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Innovations in Practice

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LIVERPOOL JOHN MOORES UNIVERSITY

Innovations in Practice

Editorial

Welcome to our eighth edition of *Innovations in Practice*. We have eleven papers for you to read in this special edition of the Journal that features articles from staff in the Centre of Sport Dance and Outdoor Education of the Faculty of Education, Community and Leisure, and one final year undergraduate student. The content ranges from subject-focused research to pedagogical considerations of learning, and of innovation and good practice in Higher Education that is applicable to any subject.

The first article *Answers, Considerations and Questions to the Teaching and Learning of Studio Practice* by Fran Leaver addresses a dance research project that examined if physical variables of students were related to high marks in dance technique (studio practice) classes. Results of the group studied concluded that there were certain physical attributes most closely related with high marks in the module. The author then discusses how the findings have impacted on the pedagogical practice and approaches of the academic staff delivering teaching on the module, as well as on the subject knowledge and potential supplementary training opportunities offered to the students.

Our second jointly written article examines the responses of academic staff involved in the delivery of an innovative model of transition of new students into university. In *A Radical Re-modelling of Induction - the staff experience* Barbara Walsh, Sarah Nixon and Cath Walker outline the reasons for the Department's novel approach to how first year students are taken through an induction process. Their discussion on

the effects of that extended transition on both students, but especially on staff perceptions, is honest and illuminating. They expand upon those perceptions under four main themes: emotional effect; organisational issues; relationship between staff and students and the impact on student learning. The experiences they outline can serve as a point of reference for any programme team considering revisiting the induction process.

The third and fourth articles each consider contexts of learning. Jason Arday in his paper *Developing Professional Learning in Higher Education: Utilising Peer-mentoring to promote collaborative and reciprocal learning,* provides a contextualised synopsis of relevant literature on the practice of peer-mentoring within Higher Education. He utilises key authors to explore the benefits of peer-mentoring strategies that encourage collaborative and reciprocal learning, with a specific focus on the collaborative support provided for early-career lecturers in Higher Education. In his article: *Fundamental dilemmas in Research, and how by approaching learning from an evolutionary perspective, we might provide a better understanding toward causality*, Dave Larkin seeks to challenge notions of certainty and argues that learning can be considered as a fundamental mechanism in evolution. He presents learning from an ecological perspective, one that sees the emergence of 'consciousness' as a construct of learning, and learning as evolution in action. He proposes that such an approach to learning requires a new understanding, perhaps even a new bridge between paradigms of inquiry that will lead towards a more holistic understanding of self and place.

Our fifth article in this edition is by Darren Carr and continues to explore the notion of learning in Higher Education. His paper *An in-reaching community of practice: Constructing a learning cooperative* contextualises four years of project-based action research endeavour involving the ECL Faculty-based dance company JUMP IN (tegrated). He outlines his research that has aimed to create a new model of teaching and learning using approaches to pedagogy to promote social constructivism. He identifies the model of practice he has developed, one of an in-reaching community of practice, and summarises the positive effects that learning through the model has had upon the students, both as people and as learners.

The sixth article, *An investigation into Personal Tutor perceptions of Reflective Practice and its' use within an undergraduate degree programme* by Vicci Boyd addresses a research project she undertook with teaching staff in the Centre for Sport, Dance and Outdoor

Education. She notes how learning through reflective practice is a key area of the programmes, but her focus of interest was on the *perceptions* of reflective practice by individual members of staff. Her investigation discovered a wide range of definitions by the participants, and she outlines key areas for staff development purposes that may help to address the range of interpretations.

The next four papers in this edition share reflections upon professional matters and innovative practice within Higher Education that while coming from the Centre for Sport, Dance and Outdoor Education can be applied to any programme subject.

The seventh paper by Angus Ryrie, Danny Cullinane and Simon Roberts outlines *The use of technological based assessment in developing the self-directed learner: a case study in sport coaching.* The authors reflect on the multi-dimensional nature of the methods used in supporting and enhancing sport coach learning within two undergraduate programmes. They explain their tripartite approach to support the development of self-directed coach learning (via formative tutor feedback, summative assessment, and peer supported mentoring), and the technological tools used to support that assessment process. They highlight how the format has facilitated students in reflecting on their practice.

Our eighth paper, again from Fran Leaver, presents the reader with four examples of good practice of out-reach and in-reach projects from the Dance Practices programme that could be adopted by others. In *Engaging in real-life practice within the University environment as a means to increasing student motivation and success* she outlines a model whereby the University becomes an 'interactive worksite' both in relation to teaching and learning, and as a means by which to bridge the students' relationship with the world of work.

Our ninth paper by Track Dinning, *Successes and challenges of developing Entrepreneurial Skills within the curriculum in Higher Education* discusses how a Campus Enterprise (CE) programme was developed in the Faculty of Education, Community and Leisure. She describes how, over six years an approach to Enterprise Education has been taken so that it could either be embedded in the curriculum and /or directly accessed by students. A model of Enterprise Activity that works on three levels of activity is outlined, one that can engage students at each level of their study. She examines the challenges that have been experienced by the programme, and indicates the key factors that have contributed to the CE programme becoming established within the Faculty. Finally, she notes that with part of the University's Strategic Plan for 2012 –

2017 to become a modern civic university, a curriculum that has links to entrepreneurship will be conducive to achieving that aim.

Our tenth paper by Cath Walker is a personal reflection on the establishment of a collaborative partnership between LJMU with Greenbank College and Sports Academy, Liverpool. The motivation behind the partnership was to create a Foundation Degree that proactively encourages students with disabilities to enter Higher Education and ultimately complete a Degree with LJMU. The degree in question is a Foundation Degree in Inclusive Sport Development that attempts to widen participation to students who might not previously have considered undertaking a Higher Education course. She is thorough and honest in her reflections, warning readers that effective collaboration is hard work. As the Link Tutor for the Programme she concludes with a practical list of 'do's' and 'don'ts' for others who would like to explore working in partnership.

Our final paper is by Emma Grannell, a final year undergraduate student on the Dance Practices degree. Her paper *Exploring the impact of the integration of dance within the primary curriculum, to support experiential learning* was part of her final dissertation for her degree. She examines the impact of integrating dance within the primary curriculum to support learning, concentrating on working with four subjects: science, maths, English and history. While acknowledging that the length of her research placement was limited, she was able to demonstrate valid and positive benefits of the integration of Dance in the primary curriculum.

It is evident from this editorial that we have a broad range of submissions that are applicable to readers beyond the subject-base of Sport or Dance or Outdoor Education. Hopefully they will stimulate reflection and debate, and perhaps even kindle further ideas for pedagogical practice that might be shared in future editions.

Pauline Brooks: Editor

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Answers, Considerations and Questions to the Teaching and Learning of Studio Practice

Leaver, F.

Introduction:

This paper firstly reflects on a research study that examined which physical variables in relation to University dance students were related to higher marks in dance technique classes, and then continues by examining the impact that these findings had on the subject content for Studio Practice (dance technique). The rationale for the research was originally student-centred, exploring literature that looked at the concept of fitness in relation to dance and dancers as well as studies that examined the value of supplementary training for dancers. However, the research study and its results started a pedagogical journey of questions and considerations for the researcher, which have and still are impacting on teaching and learning. A shortened version of the original research is presented here to provide the context of how these results have impacted on the teaching and learning of Studio Practice by the researcher. Other issues such as aesthetic judgements and the difficulty of marking an artistic form are also raised, as they are integral within the discussion and debate of good practice, but will need to be elaborated further in future articles.

To give a brief contextualization to the research the Dance Practices undergraduate degree was written in 2008, and theoretical and practical components were introduced to all levels of study of Studio Practice modules (formally called Dance Technique). This decision was a result of the developments and needs of a dancer in the Twentieth First Century and as Daniels says ‘as the dance field evolves, we have seen an increase in the desire for thoughtful dancers…we must invite the whole person into the dance studio’ (2009, p. 8). Within the scope of this paper it is the practice that is predominantly concentrated upon.

Literature review:

As mentioned the research study initially centred round the dance student and explored the concept of fitness as well as their need for supplementary training. As Koutedakis and Jamurtas said 'no single fitness measurement can predict success in dance' (2004, p. 651) but it is important to consider what fitness actually is and Koutedakis et al see that it is 'the ability to cope with the demands of a specific task' (1996, p. 106) which in this context is the studio practice class. Rosser (2001) lists a number of specific components in relation to fitness including cardio-respiratory endurance, muscle strength, muscle endurance, flexibility, skill, speed, body composition, nutrition, rest and relaxation but states that it is specific to the individual. Whilst this research predominantly refers to the lives of professional dancers, it is still relevant in many respects to University dance students some of whom go on to become professional dancers or often the teachers of the next generation of dancers.

However, despite identifying these components of fitness Koutedakis and Jamurtas say '...professional dancers often demonstrate values similar to those obtained from healthy sedentary individuals of comparable age in key fitness-related parameters' (2004, p. 651). Allen and Wyon go on to conclude that 'dancers generally have poor physiological conditioning compared to other sporting populations due to their high skill levels resulting in very good economy of movement whilst dancing' (2008, p.7). They concur that although this skill level in turn protects dancers from injury, it is also this efficiency of movement that minimises 'a possible training effect due to the diminished overload principle' (2008, p.8). In relation to the overload principle Koutedakis, Metsios and Stavropoulos-Kalinoglou (2006) say that there must be sufficient intensity and duration to the exercise in order to activate the adaptation mechanism. However, as Brown et al state 'While dance training is focused on the development of technique, its explicit objective is rarely to improve the athletic components of dance' (2007, p. 38).

Research shows that one of the causes of this low level of fitness is the method of the daily dance class. Class has been described by Wyon et al as '... an intermittent exercise form with the centre phase reaching high intensity levels and the work to rest ratios dependent on dancers level of training and size of class' (2002, p. 45). Allen and Wyon go on to say 'Unlike most athletes, dancers are biased towards skill at the expense of base strength and fitness' (2008, p. 9) and Macey sees that there has evolved a physiological training gap between class, rehearsals and performance (2008, http://www.danceuk.org/). As a result it is not surprising that dancers demonstrate a

lower level of fitness than their sporting counterparts as the principle of overload already mentioned is not adhered to in the daily class. Koutedakis and Jamurtas see this is something that dancers cannot afford to do because 'The physical demands placed on dancers from choreography and performance schedules make their physiology and fitness just as important as skill development' (2004, p. 651). Redding et al agree and in relation to those involved in the training of dancers say 'It is no longer acceptable to train dancers without due regard for physiological concerns if they are to be prepared appropriately to meet the demands of current choreographic work' (2009, p. 91) and Angioi et al (2009) are also in agreement. Redding et al state that 'In dance training, the monitoring of skill and technical improvements often prevails over other concerns' (2009, p. 3), and this is certainly relevant to this University setting.

In light of the limited levels of fitness evident amongst dancers there are increasing amounts of research that demonstrate positive results regarding dancers who engage in supplemental fitness activities beyond or within the dance class. As Koutedakis and Jamurtas say 'recent data on male and female dancers revealed that supplementary exercise training can lead to improvements of such fitness parameters …' (2004, p. 652). In her review on integrating fitness into dance training Rafferty sees that the majority of those researching in this area conclude 'there are gaps in the structure of dance training programs that could be filled with type of physical training that has benefited other elite athletes' (2010, p. 45). Examples include a study by Welsh et al which included back strengthening work for dancers enrolled in a University-based professional training programme which in its results found increases varying from 14 – 151% in lumbar extensor strength (1998, p.141). Brown et al (2007) concluded that after a six week period of plyometric or traditional weight training, strength and power-related variables improved, including anaerobic power in highly trained female collegiate dancers. The control group who only did their dance training for the six week period, showed no significant increases in strength (2007, p.44). Similarly Koutedakis et al (2007) in their three month study on how aerobic and strength training affected fitness related parameters, found that the control group who only completed all their dance duties over the period with no supplementary training, showed no signs of improvement in muscular strength.

In terms of including this supplementary training into a student's curriculum Rafferty and Redding's (2007) study examined the effects of a one-year dance specific fitness programme on undergraduate modern dance students,

including a weekly ninety minute fitness session that was developed across the year in accordance with specificity and periodisation. Redding et al's (2009) research developed this further and weekly fitness classes were included in the school's timetable. A recent study by Twitchett et al (2011) aimed to look at the effects of a specifically tailored fitness training programme on ballet dancers in relation to injury and the aesthetic quality of performance, with a control group to compare against. The results demonstrated that the intervention group's overall performance increased significantly and greater than the control group. The study concluded that 'Practical applications from this study suggest that supplemental training should be part of a ballet dancer's regime and minimal intervention time is required to have observable effects' (2011, p. 35).

The study already mentioned by Angioi et al had a twofold aim of replicating and testing a novel aesthetic competence tool for reliability and also investigating the association between selected physical fitness components and aesthetic competence. Angioi et al say:

> technical mastery of skills is essential to achieving the necessary aesthetic competence during dance performance. Since the body is the instrument of the dancer's expression, it has been suggested that aspects of performance could benefit from enhanced physiological capabilities such as muscular strength and power. (2009, p.115)

Koutedakis et al (2007) as well as Brown et al (2007) agree with these enhanced capabilities suggested by Angioi et al. However, Angioi et al do concur that no studies yet have determined which of the main fitness components would best predict aesthetic competence in contemporary dancers. The nature of contemporary dance is different to ballet and a range of different techniques and approaches are used within this genre and so contemporary dancers have to cope with a diversity of demands. If dance scientists understood which physical fitness components most affected aesthetic competence especially in contemporary dance then this could be utilised in designing fitness training to improve aesthetic competence and performance (2009, p. 121). Despite the limitations of the study they concluded that 'upper body muscular endurance and jump ability best predict aesthetic competence in contemporary dance students and professionals' (2009, p. 122).

In conclusion to supplementary training Koutedakis et al state 'the dance only approach does not provide enough scope for developing aspects of physical fitness' (2007, p. 811) and therefore intervention programmes or changes to a dancer's training should be accepted. If research such as this study can identify the physical

variables most related to high technique marks then supplementary training programmes can be specific to the individual.

Research findings:

In the original study a quantitative methodological approach was taken and a group of twenty-nine University dance students from year one and two took part in a number of conducted fitness tests. All students gave their permission and signed a consent form to take part in the research. The tests all took place in one day in the dance studio two days prior to the technique assessment and the researcher was present throughout the testing with the assistance of a member of the sports team. Anthropometric measurements were taken and the tests included the Dance Aerobic Fitness Test, muscular endurance, muscular power and active and passive flexibility were measured. The final set of results was the technique mark gained by each student. Using SPSS (version 17) regression analysis and univariate analysis was conducted to examine the relationships between the independent and dependent variables and the study concluded that core strength, height, active flexibility and Body Mass Index (BMI) were the physical variables most closely related with high technique marks in this *current* sample of students. It is accepted that further research is required to investigate these findings across a larger sample range and this is in process, but these findings have impacted on the pedagogical practice and approaches of the staff as well as the subject knowledge offered to the students.

Impact of findings on teaching and learning of studio practice:

The next part of the paper examines the four variables identified in the original research, and how they individually relate to the literature as well as their impact on both the researcher's teaching and learning of studio practice and the wider field. In this discussion a number of wider issues arose as a consequence of these four variables, some of which are mentioned under the next four headings or later in a separate section.

Core Strength:

If we look first at core musculature this is also an indicator of muscular endurance which enables the dancer to perform a range of movements including high surges of power such as a jêtés as well as high powered outputs for 30 – 60 seconds (Koutedakis and Jamurtas, 2004, p. 653). Koutedakis and Jamurtas refer to the concept as 'anaerobic endurance' which is a 'type of physical fitness in the centre of a continuum between aerobic fitness and muscle strength' (ibid) and the research so far suggests that contemporary dancers

have better anaerobic fitness then their ballet counterparts.

Within the realms of teaching and learning tutors need to consider how they can incorporate outputs of 30 – 60 seconds in order to facilitate the 'anaerobic endurance' coined by Koutedakis and Jamuratas. For the researcher this 30 – 60 second output has been quite feasible to put into practice although some sections of the class better suit it than others, so static exercises, centre work and movement phrases can easily be developed to cover this time frame and beyond. The principle of overload mentioned by Koutedakis, Metsios and Stavropoulos-Kalinoglou (2007) can be applied with core work, as with other elements of class, and the challenge is about building the number of repetitions but in a way that is interesting and retains the artistic nature of the dance style. The overload principle does require the tutor to think carefully about how the scheme of work will progress throughout a semester so that the traditional pattern of the class does not re-emerge. As students prepare for their final assessment class, overload can be hard to sustain as the students invariably put skill and its acquisition above training considerations. It also requires a balance between time given to feedback and time moving, as without sufficient reflection a dancer might continue to move incorrectly. The use of reflective journals and discussions through networked sites can assist the tutor is continuing with feedback after the finish of the session, but this needs further development and consideration.

This variable core strength identifies well with the work of Philips who states that in order to improve the stability of the central abdominal stabilisers then both passive and active stability need to be worked on (2005, p. 24). The holding of the plank (which was used in the research) whilst a good indicator of the strength of these stabilisers is only a measure of the body in an isometric position and the holding of this alone should not be the sole indicator of endurance in this area of the body. In Twitchett et al's (2011) study on ballet dancers they introduced an intervention programme which aimed at improving local muscle endurance using circuit training methods targeting specific muscle groups (2011, p. 36). This study suggests possibilities for future supplementary training that could assist dancers to improve muscular endurance throughout the body. As muscular endurance is achieved by repetitive contractions of muscle fibres (Sharkey and Gaskill, 2007) it would make sense that dancers, as Twichett's study suggests, develop muscular endurance in a range of muscles and not just prolonged repetitions of one position.

Within the researcher's classes this led to movements that went through a range of movements, some static and others in

motion in order to incorporate the improvement of core musculature within a passive and active state. It has also led to giving the students the opportunity to explore through a mini-circuit training session, different types of equipment that can assist active core strength, such as flexi-bar, kettle bell, Swiss ball, resistance bands and wobble boards. This enabled them to experience a range of affordable equipment that might either be considered for their supplementary training or for use during long holiday periods.

It is important to briefly note that with the subject of core it is important to tie in to some aspects of theory, as often dancers have the misconception that the area referred to as the core consists of the superficial abdominal muscles and are often unaware of the complexity and interrelatedness of the core area within the trunk, spine and shoulder girdle. With modern studios it is now possible to visually project an image of the superficial and deep core muscles to aid students learning, even in practical sessions.

Body Mass Index:

Moving to the BMI scores, in the field of dance the inclusion of this variable is to be expected and links between body composition and dance have been culturally attached for years and relate to da Silva and Bonorino's words from earlier. Much research exists on body composition and body mass and is predominantly from the perspective of the female ballet dancer and body composition has been identified as a component of physical fitness (Wilmerding, McKinnon and Mermier, 2005; Koutedakis and Jamurtas, 2004). There is also research about the concern that a low BMI can contribute to fatigue and injury, and it is encouraging that within the results there was a mean of 23 (±2.45) which falls into the 18.5 – 24.9 BMI classification for normal weight (Heyward,2002, p. 183).

Although no low BMI scores were apparent there were a number of BMI scores over 25 which can also have implications for the dancer. McCalister's work looks at the dance teacher's role in advising overweight dancers and says that in many University programmes 'the student population is mixed with students of different backgrounds, foci and training' (2007, p. 19) and she says that overweight dancers are at risk of injury. A BMI score of over 25 could lead to unnecessary strain on joints and limbs as well as to restrict certain movements which might spoil the intended aesthetics leading to lower mark ratings. As Wilmerding, McKinnon and Mermier say 'Perhaps the greater concern should not be what a dancer weighs or what percent body they maintain, but how they perform' (2005, p. 22) but this begs the discussion about the association between what a tutor sees and the criteria. It does raise the issue of what

advice is given to students under or over the recommended BMI figures, although the research here concedes that greater reliability to this parameter in future research should be measured taking skin fold measurements which Micheli et al (2005) conclude is possibly the most accurate and practical way of assessing body composition for dancers.

Digressing slightly is the question of whether tutors are influenced by the aesthetics of the body, even though this is not in any marking criteria. Redding (2010) referred to our personal experiences and is it possible that one prefers the body type that one has accepted as the norm in our own training? This is certainly a matter for future consideration. On a practical level it can be a difficult path for a tutor to guide students through what might be their first time living out of the parental home, with limited knowledge of cooking or nutrition. In terms of subject content at Level Four nutritional information is given to the students in an informative but relaxed manner. A food diary is conducted and these are peer reviewed within class time so that comments can be made positively or attention drawn to particular issues, which if necessary can be dealt with on a one to one basis. Cross curricular activities with other departments, for example Nutrition and Food Science, can be a valuable avenue to explore.

The matter of a student's weight has personal and pastoral implications and although counselling is available it must ultimately be the student's decision. One approach can be through the safety issue of performing in a class, where the space is shared with 20+ other students. If a dancer is unfit during a class, and this is as a result of a nutritional deficit then this can be drawn to the dancer's attention. Overall this is a matter that is best dealt with by observation from the tutors assessing for any dramatic weight loss or gain and encouraging students to talk about any issues, although there is no perfect solution. It is also a matter that is not to be left purely in the Studio Practice domain.

Active flexibility:

This discussion in relation to aesthetic values leads well into the third variable that was related to higher technique marks which was active flexibility, and this offers some debate for consideration. As Deighan says 'without adequate flexibility, dancers are unlikely to raise themselves to professional standards' (2005, p. 13) and although not all University students enter the professional dance world it is still a consideration. Although Deighan's point is debatable, she sees dance as a mode of non-verbal communication and in order to fulfil this then 'optimum levels of flexibility, or range of motion (ROM), are essential for maximising the versatility of movement' (ibid).

Wilmerding (2009) has tested the active and passive flexibility in the developpé a la seconde in University students, in order to develop supplementary exercises to decrease the range between passive and active, which is often caused by lack of strength. In this study, even though only active flexibility showed as a physical variable, it is important to note that there is often a difference between active and passive ranges Clippinger (2007) and Howse (2000) recommend a balance between strength and flexibility especially for injury prevention, a point which Brown et al (2007) agree with. Accordingly, both tutors and students should consider combining strength and flexibility work simultaneously in any class or supplementary training.

The researcher has incorporated within the practical element of the module both active and passive work, as the researcher's experience has shown anecdotally that dancers favour dynamic and passive stretching over active-static and this balance has tried to be addressed. Dance, like many other areas of physical activity, has a high area of repetition, in order to gain the necessary skill acquisition and this often leads to habitual or favourite exercises that are over-practiced at the expense of others. By increasing the students understanding of the different types of stretching and when these are most appropriate within the setting of the dance class can help to counteract the habitual stretching routine. For example Jeffreys (2008) says that dynamic stretching is best in the warm-up period of the class and this has been utilised by the researcher within the first section of the class. Having a more balanced range between active and passive is necessary as without the active flexibility many of the movements where the dancer moves through a three dimensional space will not be to the same standard.

Height:

In terms of this variable there is obviously nothing a tutor or student can do to change this factor, but in terms of teaching and learning it can certainly impact on the content of class work. Dancers will range in height and so a tutor should cater for this within the make-up of sequences, so that vocabulary challenges dancers of all heights. It is also important to stress that the antagonistic relationship between the anterior and posterior core muscles are given equal attention and that dancers are encouraged to feel beyond their kinaesthetic extremities regardless of height. A class should challenge dancers equally and any tutor must also work past their own stature when creating suitable material, which is not always an easy thing to do. The researcher has found that sometimes using material from other sources can be a solution to prevent one's own preferred style of movement being too dominant.

Wider Issues:

Aesthetics:

Beyond a teaching and learning perspective, the variables of height, BMI and active flexibility all raise interesting issues towards aesthetic judgements and that relationship with the marking of a studio practice class. Research by Angioi et al (2009) investigated the association between selected physical fitness components and aesthetic competence using a new tool to measure that aesthetic competence. They felt that dance teachers amongst others had to rely on a variety of non-standard criteria and methods to quantify performance. The selected criteria they used as their measuring tool included the following: control of movements; spatial skills; accuracy of movements; technique; dynamics; timing and musical accuracy; performance quality and overall performance and each criteria had the following scoring 1 – 3, 4 – 6, 7 - 8 and 9 – 10 (2009, p. 116).

Obviously within the University system there is an increasing gradient in criteria and grade descriptors through the three levels of study and there is no doubt by the researcher about the rigour behind the marking process in this subject. However, why was the variable of height, of which no student can intentionally change, related to higher marks in studio practice in this particular research study? Wilmerding, McKinnon and Mermier (2005, p.18) refer to the 'pervasive aesthetic' and da Silva and Borodino say in their work on ballet students 'the figure of the dancer has value in the artistic appreciation as a critical expected, with aesthetic and cultural pre-established judgements' (2008, p. 49).

In relation to aesthetics it also asks the question that if you are moderating or watching material not your own, do you view it differently? A tutor must look at the body in the act of doing that movement, and so therefore is the viewer not also making some sub-conscious comment on that movement. If you, the moderator are looking at material that you are not familiar with, and contemporary dance has a wide spectrum of styles under its umbrella, then might you view that differently from a style that you have an integral and kinaesthetic awareness of? No answers are suggested here but these results did make the researcher further question the difficulty of marking an artistic movement form as well as her own aesthetic judgements.

Resources:

The references to Philip's article on core stability in two sections raises a pedagogical issue that is visible from the relatively new field of dance science. Within this area of study there is a significant amount of research conducted

at Postgraduate and Doctoral level and in a controlled or laboratory based setting, and mostly in relation to the vocational sector of the dance training world. So as a result the researcher has found it important that information needs to be presented with a degree of relevance and understanding to University undergraduate dance students, but agrees with Daniels who says: 'It is essential that students learn to apply conceptual and perceptual knowledge to the specifics of dance technique' (2009, p. 9). As with many subjects the researcher has found that using a range of resources can help disseminate this information and cater for learning styles. It is about enabling the Undergraduate dance student understanding so they can take these research examples forward and make them relevant to their own dance environment.

With the mushrooming effect of the original research the words of Trawler have become increasingly relevant when he says 'they [challenging practices in learning and teaching] challenge academics and students to relearn what they do, to address old assumptions, to behave differently using new skills, perhaps overturning what has gone before' (2009, p. 143). In relation to dance, traditionally it has been taught as a skill-based activity and as Redding says 'Teaching methods in dance have typically evolved from tradition and personal experience rather than from the movement and exercise sciences' (2010, p. 43). With the firm footing that dance science now plays within the dance world as Nemeses and Chatfield say 'Possession of additional information influences choices in the material, structure and environment one selects for technique classes' (2007, p. 115) and pedagogic decisions can now be informed by research not just experiences or traditions. In relation to Trowler's words there has been a challenge for the researcher in term of theory and practice, the knowledge and understanding presented to the students as well as getting students to reflect and evaluate on how they take on that information, in relation to Daniels 'thoughtful dancer'.

Conclusion:

To conclude the original research presented here has helped to redefine the curriculum as well as being used to inform the students in relation to their own individual learning. It has led to a point of consideration on how to combine elements of science, the arts and humanities so that students can see themselves as a holistic and multi-dimensional body. It has moved members of the Dance team at LJMU to utilise a multi-disciplinary approach within their practical teaching, moving away from the

more traditional teaching methods and approaches.

As Daniels says:

> Conceptual knowledge, deep perceptual awareness, and understanding of individual solutions are facilitated by a learner-centered pedagogical approach that encourages students to become thinking dancers who assume responsibility of their own growth and progress' (2009, p. 9).

Future papers need to look at the relationship and balance between the teaching and learning of the practical and theoretical elements so that this thoughtful dancer that Daniels refers to can have both kinaesthetic and intellectual understanding of the issues facing dancers in the twentieth first century, in which the demands on the dancer are constantly increasing. It is anticipated that as the knowledge of dance science expands and meets the pedagogical setting of the studio and classroom that questions and answers will continue to shift within this balance.

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A Radical Re-modelling of Induction – the staff experience

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Abstract

Much is written about the transition of new students into university but there is a smaller body of knowledge about the staffs' perceptions of the process. How students are inducted into an institution is critical to their level of familiarity and engagement and the development of their knowledge and skills. This paper explores an extended transition process offered to a group of students from the viewpoint of the staff team involved. The findings showed how staff had to move away from their usual roles in transition; for the most part they enjoyed the challenge of delivering the curriculum in this way. Staff did acknowledge the messiness of the programme, and recognised the new transition did impact on other responsibilities they had committed to, but at the same time as this was a new initiative, the problems were quickly put down to a "quick new learning curve" that could be rectified with careful planning.

Introduction

There is a plethora of research in the areas around student induction and transition into university (McInnis, James and McNaught 1995; Laing, Robinson and Johnson, 2005; Cartney and Rouse, 2006; Vinson et al., 2010) but a distinct lack of it in relation to the experiences of the staff. This paper focuses on a re-modelled transition programme, whereby the first year students journeyed through a five week process of getting to know each other; engaging with the subject content and developing the basis of their academic skills. Details of this approach can be found in Vinson, Nixon, Walsh, Walker, Zaitseva, and Mitchell (2010). The staff team (n=11) working with this student group had been together for a

number of years, primarily working on the one programme with a bias towards delivering a strong student experience. The approach was taken to ensure best fit with what the team saw as a changing clientele as a result of the widening participation agenda and different student expectations (Select Committee on Widening Participation, 2009).

The five week transition period discussed in this paper was planned around a set of themes related to the programme but followed the thread of 'what sport means to you.' The term transition rather than induction was used, to illustrate the connection between the experiences that students brought with them to university and their new environment. The programme team saw university as a continuation of a learning journey and not the commencement of one. It was vital therefore that staff were able to interact quickly with students to establish rapport so that this interaction could be progressed. Two members of staff per week were allocated the task of planning the activities and contributing to the whole group lectures as well as selecting the activities based on the theme of the week. (Each weekly theme reflected the key routes embedded throughout the programme such as the Business of Sport, Inclusion, Physical Education and Health.) Staff responsible for the routes facilitated some of the theory sessions through the five weeks and three members of staff had particular responsibility for overseeing the delivery, implementation and timetabling of activities and that the students and staff were aware of where they should be and when. The students upon arrival to the University were allocated to personal tutor groups and each member of staff was responsible for a group. There were on average five tutor group sessions per week (designed and delivered simultaneously by all staff) discussing both the content of the subject and students' personal development. Activities such as goal setting, team building, time management and sessions promoting group cohesiveness were integral to this process. The data was collected from the staff team (n=11) during the transition period specifically at week three and week five and by a focus group of six staff at the end of the semester. This paper shows the experiences of the staff team of running an intensive extended transition, and what they felt this meant for both them as individuals and the students.

Philosophical approaches to induction

According to Laing, Robinson and Johnston (2005) helping students to manage the transition into Higher Education (HE) should be a process that inducts the individual into the needs and expectations of higher education. Zepke

and Leach (2005) suggest there are two approaches to the issue: one which looks at assimilation, fitting students into the institution, and a newer approach which looks at adaptation where institutions change to accommodate students' diverse needs. The approach taken in this paper was the latter. When students' cultural capital is valued and fits with the institution they are 'fish in water' according to Young (2002). However, when cultural practices are deemed inappropriate or invalidated, students are more likely to experience a culture of stress and consider dropping out. Induction can be resource heavy (Edward 2003) and needs to be supported at institutional level. However, as Johnston (1997) points out, some tutors do not see pastoral work and the retention of students as part of their academic role. This issue may be exacerbated when resource constraints limit the time that academic staff are able to spend with students individually, and when academics are faced with conflicts between their research and their teaching roles (James1998, Parliamentary Select Committee 2001).

There is a move within some sectors of HE to reject what is seen as a 'therapeutic' approach to education, equating this with an emphasis on emotional damage which is considered to lead to vulnerability and the 'demoralisation of education' (Mackie 2001; Etter, Burmeister and Elder 2001). Tucker (1999) stressed the importance of fostering a sense of belonging with others, while other researchers (Yorke and Longden 2008; Kember 2001; McInnis et al.,1995) note the positive influence of the generation of self reliance and of peer support groups. Retention rates have become increasingly high profile (Edward, 2003) if there is inadequate facilitation of the transition to university from school then attrition may occur. Whilst retention rates were not an issue in this programme, staff recognised the importance of continued diligence in regards this matter for the future. According to Billing (1997) staff have a dilemma at induction, they either do too little to try and give the students some autonomy and responsibility for their own learning, or they do too much because students need support and guidance in order to adjust to the university environment. Rather than 'get it over with' as quickly as possible, Lowe (2003) suggests that induction should be seen as a process instead of an event and should include staff and student interaction, peer group support as well as academic preparation. This was a key principle of the transition process in so far that staff wished to attempt to ensure that students were as enthusiastic, passionate and engaged as possible in both subject content and the institution. If institutions want to enhance their retention they must change their processes so that academic advice is easily available and offered in non-bureaucratic ways (Yorke 1999).

Edwards (2003) conjures up the image of induction of speakers queuing up at the door to deliver their concentrated 20 minute talk on course structure; assessment and computer systems, when what was probably needed by the end of the day was counselling services! Failure to adjust to the environmental demands, rather than intellectual difficulties, accounts for a high proportion of student departures (Coates 2005). The views of staff are particularly important, as effective implementation of the package of recommendations relies on commitment from all staff to a process of holistic and fundamental change in the culture of Higher Education (Young 2007). This paper explores the opinions of staff who are heavily involved in both the design and the running of a longer and more intensive transition period for students new to university.

Staff and student interaction / effective induction

Many students who withdraw from courses express a desire to stay in HE, indicating that they may have benefited from appropriate, early academic and personal support (Young, Glogowska and Lockyer 2007). Students who do not socialise are more vulnerable (Mackie, 2001) and without individual contact this may go unnoticed. McInnis et al (1995) reported that many students who never socialise with their groups are typically low achievers. Tinto (2002) stresses the importance of helping students believe in their own abilities to meet the demands of their course; however, they also need the necessary skills to survive. Therefore, it is not surprising that staff-student relations are so important as it is through these that the student may find their place within the institution. Thomas (2002) adds that the habits of the institution do much to shape these interactions, as do those of the individuals involved. In this regard institutions should give serious consideration to changing the character of the educational experience (Tinto 2002), and must recognise that frontloading of effort is the wisest course of action.

Pascarelli and Terenzini (1997) identify informal interaction with staff as a major influence on students' social and academic integration whereas a negative perception of academic staff by students is cited as being harmful to students' chances of success (McInnis et al.,1995; Lowe and Cook 2005). Effective induction programmes reach out to make contact with students in order to establish personal bonds among students and between students, faculty and staff members (Tinto, 2002; Yorke, 1999). Programme teams not only provide continuing assistance to students, they also act to ensure the integration of all individuals as equal and competent

members of the academic and social communities of the institution (Tinto 2002). The transition model in this case set out as one of its core purposes to do this.

Studies indicate that students identify social contact as a valuable component of their learning (Harvey, Drew and Smith 2006, Laing et al 2005). Furthermore, in the context of widening participation, Longden (2006) argues that a wider definition of social inclusion must involve a 'reconceptualization' of the teaching and learning interface. Coates' (2005) research suggests that viewing retention as an 'educational issue' offers the potential to achieve better academic and social integration for a wider range of students (emotional impact). If students feel that staff believe in them, and care about the outcomes of their studying, they seem to gain both self-confidence and motivation and their work improves (Thomas 2002).

Wilcox, Winn and Fyvie-Gauld (2005) believe academic staff need to be aware of the intense anxiety and fear that new students experience in relation to the social aspects of transition to university. Personal tutors can play a significant part in conveying to students that these feelings are not unusual. Longden (2006) believes support services should be concentrated most heavily in the early part of the first year so being proactive in reaching new students before they have an opportunity to experience this anxiety, fear and confusion. In contrast Laing et al (2005), indicate that the early part of the first year needs to be devoted to inducting students systematically so they clearly appreciate what is involved in studying at an advanced level. Consequently the five week programme included: alternate learning environments (e.g. Cartooning, smoothie making, Google mapping), movies, non-traditional physical activities (e.g. free running, Speedminton and Rock-It-Ball), lectures, website construction, mini research projects, guest speakers, debates and daily reading tasks. It was hoped that this innovative interactive programme would engage and inspire students throughout their early experiences at university. But at the same time provide a conduit for the interaction of staff and students to build a firm foundation for the university journey.

Taking all this into account may help teams to re-conceptualise their position around induction and as importantly for institutions to be clear on their stance in relation to new students becoming part of a community of learning. It is hoped that the views within this paper will start conversations and offer a basis to support the change to a positive transition for students supported with resources and given the status it deserves as critical part of the institution.

Methodology

The rationale for change was founded upon the programme team's anecdotal belief that students are lacking engagement with their subject of study, curiosity, and under-developed study skills. The programme team were concerned that sometimes there was no sense of overall direction/purpose/fit, no passion for their subject area. There was recognition that the level of support required to ensure that students are gaining/acquiring these qualities, skills and dispositions from the very beginning of their University experience would be considerably greater than traditionally provided. However, the programme team had a commitment towards student centred delivery, to a core belief of a relevant personal learning journey for students through university. The work of Barnett and Coates (2005) and their Knowledge, Action, Self Model, echoed this ideological positioning and provided a basis for a change of curriculum focus. After discussion the decision was made to radically overhaul the previous approach and to put together a five week transition programme to more effectively introduce the new students to the university, each other, the staff and the subject.

The approach to the study was purely qualitative. The programme team (n=11) were given questionnaires containing open ended questions at the end of week three and week five targeting their reflections on the process of transition and feelings towards the changes. A focus group of six staff was also utilised to analyse their perceptions and attitudes towards the transition programme at the end of the thirteen week semester. The written reflections and focus group interview were transcribed and coded with the emerging themes discussed below.

Discussion of findings

Yorke and Longden (2008) report that induction is resource hungry with great demands on staff and overall the results from this small scale research project showed this to be true with their being both challenges and benefits to the transition period. Four main themes emerged from the analyses which were the emotional effect; organisational issues; relationship between staff and students and the impact on student learning.

Emotional

In relation to the emotional effect of the transition the findings indicated that this was a problem area for the staff "*I barely slept during Week two……..very tired*" (questionnaire – week three). Alongside there were comments about how this linked to the student experience:

"*although the student experience in level one has probably been fantastic, the induction period has left me personally stressed, tired and feeling totally un-organised*" (Questionnaire – week five).

At the end of the semester when asked what challenges they faced personally during the induction two members of staff referred to how tiring it was and one to how difficult it had been. One member of staff notes:

"*it is amazing how tiring it was. It was not just being busy, there were so many things happening during that transition that you had to keep in your head*." Whilst another states: "*struggling: doing it to a good quality, doing the job right, and not just the teaching and learning but across everything*" (Questionnaire–week five).

Alongside the negative emotional affect that most staff reported they felt, there was also a more positive view that they enjoyed being involved in the transition process and felt it was worthwhile.

"*I have really enjoyed working with my students*" "*Think it has been great*"; "*I feel personally that it has been worth it*" (Questionnaire – week three).

"*I am relatively positive about the whole process…,I found the five weeks quite fun, tiring, time consuming, but it would have been no different if we had gone straight into a formal timetable… but fun in a perverse way*" (Questionnaire – week five).

There also seemed to be a longer-term view being offered of what might happen in the future and studies by (Wilcox et al 2005; Brookes, 2003) demonstrate that the climate created within an institution impacts on student outcomes.

"*I would do it again, it is something worth doing, setting it up is difficult and takes a lot of effort early on but gets the students up to speed and saves on effort later in the year*" (Focus group week thirteen).

Organisational

In relation to the second theme of organisation there was a consistent message from the staff which included issues around confusion, perceptions of hours and work load and preparation time. Comments from staff whilst in the midst of transition included:

"*From a staff point of point it has been confusing. We should have discussed timetabling and clashes before we started*" (Questionnaire – week three).

"*Staff appear to be overloaded and unable to prepare adequately between sessions or have a minute to breathe*" (Questionnaire – week three).

As Billing (1997) suggested, the programme was planned well ahead of time with timetabled sessions and room bookings all in place. However, the finer details were left to the individual staff –

which was extra work for those particular individuals. It was suggested that the organisational issues may be due to the newness of the experiences and that in future years things may not be as difficult. This was raised as an action point for the following year to make sure the organisation was more evenly spread. One individual commented that:

"*uncertainty at times as to what we are supposed to be doing next and lots of confusion- however that would seem inevitable on the first run and you would assume it only needs tweaking next year*"(Questionnaire – week five).

Yorke and Longden (2008) advocate a concentration of academic support in the early part of the first year which the transition project aimed to do. From the focus group which was held a few weeks after the end of the transition programme came a more pragmatic view as 50% of the staff reflected back that some of the issues were their own, comments included:

"*I am not the most organised of people*…";
"*A personal challenge to juggle everything*";
"*Time Management was a challenge*"

Besides the transition process that was running within the programme there were also external pressure being brought to bear, one individual comments that: "We *have the down side of… saying it is too expensive, all those hours*!" the same individual continues by saying:

"*So it is the perception of staff in the faculty, thinking it is expensive because we have all those staff engaged with the students, but in the long run it might be better, better retention, student learning, looking forward to dissertations and stuff have we set the ground rules already for level three.*"

This fits in with the work of Tinto (2002) and Billing (1997), who explained that successful education, not retention is the secret to successful induction programmes.

Staff and student relationships

Nearly all staff at each time point placed strong value on the interaction with students and knowing their tutor groups well:

"*For me meeting the tutor group a number of times during the week really helps, because we get to know those students really well over those five weeks, they get to know me and how I work*" (Focus group – week thirteen).

This comment highlights the two-dimensional aspects of this approach it is about the staff as much as the students. Although the benefits of "*Got to know my personal tutor group well*" (questionnaire – week five) are not known as this time, it is assumed that this will be beneficial over the long-term for both parties. According

to Tinto (2002) effective programmes reach out to make contact with students in order to establish personal bonds among students and between students and staff.

However a common theme both during and after transition, was that staff felt that they only got to know their tutor group rather than the whole cohort. Although one of the goals of the transition programme was to establish a rapport with tutor groups it was not intended to be at the expense of getting to know more of the cohort as well. Comments included:

"I *would like to get to know some of the other students other than just the twelve in my group so maybe even having to feed back to a different tutor for one session and then combining a number of sessions into one might be useful*" (Questionnaire – week three).

"*I don't know the rest of the year group…..It would be nice to hear different views and opinions from the other groups to have a more holistic view of the year group*" (Focus group – week thirteen).

Despite this, 80% of the staff team were very positive about the transition programme, one individual felt that they "*accepted it was time consuming and there was a lot going on, but none of that affected the students, it affected us*" (Focus group – week thirteen). The students were certainly not left waiting around (Billing 1997), their time was used effectively.

At each data collection stage the staff expressed concern about the effect of the first year transition on the other students:

"*The level one induction has almost super-seeded everything else and I personally feel all my attention has been focused on them. I don't feel I have really helped the level three students in their dissertation week, as I have consciously been thinking about 'rushing' to the next level one session/meeting*".

One member of staff was even stronger in relation to this issue and stated that "*If there is one major negative it would be that we did not do enough with the second and third years*…."(Focus group – week thirteen). This point was taken on board for planning the next year.

The respondents at all points referred both positively and negatively in relation to their colleagues and the resulting effect on the transition programme. One individual noted at the end of week three that: "*Not all staff have engaged fully in the processes*" and further commented that "*there were times when some members of staff were doing more than others*". However, on a more positive note another stated that: "*I feel much more part of the programme, as I normally have very little input at level one*" (Questionnaire – week three). One comment at the end of the programme was that:

"*As a whole team we did not work as*

well… but we have got through it, it's like walking along a cliff path, stumbling two steps from the edge, right yourself and think that could have been nasty, what a lovely day, and think next time we walk past there I will be careful, but we would walk that path again, we know it can trip you up, but we are aware of that now" (focus group – week thirteen).

Impact on student learning

When reflecting back over the approach taken it was felt that a lot of the issues/ challenges were as a result of delivering a new initiative. One member of staff said: "*I think that is part and parcel of anything new you do*" (Focus group – week thirteen). This reflects on the work of Lowe and Cook (2003), that induction should be seen as a process instead of an event. Excitingly the findings show some real benefits to the students of running a transition programme such as this one and these have come out very strongly despite in some cases the challenges already discussed. The student voice has been written elsewhere (Vinson et al 2010) and key findings were that students connected with the staff from week one and talked strongly about their enthusiasm; helpfulness and how they had created a sense of belonging. The involvement of staff in facilitating the academic and social integration of new students is seen as a key factor in the successful management of student transition (Coates 2005; Longden 2006).

Some staff at week three alluded to a change in the students, which was very evident at week thirteen, one commented:

"*the other major thing for me, because we have talked about feedback, some of the students in my tutor group have already said to me, I have read the feedback, and when I did my next piece I tried to incorporate what that feedback was saying… level three students don't often do that, so to hear a level one student say that is fantastic, so there has been a change about how they think about things*" (Focus group – week thirteen).

Another member of staff commented that there is:

"*generally a greater awareness of all sorts of things, particularly around study skills. Almost from day one they have had a greater sense of thinking about who they are what they are doing and the way they learn*" (Questionnaire – week five).

Another individual stated that:

"*I think they are engaging in being students differently. And getting involved in things better… curious is a good word. Attendance at the tutor group was generally quite good, they were questioning things, they weren't just accepting it*" (Focus group – week thirteen).

According to Tinto (2002) the presence of a strong commitment to students results in an identifiable ethos of caring which permeates the character of institutional life.

Lessons learned

Despite trepidation from some staff and the extra time spent by key colleagues in developing the transition and curriculum change, the project was received well by 80% of the staff team. There was great satisfaction in relation to meeting the initial aims of transition, i.e. better engagement with the subject and the students. Staff had to move away from their usual roles in induction, for the most part they enjoyed the challenge of delivering curriculum in this way. Staff did acknowledge the messiness of the pilot, and recognised the new transition did impact on other responsibilities they had committed to, but at the same time as this was a new initiative, the problems were quickly put down to a "quick new learning curve" that could be rectified with careful planning.

In relation to developing this as a process, there are many lessons to be learnt from the findings of this paper. Organisation seems to be crucial to staff feeling in control of their own work situation, this included having the relevant resources ready and having their days mapped out. More thought needed to be put into the amount that staff are expected to do and whether this can be balanced out more evenly and with less intensity, maybe even reducing the contact day for the students by one hour may enable the staff a little breathing space. The students may need to be rotated around the staff more in future years so that staff get to know more of the group, and on the flip-side, students get to know more of the staff. This would seem to be relatively easy to do in relation to connecting tutor groups up and rotating sessions.

The transition programme outlined in this paper appears to have effectively put into action many of the elements suggested as good practice by the literature. The integration of intensive, supported activities combining individual, social and academic perspectives of the early weeks of university life, has elicited an encouragingly successful programme. The transition programme has allowed students to have fun, engage with some degree of acquisition of subject knowledge and personal learning strategies, enabled the generation of social networks and varying perceptions of belonging, together with connection to staff.

The experience obtained through this innovative transition model can constitute a point of reference for those who are considering revisiting induction programmes. This programme after a number of transitions is now a standard part of the delivery of the programme.

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Developing Professional Learning in Higher Education: Utilising Peer-mentoring to promote collaborative and reciprocal learning

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Abstract

Successful peer-mentoring is stimulated and sustained by effective collegial and professional dialogue, which embraces reciprocity at the centre of its development. Developing professional learning in Higher Education will resonate with many practitioners and academics within the sector. Significantly, how we develop this type of professional learning and utilise its conception, is still debateable. Underpinned by key authors within the field of mentoring and collaborative professional learning, this article provides some insight into the benefits of collaborative and reciprocal learning, and how this can be facilitated through peer-mentoring. How mentoring is viewed bears important implications for how mentoring is practiced and experienced within Higher Education institutions. Subsequently, this article will also highlight some of the risks associated with peer-mentoring in Higher Education.

Keywords: Professional development, professional learning, peer-mentoring, reflection, collaboration, reciprocity

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High-quality professional learning will have resonance with teachers at all stages of their careers, whether in schools or universities, and forms the basis for improving learning experiences and attainment for learners in their charge. The national strategy for professional development in schools emphasises the importance of coaching and peer-mentoring in assisting staff to experience relevant, focused and effective professional development. Learning with and from other colleagues, enhancing the impact of professional development, and embedding changed and improved practices are all essential elements in assisting organisations and relevant stakeholders towards becoming

professional learning communities (Rhodes, Stokes and Hampton, 2004).

The purpose of this article is to provide a contextual synopsis of relevant literature on utilisations of peer-mentoring within Higher Education (HE), using key authors to explore the benefits of peer-mentoring strategies that encourage collaborative and reciprocal learning, with a specific focus on the collaborative support provided for early-career lecturers in Higher Education. This article is underpinned by a personal interest that has been developed through engagement in mentoring within education, having been through the Initial Teacher Training (ITT) process and experienced mentoring in three sectors of education (Secondary, Further and Higher Education). Additionally, this article will engage with some of the benefits and risks of peer-mentoring strategies that encourage collaborative and reciprocal learning.

Mentoring practices can be understood in relation to theories of mentoring and, among the theories developed in the literature which are centred on theories of learning to teach: 'learning by reflecting' and 'learning through apprenticeship' (Cain, 2009). There is a plethora of literature which recognises peer-mentoring as a professional development strategy. Le Cornu (2005) suggests that peer-mentoring utilises the latest conceptualisation of mentoring, that of co-mentoring by Bona *et al.,* (1995) or that by Hargreaves and Fullan (2000) where all lecturers give and receive support. Furthermore, Le Cornu (2005) suggests that such a conceptualisation challenges the traditionalist assumption that the mentor or experienced practitioner knows best. Significantly, Le Cornu (2005) recognises that this conception is consistent with the latest approaches to teacher professional, where teachers are encouraged to participate in learning communities. Conversely, Leidenfrost, Strassnig, Schabmann, Spiel and Carbon (2011) concur that mentoring provides an excellent opportunity for individual professional advancement. Specifically, Leidenfrost *et al.,* (2011) explains that for academic advancement, mentoring programs implemented in the context of Higher Education have been found to show positive effects for mentees, as well as for mentors and universities.

In examining this diverse literature it is apparent that there is no ideological purity in relation to how mentoring is undertaken in its various contexts. In Higher Education, teaching takes place in different ways. Instructors, highly trained in their area of expertise, engage students through technology, lecture, service learning projects, experiential activities, and more. Mentoring also occurs in this context as lecturers work collectively at times to mentor one another in and outside professional teaching and learning contexts (Kensington-Miller, 2011).

Thus, it is imperative to acknowledge the impact that peers have on one another. Over the years there have been many attempts to harness and utilise this influence more formally. Collegial learning has often encouraged practitioners to act as counsellors and advisors, particularly with regards to providing training and advice where previous experience lends itself to facilitating learning (Carroll, 2005).

Learning by reflecting

The theory, that we learn by reflecting on our experiences to better understand them, has a long history. Zeichner and Liston (1996) drew on the work of Dewey (1933), Schon (1983, 1987) and others, to present five traditions of reflection: 'the academic tradition' (in which reflection is focused on subject manner); 'the social efficiency tradition' (focused on the practical realisation of educational theory); 'the developmentalist tradition' (focused on learner development); 'the social reconstructivist tradition' (focused on issues of justice and democracy); and 'the generic tradition' (in which reflection is an end in itself). Zeichner and Liston (1996) rejected the latter, but saw the others as productive ways of framing the reflective process. For them, this was essentially a matter of relating teaching in classrooms to different types of aims which are generated by the world outside the classroom.

For some writers, the practice of counselling provides a suitable model for encouraging reflection and mentoring. For example, Martin (1995) suggested that mentoring meetings can 'enable the practitioners to reflect deeply on their experience of teaching, and to arrive largely at their own conclusions' (ibid, p. 9). In contrast, Korthagen and Vasalos (2005) distinguished between mentoring, which involves professional development, and counselling, which has a therapeutic purpose. They nevertheless presented reflection as an inward journey, particularly in the case of 'core reflection' which happens when a trainee has a problem which cannot be solved simply. In such cases, Korthagen and Vasalos suggested that trainees should be encouraged to examine specific, problematic events in order to articulate their 'ideal situation', and to examine the 'limiting factors' in themselves which prevent this ideal from being realised.

Learning through apprenticeship

The theory of learning by reflecting has been challenged by those who view learning to teach as an apprenticeship. For example, Brown and McIntyre's (1993) empirically-based work presented teacher thinking as largely a matter of craft knowledge: 'Experienced teachers are

analogous to *'master craftsmen'*… in school-based components of their pre-service education, student-teachers should learn through gaining access to the *'craft knowledge'* of experienced teachers' (ibid, p. 49). In characterising teaching as a *'craft'*, Brown and McIntyre drew on Lortie's (1975) notion that 'craft is work in which experience improves performance' and it 'cannot be learned in weeks or even months' (Brown and McIntyre, 1993).

They reported on sixteen cases of expert teachers, presenting a model in which teachers undertake routine actions in pursuit of two types of goal: gaining and maintaining normal desirable states of pupil activity, and achieving pupil progress. In pursuit of these goals, teachers do not reflect on possible alternative forms of action. Rather, 'experienced teachers' effectiveness was dependent on a fluency of action which would be possible only if the action was spontaneous, largely automatic, and based on only a very limited conscious examination of available options' (Colvin and Ashman, 2010). This view of teaching is at the epicentre of *the apprenticeship theory*, in which trainees learn by observing mentors and by imitating their teaching practices. The mentor is a major agent for the trainee's development, advising, directing and offering effective practices.

Contextual overview to peer-mentoring in Higher Education

In trying to define and contextualise the term, a wide range of definitions for mentoring have emerged in different forms and contexts within the literature. Mentoring has been widely used in many disciplines such as education, business, and nursing (Wang and Odell, 2002; Ganser, 2002; Jones, 2006), and there appears to be no singular, clear or commonly accepted definition of mentoring as it is difficult to identify and conceptualise (Boardbrigde, 1999). Essentially, Cohen (1995) provides a universally accepted definition which conceptualises mentoring to be a one-on-one relationship that evolves through distinct phases between the mentor and the adult learner (student or employee)… to develop separately or in combination, his or hers personal, educational or career potential.

At first glance, the term peer-mentoring might seem somewhat of a paradox given that mentoring is normally associated with expert-novice relationships. However, there has been a recent shift in the literature (Colvin and Ashman, 2010; Leidenfrost *et al.,* 2011; Le Cornu, 2005) to reconceptualise mentoring as much more of a collaborative or collegial relationship. There has been a shift away from the mentor as expert, hierarchical one-way view to a more *reciprocal*

relationship. Terms such as co-mentoring (Bona *et al.,* 1995), mutual mentoring (Landay, 1998), collaborative mentoring, (Mullen, 2000) and critical constructivist mentoring (Wang and Odell, 2002) are being used to reflect these changes.

Lave and Wenger's (1991) situated learning theory provides a powerful model of how professionals learn to apply technical knowledge within ever-changing social contexts. This *'learning to do'* is very closely related to *'knowing how'* and for beginning lecturers it is often reassuring to be working in contexts with others who are experiencing or dealing with similar problems.

A shift towards collegial learning relationships is also apparent in the literature on teacher professional development. Cain (2009) identifies that a current trend in teacher development is the establishment of professional learning communities that provide a positive and enabling context for lecturers' professional growth. By participating in such communities, lecturers provide support and challenge for one another to 'learn new practices and unlearn old assumptions, beliefs and practices' (McLaughlin, 1997, p.77). Consequently, in attempting to support this type of environment, it is imperative to acknowledge the importance of providing an organisational climate for professionally developing practitioners. Rhodes *et al.,* (2006) suggest that the establishment of a climate in which open networking between colleagues' enables mutual support and reflection to take place has been shown to be an effective management of educational professional development cultures.

In acknowledgment of this, Law and Glover (1996) explain that in educational organisations, leadership and management teams should consider whether staff collaboration is facilitated or hindered by the professional development culture they have created. For example, Williams, Prestage and Bedward (2001) posit that support and development accorded to early-career academics is of a much higher order in universities where the culture is one of collaboration when compared to universities with cultures denoted by individualism.

In drawing examples from the work undertaken in changing school reform over the past decade, particularly in the Further and Higher Education sectors, there has been a significant focus on the development of educational institutions as *learning communities* (Lai, 2010). In acknowledging the changes that has already taken place in schools, universities have attempted to emulate this practice by making changes to the ways they are organised and structured, in recognition of the view that many of the structures traditionally organised in educational institutions have at times impeded teaching and learning paradigms

(Boud, 2006). Importantly, Cain (2009) explains that recent changes have been made towards university cultures, resulting in the breaking down of individualistic cultures where lecturers have spent a significant amount of their working lives separated from one another. Furthermore, Cain (2009) recognises that this has coincided with trying to create more collaborative situations, which involve independency and teamwork, which encourage stakeholders to be participants in the decision-making processes, in addition to fulfilling a commitment towards shared goals about teaching and learning.

As in other professions, mentoring has been as a key strategy in Initial Teacher Training and the induction has been employed as a key strategy in ITT and the induction of Newly Qualified Teachers (NQT's). This has been based on the belief, that the development of professional practice is most effective and beneficial when it takes place in the professional setting and in collaboration with expert professional practitioners (Jones and Straker, 2006).

A significant factor in establishing this type of relationship depends on the exact nature of expectations and boundaries. Interestingly, Reid (2008) claims that the exact nature of these expectations is a crucial element in supporting peer mentors and the relationship between the mentor and mentee. In identifying some of the limitations of this type of collaboration, it is imperative to recognise that trust and reciprocity are integral in allowing this type of relationship to prosper. In support of this, the work of Storrs, Putsche, and Taylor (2008) suggest that in order for mentoring relationships to be successful, there must be clarity and consensus of roles established early on in the infancy of the mentoring relationship.

Risks of peer-mentoring in Higher Education

In a study conducted by Colvin and Ashman (2010) they found that instructors, stakeholders, peer-mentors all saw some risk or challenge in maintaining a peer-mentor relationship. From their study they found that comments from mentors focused on their personal lives, interactions with students and reflective experiences in teaching and practice. In the various responses received, many respondents expressed a concern for balancing both the specific requirements and personal desire to do well as mentors, citing reasons such as time and other professional commitments. Furthermore, Colvin and Ashman (2010) found that several mentors also expressed that in becoming a peer-mentor or mentor, they felt that they had to make themselves vulnerable to the idea that they may not also be accepted by the student. Other risks and challenges presented centred on

mentees either being too dependent on the mentor or, conversely, not accepting the mentor.

Additionally, colleagues who did not accept mentors created challenges for the mentors who were supposed to be helping and working with them. Subsequently, Colvin and Ashman (2010) explain that colleagues engaged within the peer-mentoring process highlighted that they found the process to not be beneficial due to the idea of the 'inexperienced' mentoring one another, noting that traditional hierarchical mentoring approaches provided for early-career academics would be more applicable and beneficial for this context.

The nature of normalised forms of mentoring between mentor and mentee traditionally has reflected hierarchical ordering. Thus help, power and resources tend to flow in one direction, creating the possibility for misunderstanding or misuse of power and resources and leading to challenges and resistance. Colvin (2007) notes that peer-mentors cannot automatically presume, that peer-mentoring interactions in professional environments will be universally applauded. Colvin's observation reflects the opposition and objections that fellow colleagues may have towards developing collaborative communities where practice is continuously evaluated for continuing professional development. This resonates with Pollard's (2008) observation that many practitioners offer resistance to these types of collaborative learning communities because there is a lack of desire within these practitioners to develop their own practices and professionalism.

Consequently, the skills required for mentoring are hard to acquire and evaluate but crucial towards the development a collaborative learning community. In recognising Pollard's suggested resistance towards this type of collaborative development, it is pivotal to acknowledge that some practitioners may not possess these skills, hence the resistance towards this type of professional development. Accordingly, Bell, Rundell and Evans (2003) warn that poor coaching and mentoring are often worse than no professional development at all, because the process can build dependence or destroy confidence. In order to minimise this risk many organisations implement frameworks such as formal learning agreements to inhibit poor practice and scaffold good practice.

Commonly, Carnell, MacDonald and Askew (2006) highlight some of the specific issues that hinder effective coaching and mentoring:

- There are misunderstandings on either or both sides about the roles, obligations and expectations.
- The process is not a priority for either or both.

- The peer-mentors or coaches may not have a professional and mutual respect for one another.
- The coach or peer-mentees see the process as an organisational requirement and does not enter the process with a wish to learn.
- The peer-mentoring relationship or mentor has been forced or coercion has taken place with regards to the role, and participants have little interest in the process.
- The peer-mentees or mentors do not perceive the process as an opportunity for learning but as a way for passing on their expertise in a patronising or considering manner.

(Developed from Rogers, 2004).

The last point illustrates that the mentor holds an instructional view of learning whereas the peer-mentoring relationship demonstrates equal parity in the discovery of professional learning. Rogers (2004) suggests for this type of professional relationship to flourish it is essential peer-mentees or mentor to review the process at regular intervals. Subsequently, this may help to identify where the process may need to be revaluated.

Generalisations, generated by research, can inform practice directly

Although practitioners might wish for unambiguous findings regarding mentoring discourses, the nature of this type of relationship does not necessarily prescribe remedies or anecdotes for significant and enduring improvement. Hargreaves (1998) suggests that anyone who approaches the literature with this hope is likely to be disappointed. There is little research evidence to suggest that one approach to mentoring is necessarily more successful than another (Young, 2001). For example, mentors perceive their roles in different ways, emphasising aspects to do with listening, enabling, organising, trouble-shooting, supporting or teaching, acting as a friend, a colleague or a parental-figure.

Mentoring can be better understood by reference to theoretical frameworks. Hawkey (1997) has acknowledged that research has resulted in frameworks for a better understanding of mentoring. Such frameworks include ideals, contrasting polarities and theories. Ideals are presented as desirable aims. For instance, Stanulis and Russell (2000) suggested that trust and communication are ‘integral components’ in mentoring, and posited some means which might encourage movement towards such ideals. These include ‘all participants revealing their

vulnerabilities for the sake of learning' and mentors, acknowledging the values and perspectives that they bring to the role as mentor (ibid, p. 71). Exploring their mentoring in the light of these ideals, mentors might consider, with their trainees, the ways in which they engender trust and communication in their relationship, what factors limit movement towards such ideals, and how these limiting factors might be overcome. Contrasting polarities are presented as mutually exclusive concepts (Cain, 2009). For example, Zeichner and Liston (1996) spoke of *'directive'* and *'enquiry-oriented'* approaches; concepts that were further developed in subsequent studies.

Although mentoring is sometimes directive and sometimes enquiry-oriented, it cannot be both things simultaneously; these polarities therefore provide mentors with a means for categorising certain aspects of their practice (Cain, 2009). Mentors might approach this framework by attempting to understand the differences between 'directive' and 'enquiry-oriented'. They may use these concepts to examine their own beliefs about mentoring, in reflecting upon previous educational experiences. Practitioners might then examine their practice, ultimately changing their mentoring practices in the light of these contrasting polarities (Brockbank and McGill, 2006).

Implications for Formal Mentoring Programs

This study supports the views of Kram (1988) and LaFee (2003) which posit that individuals learn in relationships with their peers, bosses, other senior managers and subordinates. Furthermore, closer and richer relationships occur within group mentoring settings. Peer-mentoring circles provide a forum to discuss real issues relating to work, career and family with like-minded practitioners. Group mentoring models facilitate interaction between different departments and provide greater opportunities to develop relationships (Lieberman and Pointer-Mace, 2009; Harris and Mujis, 2005, Cross, 1998). Studies have (Kennsington-Miller, 2007; Zachary, 2000) shown that one of the main functions of mentoring has been career development and this was the initial motivation for participants for engaging in this developmental process.

In summarising, Darwin and Palmer (2009) suggest that if institutions in Higher Education want to encourage professional collaboration between faculties; their support for activities such as peer-mentoring is likely to be beneficial for the organisation as well as staff and students. This support can manifest itself through senior staff participating in the mentoring circles, monetary support or career advancement opportunities. Whichever mechanism of support provided, Pollard

(2002) emphasises that stakeholders must showcase and display visible support and provision towards the mentoring process.

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Fundamental dilemmas in Research, and how by approaching learning from an evolutionary perspective, we might provide a better understanding toward causality

Larkin, D.

'Cogito ergo sum' — I think therefore I am **–** *(Descartes, 1644)*

Much of our experience and enquiry tries to make meaning of the now, the what, and the why. These are often perspectives from an individual's point of view, the lens of human experience, of life lived. This experience has a 'subjectivity' that can be argued to be, the 'essence of existence'. Though emotionally credible (it feels right), this is a subjective perspective, and is only truly validated in conjunction with objective causality. It is by asking fundamental questions through the scientific method, that we might move beyond this subjectivity toward a better understanding of our experience, of our 'self', and the processes that make this lived life – conscious. It may be that the very 'subjectivity' of our perceptions act as a barometer to the 'objective causality' we hope to understand. By grounding learning within a neural-mechanism, we not only provide a foundation for action, thought and memory, but also re-define our understanding of cause and effect. It is in the very exploration of our experiences from an ecological perspective, that a new understanding of causality may be found. Should we be surprised that the most complex system that we know – our brains – might offer a reflection on this world we embody? By aligning ourselves within the question of causality, we find that the biological-brain in all its messiness, might offer the best possible tool for exploring the laws that define and drive not only our existence, but the laws of causality itself.

*'Consciousness requires the joint operation of body, brain and world' (Noë, 2009, p.10)***.**

This paper will challenge our notions of certainty and argue that: learning can be considered as a fundamental mechanism in evolution. In order to address this proposition, learning will be presented from an ecological perspective, one that sees the

emergence of 'consciousness' as a construct of learning, and learning as evolution in action. It will ask if that by having a better understanding of the learning mechanism, we may better understand causality

Notions of Certainty – Fundamental dilemmas in Research

The search for meaning and certainty has focused on the goal of 'determinism' to understand the causes of things – causality. In scientific enquiry, this has predominantly been to reduce 'down' to the parts to explain the whole, an approach towards a causal-determinism that attempts to provide; 'causality from effect' and 'effect towards causality' through reductionism. This has been the principle method towards determinism since the scientific 'enlightenment' of the 17th Century. We are increasingly finding however, that our world is not so ordered. How do we reconcile this goal of determinism with the increasing realisation that we live in a world that is not so predictable? This dilemma not only questions the subjectivity of our human experience, but challenges what we accept as determinism.

Rene Descartes (1596 – 1650) was not only a Philosopher, but a brilliant mathematician of the Scientific Renaissance. His mathematics would not only shape ways of exploring our 'place' in the world, but he would also help frame the philosophical and deterministic questions of our existence – those of 'self'. We should view Descartes' writings as not just the musings of a philosopher restricted by the knowledge of his era, but those of a scientist trying to define the processes of life, and finding the dichotomy that self presents to determinism: that to have free-will, a 'self-determinism', you can't have a causal-determinism. Descartes solution to this was to separate mind and body – Cartesian Dualism (1641). The body could be addressed through the promise of 'determinism', but the mind should be considered as closed to scientific enquiry – a law unto itself. Descartes' duality was much more than a philosophic musing; it was also the recognition of problems in the very fabric of determinism. This non-scientific dualism must have deeply troubled Descartes. As a scientist, Descartes' raison d'être was for rationality and the natural 'truth of things', as expressed in *Discourse on the Method for Properly Conducting Reason and Searching for Truth (1637)*. In trying to reconcile this dichotomy of self and determinism, he was also recognising a dilemma that had been known since pre-Socratic times, that reduction didn't lead to causal-determinism, but rather to ever-further reduction. Philosophers since Epicurus and Zeno have wrestled with this

problem of reduction (see, Barnes, 1989; Prigogine and Stengers, 1997, for review). Reductionism creates paradoxes; if we try to divide to the smallest part we are caught in an infinite process of reduction – no number can be divided to zero, 'there is no-thing, that half of it is nothing' (Tammet, 2012, p.46). At best reductionism leads to a better causal-description, but not to determinism.

We see the promise of determinism broken in ever decreasing circles of reduction: the physics and mathematics of Newton, the Relativity of Einstein and the Quantum Probabilities of Planck and Heisenberg all culminate in ever more refined causal-description. Causal-determinism it seems is not possible. Descartes recognised the paradoxes within determinism and answered them, in part, by ignoring them. In trying to banish this duality of Descartes with our ever-more powerful machines of reductionism, are we guilty of haplessly resurrecting his 'ghost of duality'? It would seem that a new approach to causality is needed. Maybe by returning to the greatest deterministic challenge we know – ourselves – we might better address this.

Self embodied in learning — an ecological perspective

'hold infinity in the palm of your hand'– Auguries of Innocence (Blake, 1803)

Though understanding the complexity of consciousness is daunting and distant, unravelling the complexities of why and how we learn seems more accessible. It is our ability to learn that is increasingly being seen as causal in an evolutionary adaptation towards consciousness (Damasio, 2010; Linden, 2007; Panksepp and Biven, 2012). It is the learning journey from novice to expert as strategy for survival, that would seem to have us 'resonate' with our environment, and in so doing, might just provide a way of analysing causality from an ecological perspective. An ecological perspective to learning requires that we consider why certain evolutionary adaptations are favoured and selected over others. It is selectionist, where the 'adaptations' in learnt behavioural traits offer a greater probability for survival, and therefore propagate. It requires that we look at learning from the biological value it proffers to the individual.

Such an evolutionary definition of 'how' we learn necessitates that we acknowledge our animal condition: a bald, social ape in a challenging world. James Gibson (1979) offered such an environment-organism approach to his research into perception and consciousness – that of ecological 'Affordance'. Gibson saw Affordance as a relationship between an organism, its optimum living condition, and the environment it is interacting with. This implicit 'knowledge' is defined as a

measure of the 'perceived' biological value that the environment 'affords' or 'presents' to us as organism when it interacts with it. This is an Affordance seen from the very beginning of life as we know it: primordial organisms such as single cell bacteria and amoeba changing shape and moving in response to their immediate environment (Yanai et al., 1996). Indeed, it has been suggested by Damasio (2010) that an implicit 'knowledge' of biological value is encoded in our cells at a molecular level. However, as only a 'reactive' behaviour toward biological value, it suggests behaviourism: a disconnect between cognition and behaviour that doesn't actually imply a learning process, (see, Fodor and Pylyshyn, 1981, for critique). Shaw, Turvey and Mace (1982), addressed this behaviourist critique by constraining Affordance within the organisms' 'ability' to engage with their environment – their 'Effectivity'. This now presents Affordance as a learnt-behaviour of 'relational-Affordance'. Affordance may now be better defined in terms of the learner's cognitive 'effectiveness': their ability to access the opportunities made available to them through the environment. Learning viewed from relational affordance now has an evolutionary worth – one that confers a selectionist advantage to 'learnt-ability' (a value for knowing and not knowing on a novice to expert continuum). This learning ability suggests both physical and cognitive 'plasticity' allowing for dynamic adaptation to interact with an environment (Linden, 2003); an adaptation to the pressures of the 'here and now' (Faherty, Kerley and Smeyne, 2003).

We are increasingly finding evolution to be a 'dynamic' process of adaptation and selection in action continuously at the micro level of our bio-chemistry. It is this micro-selection through successful dynamic adaptation (learning), that increases the probability of macro-selection (generational), and therefore the increased probability for 'genetic' evolution. In some organisms, learning defines the individual's probability for ecological survival, thus allowing learning to be viewed from an ecological perspective. Learning may not just be a product of evolution, it is evolution in action. Though this relational Affordance provides an adaptive value to the individual's ability to learn; if this were only a reactive mechanism to environmental stimuli, learning might be considered almost zombie-like (an unknowing response of behaviour and conditioning). This lacks the self-control and a self-determinism we feel. As an adaptation, relational Affordance is limited by its nature and its niche. We however, are not unknowing; we have a consciousness of self and place – a knowing awareness of our world. We thrive far beyond our biological niche. In fact we change our environment to suit our biology. These would seem to be very successful adaptive behaviours.

Though it would be ambitious, maybe foolhardy, to try and unravel the complexity of our experiences of consciousness, we might approach the concept of consciousness from the same ecological perspective of learning. In doing so, we need to consider a selectionist spectrum that ranges from: an 'unknowing-awareness' or relational Affordance (a reactive response); towards a 'knowing-awareness', an organism's awareness of its relationship with and to its environment – a consciousness of 'self' and of 'other'. This knowing-awareness signifies an adaptive-value, not only the primordial learning response to the 'now', but anticipation toward a 'future' – a 'purpose'. Consciousness may now be defined not only by a relationship with an environment, but by the awareness as - 'separate' to this environment. Without this awareness of 'other', how would we be able to have 'self'? Indeed, this emergent 'self' and 'other' infers a new environmental dimension, that of belonging, the social and cultural. These would have as much importance for biological value as any physical environment the agent finds itself in.

'abstract thought is largely metaphorical, making use of the same sensory-motor system that runs the body' (Lakoff, 2003, p.3).

Here, culture is seen as an adaptive-necessity in order to resonate effectively with, and access, the Affordance inherent in this cognitive-landscape of self and other. Such treatment of consciousness as 'an abstraction of social-cultural learning' resonates with the work done by George Lakoff. Lakoff sees language as co-existing in a symbiotic relationship with the self, the body and the environment. In this embodiment of language and cognition, Lakoff is moving away from the ephemeral categorisation of language, and viewing it more as a subjective-feeling rather than generic description (Lakoff, 1987). Language and consciousness intertwined.
Such awareness of other(s) and of self allows for many possibilities: the anticipation of different futures (self-subjective and metaphorically abstract). It requires the conception of differing outcomes; a cognition of multiple subjectivity(s). It is an anticipation of the 'optimal' response for biological value, to the most likely future, that gives us a cognition; a finitude from the multitude of 'subjective' perceptions – a 'quasi-objectivity' to our consciousness.

We should therefore expect cognitive behaviours that would reflect such quasi-objectivity. One possible example of such an affective behaviour is that of 'delayed satisfaction': the rejection of the rewards of the 'now' for a possible 'future' of greater biological value (Schneider and Lysgaard, 1953). As an evolutionary gamble on the most favourable or likely future, these anticipations of probability

would determine an individual's perceptions of their ability to thrive in such a future (innate and learnt behaviours): You might approach a future you anticipate you can utilise your abilities with less cognitive restraint, than a future you anticipate as 'beyond your abilities'. Indeed, the latter may result in cognitive constraint. Noë (2009), sees this constraint as, 'perceptions of accessibility' to one's relational Affordance. The affective behaviour is seen through a 'reduced' ability (often observed in performance 'choking') – a collapse of control (Eysenck, Derakshan, Santos and Calvo, 2007; Wilson, 2008).

Consciousness may now be seen from the same ecological perspective as learning – one that models increasing anticipation for best biological value. A learning-adaptation selected toward an emergent self-awareness. It is the opportunities that your environment offers you as an organism (Affordance), your ability(s) in realising them (Effectivity), dictated by your cognitive perceptions towards successful/ accessibly biological value (Accessibility'), that determines where on a spectrum consciousness you lie – one of unknowing to a 'consciousness of self'. This spectrum should in no-way be misconstrued as any hierarchy consciousness, only that 'nature abhors a vacuum' (Aristotle) and evolution will try to fill every niche. Selection has no plan; consciousness merely implies a 'complexity' toward survival that has some biological worth and that has persisted. It provides an organism the possibility to expand from the subjectivity of niche determined survival, to the quasi-objectivity of niche control and agency.

This evolutionary perspective to consciousness implies 'learning' as a fundamental mechanism of and from evolution, one that is innate and self-organising. To observe and measure such a learning mechanism we need to avoid the pitfalls of reductionism and the dilemmas of determinism.

If not determinism – then what?

There are some statistics that seem commonplace in the regularity they are rolled-out, that nevertheless deserve repeating for their true magnificence. One such is that there are more possible pathways in the human brain, than there are atoms in the Universe (Comier, 2012; Drachman, 2005). It is the very complexity in our neural networks that provides for a 'connectionist' approach to perception, an approach based on negotiating the chaos of life (Hatfield, 2009; Kelso, 1995). This allows us a perception that is embodied in the open, dissipative, dynamical environment we find ourselves. This is important because it pre-supposes a unique quality of dynamical systems – that of emergence. Emergence allows for spontaneous output or a 'self-organisation',

one that is non-reductive but rather 'constrained' within itself – such as whirlpools 'constrained' by the water they form in. Self-organisation allows a cognition that '*settles into a particular state*' (Shapiro, 2010, p.47), a representation of consciousness that doesn't need reduction or a finite pathway, it just happens – spontaneously. It allows the possibility of emergence of cognition without specific computational networks. It is the ad hoc formation of patterns in brain functioning and the 'settling' of experience, neural pattern and biological outcome. We can now look at learning as a biological mechanism in accordance with the 'order and complexity' we encounter in this dynamic Universe we inhabit. It suggests a causality that is non-reductionist and non-deterministic. A causality of 'emergence and self-organisation' (Varela, Thompson and Rosch, 1991), and necessitates a new relationship with cause and effect: a causality from self-organisation – one of probability.

Interaction with the environment embodies an adaptation to niche with the refinement of experience. Nature and nurture together in an adaptive learning mechanism. Such an affective behavioural approach to learning, would seem to concur with many constructivist propositions of learning; a resonance between environment, behaviour and cognition.
' learning is Constructivist in nature', Illeris (2009, p12).

Such an embodied perception requires a cognitive affective platform on which to build experience, a 'non-conditioned' behaviour for engagement. This learning platform must be innate, or learning would not happen. Jaap Panksepp suggests such a 'base' neural system in his 'Affective Behaviour' (1998). This affective behavioural system informs and supports the evolutionary perspective posited by relational Affordance: that of an 'innate' learning platform acted upon by experience.

This affective behaviour has been found throughout the animal kingdom (Panksepp, 2005), and support for such a cognitive learning platform, one of innate nature being refined by the lessons of nurture, has been seen (see, Zanone, Kostrubiec, Albaret J and Temprado J, 2010). Such an amalgamation of relational Affordance with affective behaviour presents an opportunity to test the complexity theory hypothesised in a fundamental learning-mechanism. Self is not just 'thought', it is the emersion of body in experience, embodiment – learning in action.

Though in its scientific infancy, complexity or 'dynamical theory' is starting to reveal some of the secrets of learning and, maybe of consciousness. By using coordination dynamics (non-random action linked cognition or 'coupling'), Kelso (1984; 1995) and Zanone (1997; 2010) have been able to represent the neural

workings of such a cognitive mechanism in action. This has been extrapolated across neuroscience, from language e.g. (Tuller, 2005), to action studies (Wallot and Van Orden, 2011). It is enabling the measurement of learning as an emergent 'state' of cognitive functioning, and allowing the observation of behavioural phenomenon from self-emergence to be correlated with learning – order from the chaos of life.

Complexity theory and the measurement of self-organising behaviour has provided the opportunity for experimental designs to test this ecological learning hypothesis. In doing so, it has opened a window on to how we might view causality. Not one of certainty and determinism, but one of emergence and a 'probabilistic' causality.

Summary

The approach to learning through an ecological mechanism driven by complexity theory resonates with the probability we are increasingly finding in much of our scientific enquiry. It is the emergence of order from the chaos of life, a hypothesis grounded in the universal laws of energy and information, and one that would seem to govern our perceptions of consciousness. This approach to learning requires a new understanding, one of probabilistic-causality rather than causal-determinism. It could be in the very 'essence of our existence', that a bridge may be found between paradigms of inquiry; one that connects our desire for certainty with the subjective-depth of human experience – a bridge towards a more holistic understanding of self and place.

We are unique learning creatures, we teach our children everything; subjective beings with a social and cultural objectivity – learning, embodied in experience. I learn, therefore I am – but have I free-will? ...

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An in-reaching community of practice: Constructing a learning co-operative, using a project based teaching and learning model in a Higher Education

Carr, D.

Abstract:

JUMP IN(tegrated) Dance (JUMP IN), is an example of project-based action research, set within a environment that aimed to create a new model of teaching and learning using approaches to pedagogy that promote social constructivism. During the four years of the research it was possible to identify and develop a model of practice entitled *an in-reaching community of practice*. This model embraces the possibilities that social transformation through action and conscientisation (Freire and Faundez 1989), multiple intelligences (Gardner 1983) and learning styles (Kolb 1981) play in order to challenge time-old preconceptions that learning has to follow distinctive disparate designs. This new model aimed to challenge assumptions that learning is limited and exclusive to set cohorts, whilst at the same time enabling opportunities to seek new insight into the role of the lecturer, host and learner in a project-based studio environment. The research identified that it also created opportunities for educational sustainable development (Dawe, Jucker and Martin, 2005) as a result of its prevailing orientations in teaching as the model became constructed and applied.

Introduction

Over the past twenty years there has been greater scrutiny of approaches that academics and students make to the learning environment, lecture content and sustainable development. Teaching techniques, the classroom environment, private study and assessment have all been issues for review and debate. The inter-relatedness of these elements determines the depth and value of the teaching and learning experience in

Higher Education (HE), with critical observations also being identified in relation to the wider community it serves. To strengthen the identity and value of HE in current society we must investigate practices which are conducive to strengthen the current employment market and develop teaching and learning in response to these requirements.

As academics, we are trying to find new ways to tackle issues surrounding students' engagement in learning and teaching. We want to analyse their engagement with skill development and autonomy, and discover if there are any positive ramifications by it at both programme and institutional Level. Taking part in any form of creative or physical experience can be both powerful and a life enhancing occurrence. Encouraging participants to love what is different about themselves through the activity and furthermore challenge the facilitator, the host institution and all support staff (and families) to find that 'common humanity' and sharing that experience for many can be both exhilarating and terrifying (Bartlett, K. Cited in Amans, D. 2008, p. 35).

Image 1: Company participants: Annie Cater, Paula Hassan, Jamie Keeley. Photograph by Noel Jones.

This is what really defines project-based practice within the educational environment. As a result of an applied hybridisation of educational references (through the project work), we were able to create a new model of application known as *an in-reaching* community. This type of learning community is constructed from a construct, design, mode of application and reflection in teaching and learning, that utilises a cross modular, mixed-cohort, multi-assessment application. JUMP IN is in-reaching in that it has its 'home' within HE and has external participants and partners from the region (who attend campus weekly) at the heart of its core business. JUMP IN meets weekly in term time for three hours every week to participate in a variety of creative dance activities. Students also have seminars and tutorials in relation workshop practices and performance skills. Students value the opportunity to work in real-life settings, and with opportunities to gain credit for participating in the activities, engaging learners in project activity was relativity straight forward. What is particularly noticeable about the purposefulness of Liverpool John Moores University's undergraduate dance degree programme is its design of a project-based curriculum, where reflection of self, process and project related to industrial benchmarks are emphasised (a particular importance in today's employment market). Where education and community practices intersect we can define the overall design of the project and its rationale for being in the educational environment. Although originally a utility for community dance in the 1970s, the following four intersects have more guiding relevance as a foundation in the HE environment today than ever before:

- Design, structure and content is focused on the participants.
- Collaborative relationships are built as a result of engaging in the project's activities.
- Inclusive practice is apparent.
- Participants and onlookers will be able to identify that there were opportunities for a number of positive experiences.

(Amans, 2010, p.10)

Vital to the project's initiation were these four intersects (which became key values across both the community and educational practices of the project itself). As a concept this is a generic transferable commonality across project types because of the facilitators' and participants' experience, prior training and personality. Let us not forget that students enter HE with a vast array of personal backgrounds and experiences. In addition they also demonstrate varying levels of understanding, as well as their own individual perceptions of both learning and teaching. Even though dance, like philosophy and other fine art subjects, is feeling the need to justify itself in the present HE landscape, it is through its

affinity with project-based activities and studio-based practice where independent intellectual capacities can be encouraged. The value of project-based learning activities for curriculum development is in their ability to nurture the so needed 'transferrable skills' placing learning and subject knowledge in the wider contexts of values and social affairs.

Outreach in reverse

Traditionally, many aims of the vocationally-biased degrees gave graduates professional competencies transferable to the workplace. Numerous dance graduates have gained employment as community dance practitioners, animateurs or outreach workers, 'reaching out' into the community from the base of a professional company or arts organisation (such as a national dance agency or local authority arts supports service). Historically this led to many crossovers between the professional arts, education and community, where pockets of activities categorised as 'projects', *outreached* skills to community contexts or in some instances (in particular mainstream dance companies) educational outreach in education establishments. Community outreach work focused on reaching out into communities across an area. These projects engaged participants in activity regardless of their age or experiences. Jeanette Siddall and Linda Jasper (2010) both clarify that the nature of this work was more than educational because of transformational properties specific to different geographic regions, funding structures, populations and aspirations of the project's practitioners. A number of practitioners combined community outreach alongside work in education and began to look at what was transformational in terms of learning. Successful and as vital as outreach became, there is still a sense that it is reliant upon the graduate/practitioner 'knowing all' and transferring this 'outwards', potentially nurturing a culture of cloned graduates with set skills and experience base. To break this cycle it is vital that undergraduates (as part of their programme) nurture new values and skill sets. It is important that such values and skills should develop as a result of practice in a placement of project environment, and then are taken back into the classroom for discussion. The object of the action research with JUMP IN was to explore reversing this principle, and to examine the viability of providing a rationale for projects which have all the values of community practice, yet are built within the constructs of an educational environment, merging work-related and work-based learning environments. For this to happen effectively JUMP IN as a research paradigm needed to dissolve as

many institutional trends as possible, without the risk of working outside of the curriculum and assessment structures, keeping both quality and value educationally. In the first instance this required analysis and reconfiguration of curriculum characteristics.

Ronald Barnett and Kelly Coate suggest that to challenge the structural characteristics of the curriculum and to re-shape it, we must first acknowledge how much of it we place in 'blocks' (2005, p. 54). In order to standardise the competencies and experiences of the student, there are a range of experiential expectancies to be considered at institutional level. These are usually categorised within areas such as subject content and subject skill base, transferable (graduate) skills, industrial awareness (work-related learning) and placements (work-based learning). Each subject in turn must then map this explicitly within the design of the programme.

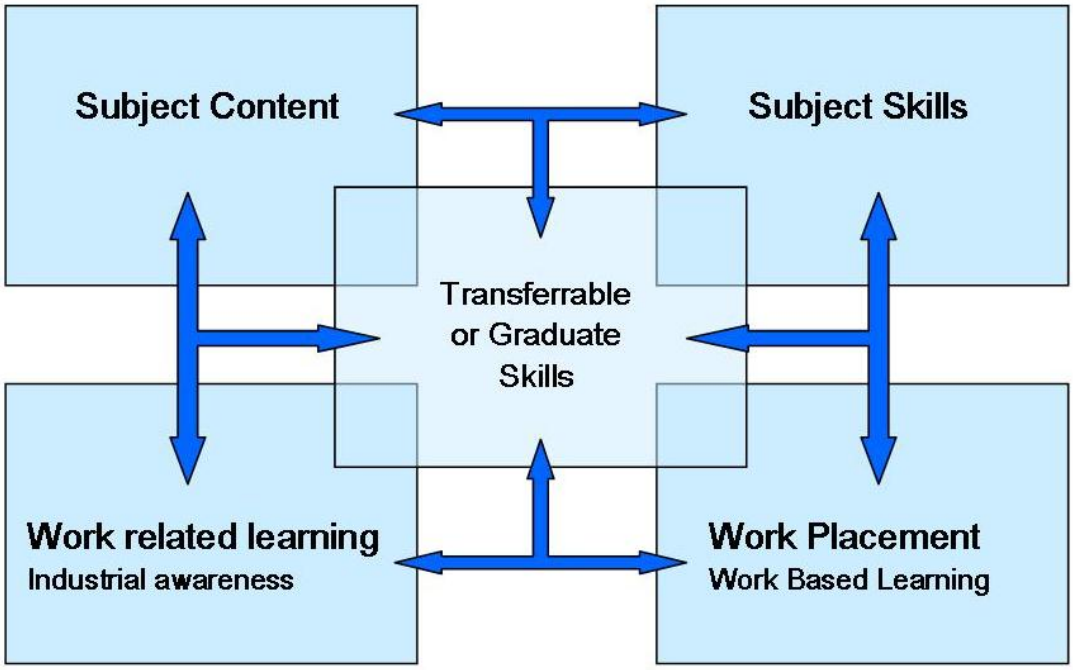

Figure 1: Bennett's Contemporary schema (cited in Barnett and Coate, 2005, p. 54)

For the most part, this is done in two distinctive ways, discreet blocks or modules specific or sub-blocks within modules (outcomes). Sometimes elements are even delivered as almost a franchise outside of the programme itself. Bennett et al (2000) had earlier reminded us that to facilitate the sensibility of such components we must consider them as an 'overlapping schema' and focus especially on the interconnections between the elements, where connections flow in all directions, meaning one domain is no more important than another (see Fig. 1). There is no doubt that project-based curriculum as a structure *is* block biased. Even though it has no recognisable identity and is solely reliant upon 'stealing' aspects of each of the key domains. Its success is reliant upon the explicit nature upon which it becomes the overlap for the domains, like an educational super highway. In order create a workable model for the project, it was possible to utilise the application of Skyrme's (2003) Knowledge Team's Principle against Bennett's Contemporary Schema (see Fig. 1). This generates a practical connection between Bennett's structural curriculum type and the infrastructure and duties of the 'team' (see Fig. 2.) in creating a workable holistic environment.

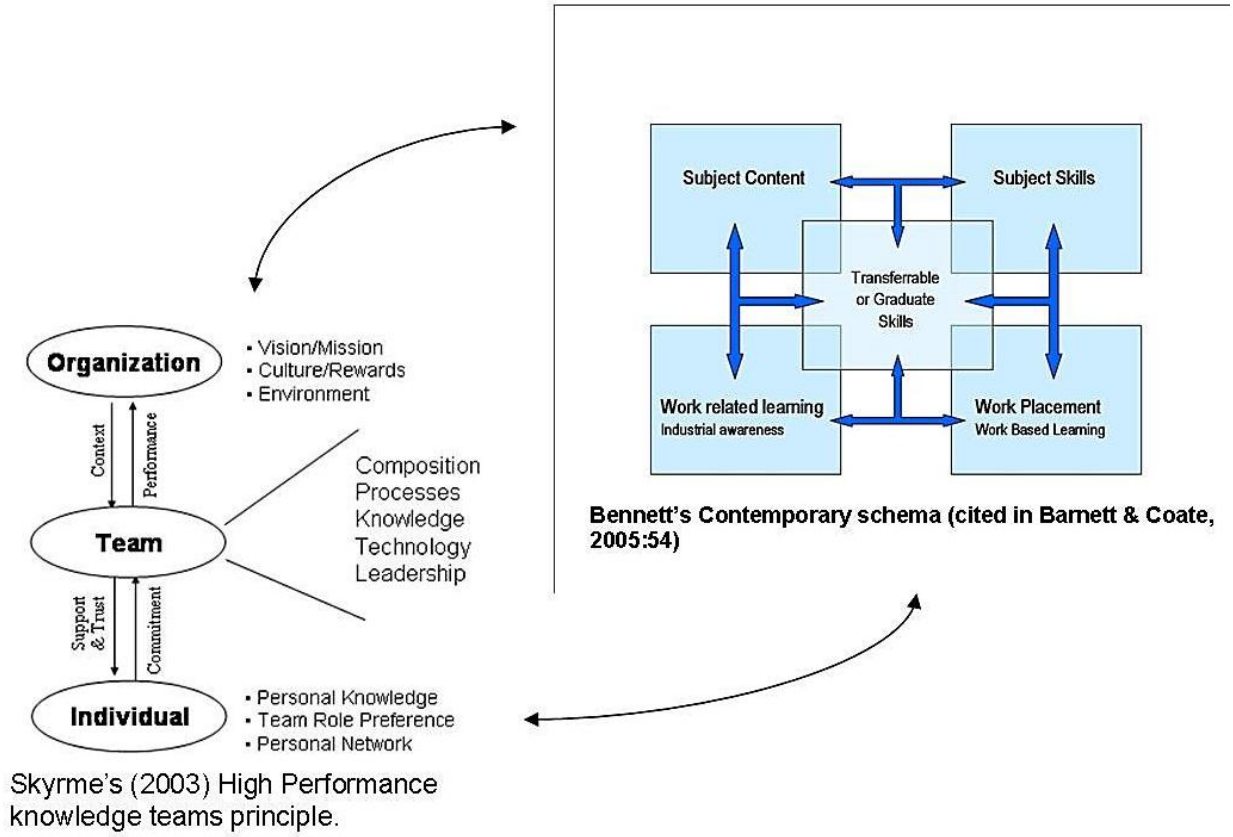

Figure 2: The inter-relatedness of a team infrastructure and duties, with a structured curriculum model as an identity for project-based curriculum in HE.

JUMP IN is accessed by undergraduate dance degree students (across all Levels), community participants with a range of disabilities, support workers and family members from three distinctive institutional domains (Carr, 2012, p. 77). As a piece of action research it was always hoped that the project would:

- Create an integrated dance learning environment within a Higher Education context for undergraduate dance students and members of the community who are able-bodied and those who have disabilities.
- Investigate the impact on learning for dance degree students who integrate with a group of peers in a real world situation
- Challenge prejudice and ignorance and dispel fear or anxiety through training and knowledge in 'real' environments that facilitate social development.
- Discover whether the experience of being part of JUMP IN would in time, create graduate artists and community mentors who have ability to empower others, to develop practices which engage others and involve a greater interactive sense of community building. (Carr, 2012, p. 78)

On the 16th January 2007 undergraduate students, community participants and the professional host mentor came together for the first time (Carr, 2012, p. 81). The first cycle of the project lasted from January 2007 until December 2008, with the process being repeated from September 2008 until May 2010. The research processes and model of practice has been repeated September to May 2009/10, 2010/11, 2011/12 and 2012/13. Over the whole period of research we evidenced dance works created for the theatre and for camera, witnessed work performed in front of a live audience and filmed in the rehearsal process. Observational data and reflective data from undergraduates who had entered the project as Level 4 students and had now completed the project through Levels 5 and 6 respectfully have now been gathered three times. Focus groups were conducted in every year if the project to determine similarity in participants developments and reflections of achievements.

Methodological approach

This piece of research adopts a constructivist grounded theory approach that is applied through a Glaserian paradigmatic framework (Glaser, 1992). From the pilot project and the creative workshops, qualitative data was gathered. The in-reaching community model (see Fig. 3) became defined and constructed from the research activity run over a four year period, using four cohorts of student researcher participants,

community client groups and an overlap of participants who progressed through the project, being assessed in different modules from Level 4 to Level 6. During that time there were various participant observations, multiple student dissertations (to draw mixed-method data), performances, focus groups, recorded rehearsal sessions, focus groups and milestone feedback sessions from critical peers. Analysis of the data identified categorical commonalities in qualitative form. Identical processes were repeated over the four year period with different cohorts all of which produced similar outcomes. These became labels upon which comparison of data is constructed. A review of literature in third and fourth years of the project ensured a non-biased approach and informed the analysis review, meaning that multiple qualitative research methodologies were employed in order to describe, interpret and define the phenomena in a progressive manner. As Wilson states:

A constructivist approach celebrates the incorporation of multiple social realities, recognises the co-creation of knowledge by the viewer and the viewed, and aims toward interpretive (rather than analytical) understanding of the subjects' meanings (2009, p. 6).

This action-research was designed to enable participants to analyse the effects of combing both an academic and an experiential approach to learning through social constructs and creative dance experiences. Through utilising a qualitative methodological approach, it was possible to examine the lived experiences of all the participants, (students/non-students, dancers/non-dancers, disabled / non-disabled). Such an approach meant it was possible to ascertain very particular information and to establish if there was a definable cycle within the project where changes occurred. For example where activity became less traditionally tutor-led, or where external influences affected learning, or how and when the participants' internalisation of experiences occurred. This methodological approach enabled the identification of reoccurring physical and verbal manifestations which resulted as a particular stage of learning and development became employed.

Analysis of data between 2007 and 2011 led to the 'data constants'. Identified were five distinctive areas of focus in which the analysis drew conclusions. These areas in 2012 defined the model of practice known as *an in-reaching community* (see Fig. 3).

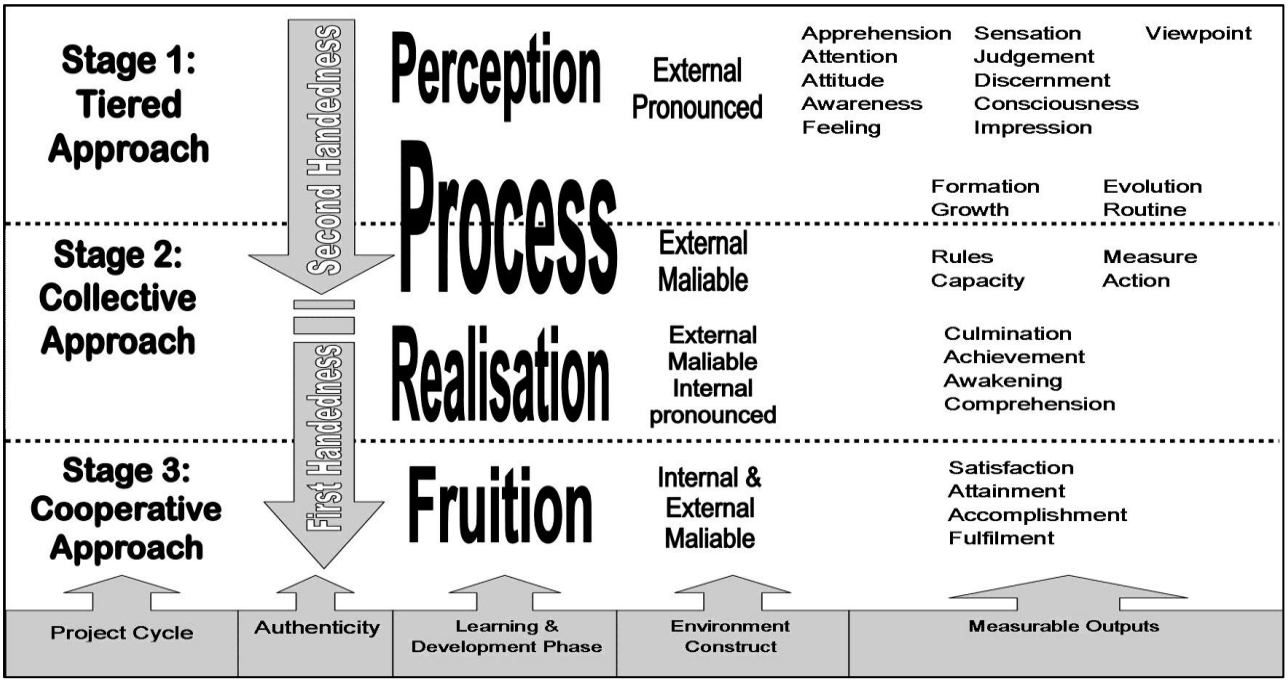

Figure 3: The above diagram is a representation of the educational model known as an in-reaching community of practice.

These five areas where data constants became generated are:

- Set passages of time in which a category of group identity was displayed – **the project cycle**);
- Task-centred orientation, from it being tutor controlled and dominated to it being student led (**authenticity**);
- Cognitive identity focus (**learning and development phase**);
- Motivational factors/inhibitors (**environment construct**);
- Behavioural traits - focus, performance and feedback/reflection (**measurable outputs**).

How this in-reaching community model is applied to an educational environment.

This model has been constructed to be useful because it:

a) became a way of defining the principles of the cooperative community;
b) was a purposeful way of being able to reflect upon and analyse the project;
c) created a new model of teaching and learning in HE (an in-reaching community of practice).

As previously mentioned it focuses on five key domains (the data constants): The **project cycle** (a measurement of application and mode across a time span with a defined entry point and exit point, and a function that is repeatable, even when participants remain. For example, a student may join the project in Level 4 and stay with the project until exit at Level 6 (three repeats, with progression in learning objectives and assessments). **Authenticity** (the spectrum in which the work shifts from being tutor-centred to student-centred and the orientation being less on curriculum driven content and more on learning and reflexivity, as a means to realign curriculum (Kember,1997). **Learning and development phase** (four distinctive tiered strategies that observe and facilitate the learner's perceptions early on through the processes towards their own realisation and fruition as a destination). **Environment construct** (a somatic reference to the external/internal references as motivational / de-motivational influences and their ability to move from those which are fixed to those which become changeable as the project evolves against key milestones). **Measurable outputs** (labels applied to what can be observed, discussed and evaluated by the self and in others through specific cycles, ranging from that which is negative and often descriptive towards positive and reflective acknowledgements, a measure of one's own responsiveness).

This model is designed to work across three distinctive time spans (**project cycles**) and has worked effectively as a year-long period of study (24 weeks), of two hours per week contact time, plus tutorial support. It could easily work in a shorter time period provided contact hours were increased in accordance with the decrease of calendar duration. This article will focus upon the model applied to year-long study, as this was duplicated for comparison over four repetitive years using four sets of participant cohorts. The first stage of the project cycle (**Tiered approach**) lasted between 7-9 weeks, where the participants looked very much to the tutor in a traditional role (see Fig. 4), and activity is particularly tutor-centred and content orientated (Kember,1997).

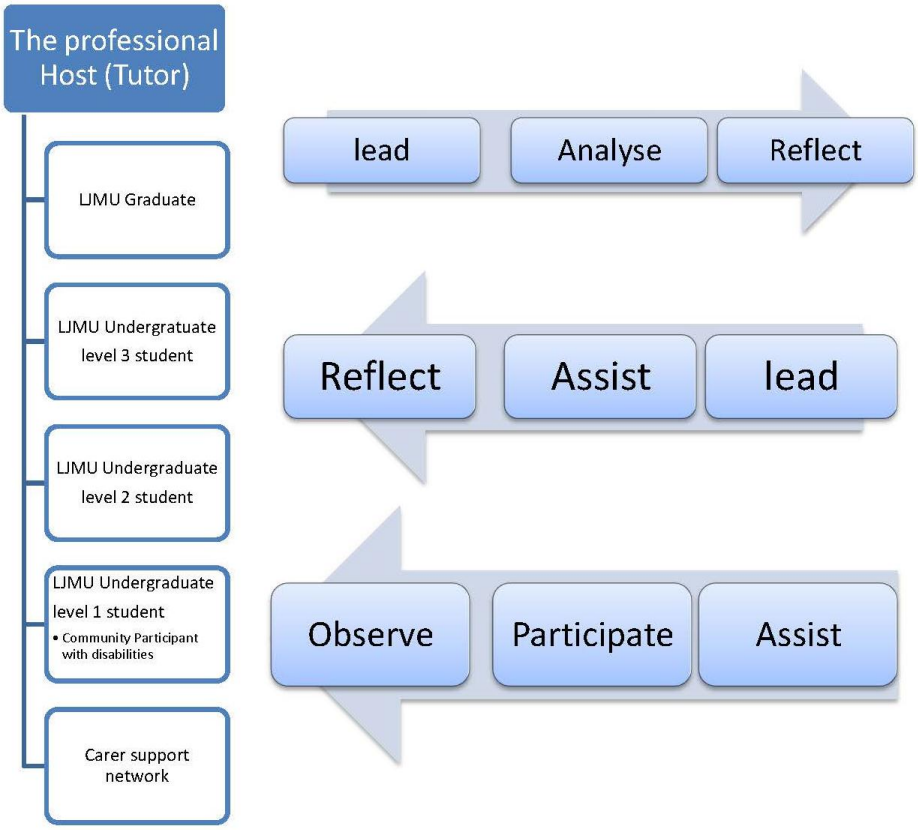

Figure 4: The first stage of the project has a 'tiered' hierarchy in terms of its infrastructure.

Even though the tutor introduced the task-based activities with opportunities for individuals to interpret and respond in a manner that is deemed student focused and is certainly differentiated across participant identities, the content is structured with identifiable fixed aims and objectives. Within the first project cycle the **authenticity** is definable as second handed (Fiere, 1972), students are responding to activities set and managed by the tutor or their older/more experienced peers. The **learning and development phase** within the first stage tiered cycle of the model is governed by participants **perceptions** of teaching and learning from previous experiences. These perceptions (motivators/de-motivators) manifest themselves in an **environment construct**, driven by external influences: family, knowledge, experience, peer bonds and subject based skill. This environment construct in the early weeks is often fixed (closed) and is a measurable indication of participation, confidence, placement in the room (how much an individual wants to stand out from the crowd), social and cognitive behavioural traits, all of which are identifiable within this realm as **measurable outputs** (see Fig. 4). At this stage the outputs are often more often identified by description of observation of a participant by another peer, rather than analytical or self reflective.

Within weeks 7-16 of the project (the second cycle **collective approach,** see Fig 4) the tutor shared responsibility of the task-based activity with the students. The tutor led one week and the students (through Individually negotiated learner plans) followed with development tasks. Through this creative paradigm the participants began to take on responsibilities for tasks, delivery and content, engaging further in the discussion and analysis of the sessions outcomes. In this second cycle there is still a second-handed authenticity shared by the tutor and student (workshop leaders). However, there was a notable shift in the external environment construct, where participants' perceptions and views changed and family members and external support agencies began to feedback on changes and viewpoints the individuals were making about themselves and the world around them. This we identified as the **process phase** of the participants' learning and development. Participants displayed a **malleable** shift in their perception to teaching and learning, and **measurable outputs** are reflective of the individual's ability to shape personal development and grow as a learner and individual. It was noted by the students doing independent research that the reflections on each session were becoming more self driven, analytical with a mixture of observation of self and others, as opposed to reflection being descriptive and not self-related.

In week 12 there was an open forum to share the semester's process and creative outputs. This was an informal sharing where family, friends and external agencies came to see the project session and observe creative activity through an informal 'performance'. For the participants the sharing and formative feedback from others external to the project and invited 'critical friends' marked a transition in the learning and development phase and authenticity. A significant shift of ownership for the work began to be generated and managed by the learners (a balance of **second-handed and first-handed** experiences) where process became a norm and **realisation** was noted as a learning and development objective (see Fig 4). In weeks 13-17 students across modules had a clarity and depth to their learner needs and responsibilities, leading more tasks to an agreed brief, sharing aspects of delivery and reflection (as researchers in their own right) – where the tutor became a consultant and the teaching and learning dimension shifted towards a balance of teacher centred to that of student centred (Kember, 1997). In addition, content became less of a fixed objective in place of an orientation towards learning as the focus. The participants themselves were less driven by external influences (moulding these positively as a motivator) but more noticeable was the focus on self and physical, creative and emotional receptors, both in the creative

and reflective outcomes. **Measurable outputs** in these weeks were ones related to positive growth patterns and cognitive acknowledgment. These included creating their own rules, noting achievement of goals at the end of sessions, awakening of confidence and comprehension of where things were heading.

In the final project cycle, weeks 17-26 (**Cooperative approach,** see Fig. 5) the participants themselves took collective responsibility for the activities, revisiting aspects from before and developing new material as a result of knowledge transfer across contexts. In this final cycle the tutor becomes very much a mentor at the core of the activity, being the 'knowledge resource' and occasionally 'whispering in the ear' of the cohort if aspects of the activities deviated too much from their expected goals.

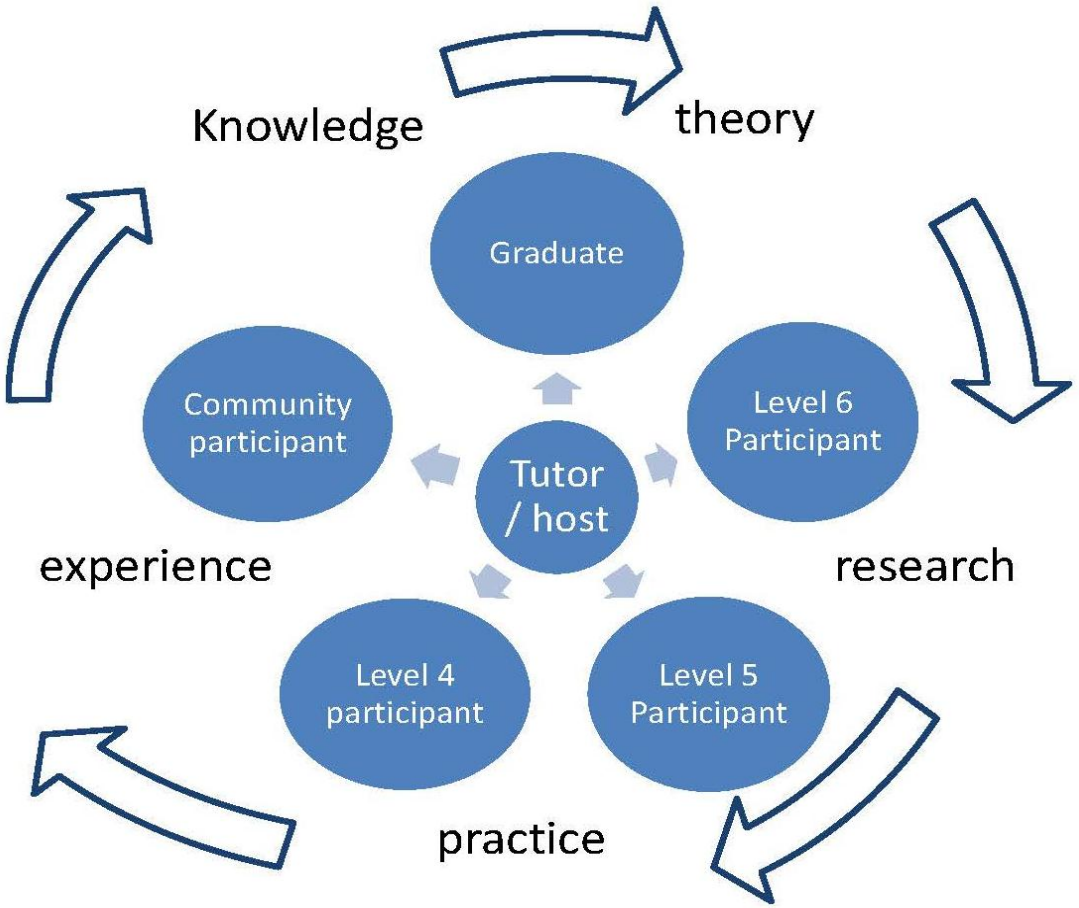

Figure 5: The co-operative paradigm, the final project cycle (co-operative approach)

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Although all activities are structured and planning is done in advance, thematic content, delivery and reflection is negotiated and agreed by all participants against their own learner plans and assessment driven needs. Whereas traditionally this can lead to competitive dominance, it was noted that as a result of moving through previous cycles, students had a real sense of shared ownership supported by strong peer support relationships. This cycle is truly authentic by its **first-handed** definition, with learning at the forefront and **fruition** (due to its analytical and reflective nature) being its learning and developmental phase. In focus groups conducted across all four repeats of the model it was noted by the participants that their noticeable developments were that of how they understood themselves and their position in the world around them (particularly in relation to malleable responses to **external and internal environment constructs**). In evaluation of the project through focus groups, questionnaires and of comparison with module evaluation data related to those in the project, **measurable outputs** were consistent in four key areas related to quality of experience: satisfaction, attainment; accomplishment and fulfilment. Upon closer scrutiny key avenues of growth related to transferable skills (working with others, problem solving, organisation, self management, communication) as well as subject knowledge and assessment accomplishment.

Constructing an in-reaching community in practice within an educational environment

The project construct is year-long; it scheduled for three hours per week (as a whole cohort) and has additional specific seminars and tutorials added at key points. From analysis of a four year period it was noted that it is possible to facilitate a 'conveyor system' of progression that enable new participants to join every September and others to 'move through the ranks' replacing those who leave because they graduate or because they chose to 'opt out' at the end of the year, when the project comes to a close.

In first year of its existence we opened the project out to all three years of the degree programme, embracing modules and dissolving the trend for students to be taught in discreet year groups (expanding the peer spectrum). We put out a call for disabled participants from the Merseyside region and connected with other support agencies in consultancy roles. This again further challenged the traditional classroom norm in HE. Only the tutor (professional host) became central and constant in the construct as mentor, project manager and traditional tutor. Blending multiple users, service providers

and institutions meant that for the students there was a more challenging degree in which knowledge transfer could be applied but more importantly received. In traditional outreach provision the facilitator plans and delivers activities to a particular client group, usually with some outcome in mind (based on previous models or formulaic experiences). In our project scenario the experiences the participants had are real lived ones, of the moment and with all the consequences not necessarily associated with purely text book-based pedagogy. There was no way of predicting what the outcome(s) would be. Despite trying, students were unable to easily presume command style roles and had to acknowledge how active and passive roles are applied and challenged. Having the community come into the classroom environment, merge learning outcomes/agendas, find their own lived experiences and work within institutional values has truly created a community of practice. Through reversing the procedures of outreach and developing teaching and learning as a result of information, contexts and lived experiences 'coming inwards' as opposed to graduates having experiences and taking them outwards, by definition we can term this 'an in-reaching community'.

The pilot session for the project was like a sensational meeting of two armies on the battlefield, full of curious traits, stereotypes, hierarchal values, rule making and physical boundaries. The seven sessions which shaped the pilot project soon translated into interesting educational challenges:

- Students were all working towards different learning and assessment goals, against three performance modules, a teaching module and two work-based learning modules.
- The mixture of cohort identities from community participants to graduate.
- There was a mixture of dancers and non-dancers with an age span of aged 9 to 52 years.
- Students immediately displayed traditional roles expecting the tutor to tell them what to do as well as taking on hierarchal roles with third year's 'being in charge' of lower years (tiered approach). Dance participants also 'actively led' the non-dancers of the group.
- As things evolved, there was a greater need to analyse and reflect upon what has been achieved in each session and how this relates to the learning outcomes as a result of the presumed slower learning pace.
- Initially student's engagement was lesser as a result of a non immediate outcome, often driven by the need for multiple peer groups to settle in an induction period. This was fuelled by noticeable 'pack' mentality in the definitions of each peer group in isolation. Each year group and

community participants tried initially to work only with their own peer group.

But they also provided insightful solutions:

- Students created individually negotiated learner contracts (INLC) to identify modules and learning outcomes for assessment as well as identifying how they would evidence this and map the project against traditional expectations of a particular module. This provided clear differential objectives across the three years and opened up natural debate and peer support.
- Community participants created a learner plan based on aspirations and goals, this often included skills for working life, social and cognitive developments, as dance skills were not the usual motivation for joining the project.
- As the weeks progressed the 'dancers' were deliberately encouraged to take a 'back seat', responding only to or as a result of the 'non-dancers' explorations, an examination of active/passive roles in creativity and their affect upon the learning processes.
- Handing over the responsibility as to who participants worked with in the early stages of the tasks to the community participants, shifted the role and status dynamic of the group, the degree students accepted more readily being re-grouped by their visiting peers, breaking 'pack' mentality.
- With the tutor being responsible for the initial bi-weekly workshops and the students adding to this independently (with the tutor giving support and feedback), blurred the traditional focus of the tutor 'having all focus of responsibility'.

Noticeable traits in the weeks which followed (evidenced by video from each session) was how apparent it was that participants were learning with and through others, and much more of the facilitator's focus was to recognise and nurture this in planning and delivery. Bruner (1983, pp. 138-9, and p. 181) acknowledges this is a natural phenomenon and key to the teaching and learning process in such social constructs, as 'the learner draws their understanding and control of knowledge under the guidance of or in collaboration with more capable peers'. It was this that not only early on acknowledged the design of the first cycle of the project (tiered learning approach, see Fig. 4) but then later facilitated the shift to a cooperative paradigm (cycle three of the project, see Fig. 5).

Through previous experiences I recognized an early factor in the students' ability to grasp learning and achieve or retain was simple an 'openness' and 'letting-go' of old pragmatic manners – 'to shed baggage', and consider their

approaches or methods of learning. This was achieved by challenging the (traditional) passive manner of the student through curriculum re-design and delivery methods (practical workshops, lectures, seminars and tutorials), where the focus of learning has an important relationship to the design element. In the peer group seminars the participants and host all agreed that learning is a blend of experimentation, empowerment, experience, and exploration. Dance students are empowered through skill and knowledge in year one, application of skill in year two and experimentation (innovation) through exploration in year three. In the JUMP IN model of practice, analysis and reflection relates to personal experiences against known theories and this provides differential proportion to how the students relate to the learning process.

Delivering an in-reaching community in practice within an educational environment

The project utilises a variety of classroom environments including the dance theatre space (conducive to the creative practical work and accessible for the disabled participants), classroom and ICT spaces for seminars and peer group work and the virtual environment of blackboard to support lectures and learning as previously mentioned above. In the practical sessions students have a critical buddy to participate in and observe each other's work. The sessions are both tutor and student led focusing on a variety of teaching styles (Mosston and Ashworth, 2002) and through a spectrum of learning activities appealing to the breath of preferred learning styles - VARK (Flemming, 2001). Progress is monitored weekly using the seminar / tutorial sessions (as well as through blackboard) and students can use both email and individual tutorials for further guidance. The two required personal tutorials enable the tutor to not only support pastoral guidance but to provide further opportunity for formative feedback and discussion. In the project there are students with either dyslexia and/or autism. Support for these students is person-focused and drawn from a socio-medical construct of their individual disability and needs. That assistance may be by the additional time allowance for assessment, liaison with external university support and the disability unit, additional tutorial guidance or the choice of a learner buddy. In classes the construct for the session's delivery is always centred on every individual; this may include choice of specific language, greater clarity in the description of task, more visual demonstration, and tactile resources and in particular use of imagery to further develop creative responses. A facilitator must know the student's confidence and ability to accept feedback in a group

situation or whether it is more appropriate that they receive this in a different way. Although it is important for JUMP IN to assess 'blended learning' across modules it uses a formative and summative framework – appropriate and applicable for each module in its own right. Firstly students are assessed on their ability to design and carry out the construction of an INLC that clarifies both the independent student centred approach to learning and assessment, but also an integration of what is expected from each of the module(s) in its traditional format, therefore not changing the expected assessment format or level as prescribed within the module handbook. They are assessed through an element of continuous assessment as an accurate reflection of their development and progress through the project (again a component of all modules), and finally the appropriate final component of the module(s) using JUMP IN as their focus. That could be, for example, by performing the work to a live audience or by writing-up their dissertation as a result of their practice-based research.

Assessment is linear and progressive; the INLC is assessed early in semester 1. Continuous assessment is assessed formatively in semester one and summative in semester two and the third component is assessed at the end of the project's lifespan in semester 2. Assessment adheres to LJMU regulations, is assessed by usually two or three tutors to the criteria of the specific module(s), is moderated and marks standardised, with samples of work sent or watched by the External Examiner for quality and assurance purposes. Summative feedback is given to the students within 15 days (agreed in the university policy) of their assessment. In the written summative feedback commentary focuses on areas of development for Level 6 students in relation to the industry, but for Level 4 and Level 5 students upon how they may develop when revisiting this area of work in the following Level of study.

Formative feedback is given weekly during group seminars and tutorials as part of the evaluative process as well as individually in the two (one-on-one) tutorials each student has during year. Formative feedback is given in a variety of ways, as a group I will post weekly announcements onto blackboard or offer feedback as commentary onto the discussion board topics, where comments are generic and not person specific. Individually, a summary of feedback from the first tutorial as a sound byte (mp3) is emailed directly to the student. In the second tutorial the student is responsible for recording formative feedback as part of the tutorial process. Formative feedback is also given by peers where students have 'critical buddies' and are encouraged to give feedback in seminars and anonymously through blackboard. During the process

students have the opportunity to upload their assessment work in progress for anonymous peer review. As a result of this students have also made use of video diaries for evaluative and reflective purposes or to provide downloadable sound bytes of observations for their peers to use in their own research.

Appreciation of the in-reaching community as practice:

There are a number of key elements to analyse and acknowledge in defining the in-reaching community model appropriately. As a learning environment it strives to become a *total environment*. Participants engage with the environment in a holistic manner where 'cognition and environment become simultaneously enacted through experiential learning' (Fenwick, 2001, p. 47). Rogers expands upon this idea when he notes that 'learning though life (lived experiences) is an inevitable and active engagement with our environment as a consequence of being a member of a common humanity' (1996, p. 105). The in-reaching community model (see Fig. 3) encapsulates both Fenwick (2001) and Rogers (1996) concepts of the relationship of learning and environment. When entering a situation the participant forms relational perceptions of that situation, varying in context, personal to the individual, even though the facilitator may have a contextual design which is uniform for all. Project-based learning communities are reflective of Barnett's suggestion that when delving into curriculum matters we have a sense of 'eschewed second-handedness' (2009, p. 155). This is certainly true in the early stages, as the tutor guided students in the 'experimentation and working practices' in the studio, directed them to primary sources, supported their 'acquaintance with journal literature', and indeed facilitated their early journey towards their own immediate experiences. The role of the tutor during the research within this type of learning community context was challenged, and it exemplified Dall' Alba's (1991) later conception categories, particularly those such as teaching developing concepts/principles and their relations, teaching as exploring ways of understanding from different perspectives and teaching as bringing about conceptual change. This was evident as the learning paradigm shifted from that of tiered learning, where a priority is the incorporation of content (often explored and described) to become more reflexive in the later cooperative paradigm where participants' understanding of content is a more prominent factor. A transposition of knowledge and thought to that of understanding what is known and experienced understood (within context) and later applied with purpose and confidence. Tang's (1998) parallel study

on collaborative learning enables us to justify the benefits of an in-reaching learning community in its ability to apply positive study strategies. As participants are sharing and exchanging ideas, criticising each other's ideas, comparing information and supplementing missing information, a higher degree of analysis beyond the assessment requirement is often demonstrated, offering important comparisons which are more influential than self-study alternatives. In seminars students began to share good practices and additional modes of private study. For the facilitator, a bi-directional transfiguration is apparent as there is a notable shift from McKenzies' 'intermediate conceptions of teaching to complete conceptions' (1995, p. 103). Key to this transformation is the acknowledgement that 'Learning is a conceptual development to satisfy internal demands' (Prosser et al, 1994, p. 221). Evidence of facilitator transformation in relation to learning can be found within the learning community because the participants are learning as a result of invention. They find individual (as well as collective) ways of exploring, explaining and understanding things, then refining and re-inventing them. As a result of this construct we can adopt Barnett's (2009) 'higher learning' definition, because this community of practice fulfils the function of learning. It admits to the nature and the diversity of the participants, 'questioning the character of the learning experience' (Barnett, 2009, p. 149), referring to a state of mind, over and above the 'conventional recipe' (of both the traditional classroom and tiered approach) of factual learning, and of the need for older more experienced peers to pass information down through the ranks.

There are three key context-based theories upon which this model relies. Firstly, linked to personality (Berne, 1970) where learning is reliant upon the reaction (active not passive) to a variety of physical, verbal and event based messages. Secondly, triggers that these present to individuals (*Human communication theory*) during three stages of source (transmission), message and reception and thirdly, *Social learning theory* is already evident. Participants arrive to the project with a whole parameter of internalised value systems (family, community, peer and school based – a series of imitations acquired from others) that through the research were identified as **Environment constructs** (See Fig. 5), ones that have the greatest possibility for development as a result of attitudinal development. Having applied Lave and Wenger's (1991) situation-based learning to the above in that during the early cycle of the project (**the tiered approach**, see Fig .4) participants learn language, attitudes, values and practices, important to the membership of 'the community'. This is usually supported by the professional host, a term Lave and

Wenger refer to as 'Scaffolding' (1991, p. 29) in an active mentoring role. In this cycle, it was evidenced that students tended to engage predominantly through comfortable learning preferences - VARK (Flemming, 2001), but in later cycles (collective approach, cooperative approach, see Fig. 3) they would naturally apply traits not from their first preference. Student feedback observed that this learning environment enabled them to challenge habitual learning preferences. Those students who led activities also more comfortably shifted from traditional command modes of teaching style towards guided discovery and reciprocal modes (Mosston and Ashworth, 2002).

Throughout the development of the three phases of the community of practice, the practical nature of the project's work called upon the individual's involvement, demanding personal responses of each participant. Examined more closely in the third and fourth year repeat of the project, it was noticed more readily that the participant contextualises reference points for learning. This is connected to theoretical underpinning (a traditional construct, where X is so and so). Personal interaction and task-based enquiry enables each participant to identify with the 'truth claim' (Barnett. 2009, p. 151) that theory from articles, books and journals does not always provide. The participant may (at face value) agree with others' theories and views as a result of theoretical underpinning and will offer it as something they too have encountered through personal experience. However, as the participants generated the cooperative cycle of the project (weeks 17-26) they became more independent and less inclined to accept others' experiences as a finality of objectification and truth. Barnett says that 'we expect students to go beyond the material they encompass and form their own affinity with it' (2009, p. 156). It was noted that participants' reflexivity and need to form a personal view about the validity of the theoretical enquiry evolved as a result of reading connected articles, defending views and listening to counter views, in a means to solidify their opinions and further justify their understanding of the learning process. In the early phases (tiered approach in all years of the project) there was a reluctance to read some of the set texts responses were often (as Barnett, 2009, p. 152, identified) 'relatively unthinking or un-reflective'. Initial reactions and views form a baseline (perceptions) and motivate the process phase, leading to a milestone conclusion of the enquiry, naturally stimulating further investigation. In the second and third phases of the model of practice's development (and most evident in the third and fourth year repeats, when the review of literature was introduced), participants begin to articulate their experiences and provide reasons for acting in a certain way. Such a learning community facilitates

insight, involvement and reflection. Participants can evidence what they have learned (practical and theoretical understanding) through assessment and critical analysis of events, their experiences and decision making processes, en-route to a collective approach. With honesty declaring 'I believe that... and this is why'.

Conclusion

As a result of helping to shape this in-reaching community as model of practice, many undergraduate students have become less fearful of engaging in the 'real world'. Community participants in the wider communities have found a fondness for our often closed institutional environment (that is HE) as a result of participating in the project's activities. Terminology and language is cleaner and more concise and student's understanding of disability, integration and the non-disabled is informed as a result of real lived experiences as opposed to textbook scenarios and external environment constructs.

Reading, another's experiences is ok and you could probably relate to it or project yourself onto that scenario. But knowing how you are actually going to respond to a situation needs you to live it so to speak. It's alright to say this will 'probably be this and probably that' but there are so many unexpected experiences that you can't get from a textbook. Textbooks don't develop an instant reaction. You might not even think about it if you are not living it. (Level 5 participant, recorded focus group, May 2010)

Evaluations offer insights into how the experience as a whole has given them a real sense of ownership, control and belonging. Through the practice and their engagement they have found it to be self-defining, both as people and learners. Personal reflections all identified greater confidence in subject knowledge and experience, transferable skills and personal effectiveness in all parties.

By the later stage of the project we were learning to solve problems and make useful reflections together, collectively making decisions and provide outcomes. With the cooperative, everyone has the responsibility for something and that not only generates a sense of ownership, but also uniqueness for all of us to want to get something done. This approach really motivated us all for our own learning and development. We all planned and brought something to the sessions and we all took something away with us that was learned as a result of something brought by our peers. (Level 5 participant journal entry, May 2012)

Students who participated in the project feel that they can act as practitioners, make a real contribution to the wider

community through project-based activities and nurture the positive and active relationships these evoke. Thus, adding to the value and purpose of the graduate in the employment market. The JUMP IN project nurtures the tutor's high expectations for the students as a result of the research activities, and in addition it has a positive effect on the curriculum and learning environment (Gipps and MacGilchrist, 1999). Such a method of experiential learning reconnects to real-life situations, focuses on real and practical life issues for dance graduates working as freelance community artists, where actual experiences are seen as learning situations. Participants developed a much greater understanding of themselves as individuals, the art form and their position in the broader community as a result of their involvement in this model learning community. The nature of the project, learning through experience, represents good practice in HE because it offers participants a greater accumulation of transferrable skills and related experiences. This type of work generates multi-layered and interconnected complex systems, adopting a more open-ended approach to the exploration of interdependency between learning experiences across the modules, the placement activities and fellow learners, developing further approaches to honing critical thinking.

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An Investigation into Personal Tutor Perceptions of Reflective Practice and its' use within an Undergraduate Degree Programme

Boyd, V.

Introduction

This article reflects upon a study that was undertaken to investigate personal tutor perceptions as to the use of reflective practice within an undergraduate degree programme. One of the primary aims of the study was to consider staff definitions of the term reflective practice in order to gauge coherence across a programme team in relation to effective implementation of reflection. Furthermore, staff perceptions as to how well equipped they feel they are to utilise reflective practice effectively will be considered, and any subsequent training requirements that they consider they may have to undertake in order to enhance the process will be evaluated.

Why this study? Justifications from Institutional, Staff and personal perspectives

The Centre for Sport, Dance and Outdoor Education offer undergraduate programmes of study with a philosophy grounded in vocation, employability and reflection on personal growth and development for students. Reflective practice is woven into the undergraduate programmes through assessments, work-related learning and Personal Development Planning (PDP); however, no formalised Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is offered by the University or specific staff training within the Centre on reflective practice for assessment and student development. The integral inclusion of reflective practice throughout the programmes prompted a consideration as to whether staff perceived that they were suitably equipped to facilitate and assess reflection. The latter will be discussed more in the literature review.

Malkki and Lindblom-Ylanne (2012) considered transformation, autonomy and adult learning to have reflection at their core and Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU) have a commitment to employability and student development through the World of Work Skills programme with students being encouraged to use reflective writing to articulate key areas of employability. The HEFCE and HEA summary report *What Works? Student retention and Success* (2012) articulates in its strategic implications that 'nurturing student belonging and success should be a priority for all staff' and 'work should be undertaken in partnership with staff and students to review experience about student belonging, retention and success' (p10). Therefore institutions are being encouraged to reflect upon their processes related to students' self-worth and development, again highlighting the importance of considering reflective practice as an integral element of an undergraduate programme. Similarly Brockbank and McGill (2007) and Stewart (2008) highlighted that reflective enquiry is mentioned in almost half of all subject areas in QAA benchmark statements, emphasising again that it is considered important at an institutional level; with Rogers (2001) noting that reflective skills will improve students lifelong learning – particularly in courses that include work-integrated learning. Kreber (2005) and Taylor (2007) however, argue that the process of reflection is poorly understood and may require further investigation as to its effectiveness for staff and students.

It was the work of Knowles et al (2001) which initially highlighted the benefits of using reflective practice within a professional context for sporting and coaching students. It can be argued that the inquisitive yet challenging nature of reflective practice forces structured and objective considerations of skills and incidents which can lead to personal development and growth. Such a process does, however, need to be a conscious effort and does not merely happen. Therefore, within a taught programme it appears that the systems need to be put in place effectively to allow students to engage with the process and to be challenged to address their philosophies and behaviours in a supported environment. Ghaye and Lillyman (2000) discuss that a definition for reflective practice is elusive as the number of reflective typologies makes it complex and difficult to define, and this will be considered as a barrier to the effective integration of reflective practice by staff with a degree programme.

The Research Objectives of the original study were:

- To consider personal tutor definitions of reflective practice;
- To investigate personal tutor evaluations of the current use of

reflective practice with Undergraduate Students on their programmes;

- To assess whether personal tutors feel suitable trained/qualified to facilitate and assess reflective practice with undergraduate students.

Literature Review

A critical examination was undertaken of the literature in relation to definