learning process. We will look at a summary of the feedback from students who have studied the module in 2012/13, explore the potential challenges experienced when introducing and working with PBL and highlight the benefits that can be gained by both students and teachers as a result of using PBL. Questions/examples/comparisons will be used to facilitate discussion throughout the presentation.
References:
Benchmark Statement Law, 2007
http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/Subject-benchmark-statement-Law-2007.aspx
Joint Academic Stage Board Handbook, (Bar Standards Board and Solicitors Regulation Board) 2011
John Biggs, Aligning teaching for constructive learning, (HEA)

Writing as creative practice
Jac Cattaneo, Northbrook College

The Write Here Write Now project crossed disciplinary boundaries by modifying Creative Writing pedagogies to enrich Art and Design students’ research abilities and writing skills. Self-selecting Theatre, Journalism, Fine Art and Fashion Media Promotion students at Northbrook College participated in bi-weekly Creative Writing sessions, in a face-to-face group and/or on a multimedia blog. As the module was extracurricular and its outcomes not assessed, students were given freedom to apply its content in ways that were individually meaningful. Participants were encouraged to read out their writing in the session, or to post work on-line for peer comment.
Research has investigated how involvement in Write Here Write Now has affected students’ studio practice as well as their evolving identities as writers. Patterns of participation were considered, as well as students’ experience of both physical and on-line communities as sites for the co-creation of knowledge.
This interactive session will present the range of material used by the Write Here Write Now project to provide guidelines, prompts and inspirations for Creative Writing. Conference participants will be given the opportunity to experiment with cross-disciplinary practices, such as ekphrasis (writing from the visual) and cut-ups to explore how writing creatively can surprise and liberate.

References:
Walker, E. (2012) Teaching Creative Writing: Practical Approaches The Professional and Higher Partnership Ltd
Mobile device speed dating

Fiona MacNeill and Adam Bailey, Information Services

This presentation is a rapid-fire exposition of what is possible with different mobile devices and apps. Our aim is to showcase several mobile apps and their pedagogical potential through the use of demonstrations and testimonials. The audience will be invited to road test or "speed date" these devices and apps in-between each of the short presentation segments.

References:

Seeing it differently: exploring the experience of dyslexia at university

Catherine Watts, Student Services

Whilst there are many opinions about what it is like to have SpLD dyslexia and how we address the issues as members of a university community, this is an opportunity to explore & share ideas for effectively supporting students.
This will be a practical workshop style session, facilitated by the Disability and Dyslexia Team, with the aim of raising awareness and improving understanding of what it feels like to be dyslexic at University.

Session Two (11.30 am – 12.20 pm)

Are you sitting comfortably? A practical look at how we can aid student learning and positively enhance the educational experience

Kevin Morton, School of Sport and Service Management

‘Are you sitting comfortably?’ will question whether we, as educators, challenge our approach and delivery, whilst developing appreciation for the educational experiences we offer. It will look at innovative pedagogy, as well as how the use of technology can create a more engaging learning experience.
An interactive session, which aims to put us in the position of a student attending our own lectures, and demonstrate how approach and delivery style can impact the content we teach. Through various activities and technology demonstrations every participant will experience first-hand how it can feel to be situated in and out of your comfort zone.
If you have one, please bring a tablet computer with you to the session.
Learning to make a difference: student community engagement and the strategic plan

Juliet Millican, Community University Partnership Programme

This year the Community University Partnership Programme (CUPP) has been involved in trying to implement Theme 1 of the Strategic plan, ‘Learning to Make a Difference’ by working with schools and faculties to ensure every student gets the opportunity for engagement as part of their undergraduate degree.

This session will compare this with the initial findings of a small research project tracking the expectations and experiences of year one students. It will raise questions about what students want and what lecturers think they need and evaluate our progress as a teaching team in meeting their expectations around social engagement.

References:
Are they being served? Student expectations of higher education, Darlaston-Jones, Pike, Cohen, Young, Haunold, 2003

Developing learning through visual media

Jo-Anne Lester and Catherine Palmer, School of Sport and Service Management and Jane Devine Mejia, Screen Archive Southeast

The visual nature of tourism is well-recognised and this area of enquiry is firmly embedded in the tourism curriculum, at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels, within the School of Sport and Service Management. We will present the development of teaching, learning and assessment strategies within a Masters module, entitled ‘Travel and Visual Culture’, and discuss the collaboration between the module tutors and the Screen Archive South East in developing and facilitating a visually based assessment. This assessment involves the utilization of film data made available by the archive to construct a visual narrative in the form of a 3-4 minute film. Additionally the range of activities [drawings; visual diaries etc] employed in the learning environment will be reflected on in the context of students’ appreciation of visual data and their engagement with different materials as data sources within the learning environment (Pink 2001; Keegan 2007; Rose 2007; Rakhi, and Chambers 2011). The issues discussed in the presentation will be of interest to other courses that explore visual culture.

References:
The Apprentice - you're hired!

Helen Stanley, Marian Willmer and Carole Cheales, School of Nursing and Midwifery

The Apprentice is a popular British reality television series in which a group of aspiring young businessmen and women compete for the chance to work with the British business magnate Lord Sugar. This participative session will share how lecturing staff from the School of Nursing and Midwifery used the format of the show to promote meaningful, active learning to teach leadership, using the technology of the iPad.

Managers from two local NHS trusts participated in an interactive competitive task to demonstrate the application of team playing and appropriate leadership competences. They were given a fictional £100,000 to spend to improve achievement against the Trust's strategic plan. Trust reports were loaded on iPads and the managers presented their ‘pitch’ using the technology.

The activity was well received, integrating the theory of leadership with real world of the workplace that evolved in a short space of time. It was about being flexible and responsive; keeping a light touch and a sense of fun but still addressing complex and important issues through the application of evidence in critical ways. There were challenges, including standards of teaching through technologies when adapting to the physical environment and different facilities to the University site.

References:
The session will explore how the system of reading lists is evolving, and how this is enhancing both the student and staff experience, then by creating a live list we will demonstrate how easy it is to quickly incorporate a huge range of materials e.g. radio clips, YouTube videos, eBooks, journal articles etc, to edit and update an existing list and also to monitor stats.

Studentfolio is not just an e-portfolio tool

Deshinder Singh Gill, School of Computing Engineering and Mathematics

This session will show different ways of using studentfolio as a tool for teaching and learning. Studentfolio was first used as an e-portfolio, but it was quickly realised that it could also be used for; reflective feedback, as a teaching aid, as a depository of web links, as a teaching resource, as a revision aid for students, how to use groups for assessment purposes, how to use templates effectively, to name a few.

The session will demonstrate the wide range of uses possible of studentfolio, and how best to use them. It will also demonstrate the power of using studentfolio as a help facility, to include video clips and multimedia in the help file. Finally, it will be shown how Sue Greener’s experience in using studentfolio for supervising research students was adapted further to turn this into a most useful resource. Students could now access the online resource whilst waiting at a bus stop using an iPhone and then upload their progress notes for the research work done whilst on the move.

References:
educationworld.com - Student Portfolios as an Assessment Tool, last accessed 3 Dec 2012.

Transformational learning experiences: critical reflections from PASS leaders

Lucy Chilvers, Centre for Learning and Teaching, Thanaporn Tunprasert School of Health Professions, Chloe Dixon and Sian Dennis, School of Pharmacy and Biomedical Science

The success of Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS) relies heavily on the commitment and hard work of PASS leaders. At the University of Brighton, 130 student volunteers were recruited in 2012/13 and trained in leadership, communication and facilitation skills. These students ran weekly informal study sessions for small groups of first year students to support them in their learning and student experience. PASS sessions aim to provide students with an opportunity to revisit course material and develop study skills in the context of their discipline, whilst also making friends and building confidence.

PASS leaders report a range of benefits from their role including the development of a variety of transferable and employability skills. In 2012/13 a level 5 PASS Leadership module was piloted with 14 students from a range of discipline areas to enable leaders to gain academic credit which would be additional to their transcripts to evidence their development and experience. In this session PASS leaders will share and critically reflect on their experiences of being PASS leaders and doing the module; there will also be time for Q&A with the students and group discussion.
References:

Sweet silent thought: how being alone supports learning

Danny Ford, Sussex Downs College

Starting out from Palmer’s (1998) assertion that ‘learning demands solitude’ this session draws attention to the denial of purposeful individual reflection in the classroom and beyond. Whilst maintaining awareness that ‘learning also demands community’ the notion of enforced collaboration within the classroom is critiqued as problematic from the position of those learning. Focusing directly on the practices and needs of the student artist it is proposed that creative responses often arise from time spent alone and that these responses require a period of assessment free incubation. Arising from a consideration of teaching art it is suggested that the creative act may suffer from ‘what we learn from teachers… and a conformist, imitative, mechanical state of mind’.

These challenges give rise to an inquiry that resulted in creative FE students being offered a weekly session outside of the classroom and beyond the influence of teachers and peers. The participants reported that this time promoted creative responses and encouraged contemplation, reflective thought and personal growth. This presentation will focus on what happened to a small group of these students when they were provided with space to be alone and outside in nature, as part of the taught curriculum, instead of being instructed and assessed in class.


Facing change: the experience of international students and university departments in the new globally diverse educational context

Jonathan Dunn and Caroline Challans, University of Brighton International College

The experience of the international student is a wide, varied and evolving one. As the number international students studying in UK universities increases, it is paramount that we continue to look beyond educational needs and encompass their social and psychological needs if they are to succeed.

Reference: Dunn and Challans (2009)
Recent data from 2010-11 published by UKCISA, shows an overall increase of 6% of international students. This is juxtaposed by a decrease of full-time ‘other’ students and part-time non-UK students. A review of the literature raises a number of concerns regarding not only equipping students with the required skills and English language proficiency, but also how to face the challenges of adjustment to university and living abroad. Based on student examples, discussion and description of issues such as loneliness and difficulties of acceptance into new groups/cultures, the aim of this presentation is to discuss and explore the challenges faced by international students and open up dialogue on what could be done additionally to help students acculturate/feel a part of the culture they are living in. Additionally, how to enhance the education of students in an increasing internationalised environment. Furthermore, this discussion will explore and advocate the need for acculturation of international students and the need for further internationalisation of the host institution and students.

References:

Session Three (1.30 – 2.15 pm)

Student engagement in quality enhancement: from representation to partnership

Heather McKnight, Brighton University Student Union

The new QAA Quality Code Chapter B5: Student Engagement sets us a real challenge. Institutions are now required to demonstrate that they “take deliberate steps to engage all students, individually and collectively, as partners in the assurance and enhancement of their educational experience” For true student engagement in quality processes we need to be thinking beyond how our current traditional representative structures operate to ensure students become partners in improving the quality of their education irrespective of location, mode of study, teaching delivery, or discipline. This session will draw on resources from the QAA advisory group workshop “The Road to the Code”. It will look at feedback collected through the annual course representative survey and identify areas for enhancement in our representative systems in line with Chapter B5. It will also consider the bigger picture of how we can ensure there is a culture where all students are active contributors to quality systems at the University of Brighton.
MOOCs (Massive Online Open Courses) are they providing a new experience of Higher Education?

Barbara Newland and Pauline Ridley, Centre for Learning and Teaching

Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) are currently in the news, with increasing numbers of UK and US universities (and private companies) offering free, open online courses to thousands of students from around the world. This session is a chance to find out more about what they are and to explore the implications for our own practice. Early MOOCs were often linked to existing courses whose online resources were opened up to anyone to participate, without fees or entrance requirements but also without access to teaching support or assessment and credit. This led to the development of informal peer support networks and many MOOCs are now purposefully designed around discussion and collaboration using learners’ own blogs and social networks. At the same time, for-profit organisations are now working with some universities to provide MOOCs which can offer accreditation (for a fee). Are MOOCs an opportunity to widen access and participation or a threat to the continued existence of university-based higher education? In particular, what do we really mean by ‘open’?

We will draw upon recent research and the experience of students and lecturers engaged in MOOCs to explore the social, political and educational implications of this phenomenon.

References:
*“Educause, 2011, 7 Things You Should Know About MOOCs*

Graded teaching observations: the lived experiences of FE lecturers

Paul Tully, Northbrook College and Phil Lugton, School of Education

In accepting Wenger's (1998) proposition that professional identity is inter-dependent on practice, the impact of graded observations as a regulatory mechanism for ensuring high teaching standards can have implications for a teacher’s self-efficacy and professional self-worth. In FE Colleges, teaching observations are often carried out by formally designated assessors and are graded against a 1-4 scale used by OFSTED inspectors. The validity of using graded observations to improve teachers’ performance is already strongly contested (see O’Leary, 2006, 2011, 2012). This session will explore the ‘lived experiences’ of FE lecturers who have been graded at observation by managers and inspectors and explores how these experiences have altered their perceptions of themselves as practitioners.

Given the increasing emphasis on the quality of teaching in HE and moves to require academics to gain teaching credentials, the session provides an opportunity to consider whether there are lessons the HE sector could learn from the experience of colleagues in Further Education. In
particular, there is a focus on the dimensions of power and expertise that operate at the heart of observation and lesson feedback processes. Research-in-progress uses action learning sets, interviews and survey data to examine the experiences of trainee and experienced teachers who are pursuing PGCE and vocational teaching qualifications. The general aim of the research is to enhance our understanding of the impact that observation has on teachers’ perceptions of their role and professional practice. More specifically the research seeks to:

- explore the views and experiences of FE lecturers on academic and vocational teacher training courses regarding the use of graded observation to improve teacher performance.
- compare recent evidence on observation practices collected from colleges in the West Midlands (O’Leary, 2012), with the views expressed by teachers and managers in colleges based in South England.
- Consider alternatives to graded observation to improve teaching and learning.

The research is set against the background of a revised Common Inspection Framework and two recent Annual OFSTED reports criticising the standard of teaching and learning in further education. In this context, it has been suggested that systems of graded observations may be compounding rather than addressing the problem of poor or substandard teaching.

References:
O’Leary, M (2010), Surveillance and normalised practice: the use and impact of graded lesson observations in further education colleges, University of Wolverhampton

Network drawing: a visual tool for developing meta-learning capacity in group work

Claire Scanlon and Paul Grivell, Northbrook College

The Network Drawing game was conceived spontaneously as part of a collaborative art project seeking to investigate ideas of growth in relation to a range of contexts. As a result of this experience we were struck by its potential for development in an educational context. Further action research has involved students in HE Art and Design at Northbrook College and workshop session at the Drawing and Cognition Symposium: STEAM at Wimbledon College UAL in September 2012.

We speculate this activity has potential for wide application across a range of fields including:

- the pedagogic - with students and staff across a broad range of subject areas
- the therapeutic - in care/social work with community groups and dementia patients
- in creative practices - with artists, designers, crafts people and programmers

Significantly, Network Drawing differs in its visual and kinesthetic approach from other types of meta-learning tool, which tend to utilize verbal or written means of communication in the form of questionnaires or in story-telling.
For the ‘Evolving Experiences’ conference, delegates will be invited to participate in a group Network Drawing game and review their experience in relation to the research aims to develop the activity as a meta-learning tool/ OER for group work. Please note no drawing skills are required

References:

Evolution of the Pi Shop: maths support within the Faculty of Science and Engineering
Steve Kilgallon, School of Environment and Technology
The maths support centre (The Pi Shop) evolved from a Learning and Teaching Fellowship grant awarded in 2011, which subsequently enabled a successful bid for HE-STEM funding to extend the service for a further two years. The Pi Shop focuses on foundation, first and second year students whose courses contain a mathematical element, but not those who are taking a dedicated maths degree. This presentation will explore the background issues relating to the problematic experiences (related to maths) encountered during the transition of students from school to University. It will look at how other institutions have gone about addressing these issues in terms of diagnostic testing and the setting up of dedicated maths support units which aim to ease the transition and enhance the student experience. It then describes how the Pi Shop was setup at Brighton and how it operates. The presentation will go onto analyse some of the data regarding attendance patterns and student feedback obtained from the project and will then set out future goals and directions.

References:
Smith, A., ed. 2004 Making Mathematics Count [e-book]. The report of Professor Adrian Smith’s Inquiry into Post-14 Mathematics Education. Available from:

Learning through adventure: Peru 2013
Mark Hayes and Angela Benson, School of Sport and Service Management
The aim of this study was to investigate field-trips as a medium to enhance the student experience, in essence ‘learning through adventure’. In April 2013, a group of level five students undertook an expedition to Peru, to examine two key themes (1) mobile technology in field based research and
(2) volunteering in an overseas (tourism) context. In terms of the first theme, it has been suggested that contextualisation of skills and theories coupled with the opportunity to interpret and communicate findings is essential to promote mastery of concepts and effective learning (Soloway, 1996). The ubiquitous nature of mobile technology provides opportunity for such contextualisation and collaboration within the classroom environment (Rieger and Gay, 1997; Terras and Ramsay, 2012). In addition, the increasing number of mobile devices with remote capabilities extends such opportunity beyond the classroom to the field. Therefore, field-based projects using mobile technology may provide a medium to enhance students learning. A mixed methods approach was used to examine this concept.

As part of ‘learning through adventure’ it was arranged for students to take part in a community based volunteering project. Consequently, the second theme was to understand how the students perceived the volunteering aspect within the wider context of the overall field trip and the extent to which the core competences of global citizenship was embraced. This part of the study used a qualitative research approach with students being interviewed in groups before and after the field trip. Initial findings will form part of the presentation.

References:
Soloway, E., Krajcik, J.S. & Marx, R. (1996) Technological support for teachers transitioning to project-based

Using both sides of the line: zero waste practices

Theresa Parker, Northbrook College

Current thinking on approaches to sustainability in education suggest students are often aware of their responsibility to engage with sustainable practices but don’t know how. This implies the need for a more critical review of conventional processes and possible alternatives for future students. The session refers to a pilot project designed to examine student engagement with sustainable practices with particular reference to pattern cutting, informed through dialogue with other fashion educators in the UK and abroad to build shared model of good teaching practice for raising sustainable issues with students whilst encouraging them to work creatively in a way that makes pattern cutting integral to the design process. Following the pilot analysis has shown how working within the restraints of Zero Waste techniques can enhance student creativity; reduce fear and anxiety when working with the unknown and impact on the way they approach their future practice. Participants will have an opportunity to experience Zero Waste practices through a workshop style demonstration.

References:
Mobile technologies and academic identities: a case study

Keith Turvey and Nadia Edmond, School of Education

Reporting on the work in progress of a study which sought to provide empirical evidence regarding user-centred appropriation and application of mobile technologies to both HE teaching and broader academic working practice. The aim of the project was to articulate what such processes of mobile technology appropriation contribute to an understanding of collective professional learning and professional identities, and contribute to the conceptualisation and critique of ‘disruption and change’ in HE academic practices with mobile technologies.

There is a widespread recognition of the importance and potential impact of new technology on academic work and an associated need to develop our understanding of the way in which academics, institutional practices and technologies are co-agents in shaping professional identities. The University of Brighton’s commitment to providing mobile technologies to academic staff is both a response to policy initiatives and an expression of a commitment to exploring the pedagogical potential offered by these technologies.

Socio-cultural and socio-material perspectives on learning and practice give rise to understandings of human agency in its social and material context. In seeking to understand individual and collective human agency within its socio-material context, our analysis of the adaptations of HE academic practices utilise perspectives deriving from CHAT and a new Narrative Ecology approach to make visible both personal agency and ‘relational agency’ in the ways new socio-material assemblages are constructed and enacted. Accounts of human agency are particularly problematic within mobile learning contexts where learning events may be both temporarily fragmented yet cumulative and connected. In an our approach, predicated on a view of professional learning as a narrative process, the Narrative Ecology model will be explored as a conceptual tool for storying the otherwise isolated but constituent aspects of HE staff’s experiences of technology: that is, as a framework for understanding the interrelationships between technologies as material tools, their social framings and mediational potency, and the agency of lecturers individually and collectively seeking to enact their professional identities. The initial stages of data collection and analysis of this close qualitative study will be discussed and presented.

References:
Creative methods in research and teaching: what can they tell us?

Sara Bragg, Tim Coxon, Andy Davies, Richard Wallis and Daryl Bailey, School of Education

Creative methods encourage research participants to express views or responses to topics through means other than word-based interviews. They have received considerable attention in recent writing on research methodologies, some of it critical of the claims made about their ‘empowering’ effects. What is less explored in the literature is how far similar approaches are already being mobilized in Higher Education teaching and learning, and how these might act as a resource for both research and pedagogical development.

This paper is based on a small-scale study of first year BA (Hons) Key Stage 2/3 Education with QTS students taking a module in Educational Studies. For their assessment they were asked to work in groups to produce a 3D model expressing their understanding of learning, along with a short written evaluation. The study brought together different perspectives and positions (from an experienced and a new lecturer, and a research fellow) to discuss the models generated, and how they might be interpreted differently – for instance, as responses to course pedagogy, as insights into currently dominant ideas about education, and as objects to be assessed. It will conclude by considering the value of such ‘creative’ approaches in teaching, learning and research.

Still lovin’ it? Have sector changes greatly altered what students think about their education now

Antoneta Bursac, Brighton University Student Union

As Vice President Academic Affairs I will be discussing how recent developments in the HE sector may have affected students and where the University of Brighton stands with reference to the recent KSS (Keep Stop Start) survey result data, this year nearly 1500 feedback forms were collected from students on all campuses. Last year this data was fed back to students via School level reports, presented by School and Course Reps at Faculty Academic Board meetings. This research formed a rich database of student opinion across the University and provided a valuable source of input, not only for the upcoming institutional review but also for other decision-making processes at the university.

We will also discuss how the university’s strategic plan fits around student demand and the affects it will have on them.
Fuse for the future?
Sue Wheatley, School of Health Professions and Joyce Webber, Information Services

This short session will demonstrate the versatility of using the 'Fuse App' for recording student and staff work, teaching activities or assessments.
This session will take participants through a step by step guide of an example of using Fuse to record via iPads student interviews. Students studying occupational therapy were required to write a reflective statement on their experience of an interview they conducted which was then summatively assessed. Post interview the 20 minute recorded clips were made available for viewing and reflection by individual students from their own computers.
This is an extremely easy to use and versatile piece of software that allows work to be recorded and then sustainably converted, no need for DVD’s or students to travel to the university to collect recordings.
What began as a useful tool in a static setting has, through Fuse, evolved into a flexible, versatile and discreet method of capturing learning and teaching activities which can be quickly transformed into easily accessible media.

A forest of media: using visual essays in assessing undergraduate study
Peter Burns and Alberto Forte, School of Sport and Service Management

The aim of the session is to share professional practice that has demonstrated over the past ten years an ability to motivate students far beyond the requirements of 30% of one module grade in their second year. Students report the visual essay (within the context of the taught module) has given them a whole new perspective on how they see the world beyond the tourist gaze.
We have been using a form of ‘visual essay’ over the past decade to assess students’ responses to the complex world of tourism, society and culture: an integral part of their study for a degree in international tourism. However, as technology has become easier to use and more widely available, the students have shifted their response from simple PowerPoint presentations to rather sophisticated films.

Graduate Toolkit: using studentfolio - did it work?
Deshinder Singh Gill, School of Computing Engineering and Mathematics and Pamela Coppola and Kathryn Christ, Student Services

To share the experiences learnt in how to implement the Graduate Toolkit using the e-portfolio tool. This will include a review of the lessons learnt in how to put in digital form the paper version of the graduate toolkit (this replaced the previous incarnation called studentprofile), how to use e-templates for students to download into their e-portfolio. This made it much easier for the students to engage with the material relating to careers advice.
The session will begin with a review of the new graduate toolkit developed and launched by the careers service in September 2012. An interactive session follows to find out what experiences the audience have had with the graduate toolkit. The experiences of using studentfolio for the implementation of the graduate toolkit will be related to the audience, with particular emphasis on how the use of templates made it much easier for the student to engage with the Graduate Toolkit.
Using role-emerging placements to broaden the practice experience of occupational therapy students

Channine Clarke, School of health professions

Role-emerging placements (those where there is no occupational therapy service) are increasingly being used to help occupational therapy students develop the confidence, skills, knowledge and attributes needed to work in new and innovative practice settings. This session will be based on recent research that explored students’ experiences of undertaking such placements and the impact of doing so on their professional practice and identity.

Findings showed that role-emerging placements acted as a strong catalyst for the students’ ontological development. Through engaging in challenging and autonomous learning experiences, they developed deeper insights of who they were becoming as professionals, this led to a professional identity that was of their own making. Having to continually reflect on and verbalise the core essence and contribution of occupational therapy to their occupational therapy educator, on-site educator, other professionals, clients and staff the students developed clarity of understanding about the uniqueness of the profession.

Such placements are now compulsory for occupational therapy students and discussion in this session will focus on the value and viability of such placements for students in other schools/faculties.

Show and tell: the evolving technician/student relationship in design practise in higher education

Vikki Haffenden and Simon Driver, School of Art, Design and Media

This session offers educators in other fields an insight into the technical aspects of Design education. Taking the department of Fashion Textiles at the University of Brighton as an example of good practise, it will explore the interaction between technical staff and students.

Students in Art and Design are generally accepted to be predominantly experiential learners. (Gray and Malins, 2004) Kolb’s model of experiential learning is that of a continuous developmental cycle of experiencing, reflecting, thinking, and acting (Kolb, 1984), and this cycle can clearly be seen in fashion and textile student's workshop based learning. Such experiential learning requires highly skilled input and appropriately positioned support from technical staff in order that the student should achieve their full potential and meet the complex learning outcomes required for success.

With empirical evidence gathered from past and present students and technical staff, this paper will explore how the role of ‘technician’ in design education has become progressively more collaborative and active, providing far more than the basics in craft skills. (Stoyel, 2005) It will further consider how to continue to develop new good practises during the changing circumstances in education, whilst at the same time maintaining the practise-based learning situation preferred by design students. (Power, 2007)

References:
Insider research: a framework for navigating the complex issues when undertaking research during professional sessions

Brian Marsh and Richard Wallis, School of Education

Masters and doctoral research in the public sector areas of education, social work and health studies often complements the researcher’s professional role. This involves understanding the critical position of undertaking ‘insider research’.

Insider research is predicated upon the researcher having experience and insight into the situation where the research is being undertaken. It is argued that learning, insights and improved practice arise from the immersion in the everyday working of a project. However there are both potential advantages and difficulties from this way of working. Insider research brings familiarity to the researched context in terms of prior knowledge, personal relationships and understanding of the micro-politics. However it can suffer from lack of distance, criticality, subjectivity in approach and analysis. Additional issues that came to the fore included (1) having role duality and multiple identities, (2) the degree of insiderness, (3) the extent of access and (4) the asymmetric power relationships between various actors.

We will adapt a model of participation, identity and practice within communities to explore the relationship between proximity to the heart of the project being studied and the ethical issues involved and in so doing contribute to the understanding of those engaging in practitioner research.

References:
Labaree, R. V. 2002. The risk of ‘going observationalist’: negotiating the hidden dilemmas of being an insider participant observer. Qualitative Research. 2: 1, 97-122
Using metaphor in lectures: an evolving approach at the International College

Alistair McNair, University of Brighton’s International College

The University of Brighton’s International College (UBIC) teaches students not only English language but also subjects such as biology, chemistry, and business. English language teachers are accustomed to grading their language so all students can understand the lesson, but subject tutors often do not do so, frequently using metaphor and difficult language, perhaps because they are teaching complex concepts. As a result, students often struggle with the language as well as the subject.

This presentation discusses the use of difficult language and metaphor by teachers in seminars and lectures. It outlines some of the reasons metaphor and difficult language is used, why metaphor use can cause problems and whether its use should be avoided. It also gives examples of metaphor use from classes at the International College and whether students understood them. The presentation suggests it is important and probably unavoidable for teachers to use metaphor as they provide important academic functions, namely helping lessons be memorable, labelling new concepts and questioning value systems. It is also important for teachers to be aware of their metaphor and difficult language use in order to help prevent misunderstandings, and to have strategies in place to help students cope.

References:
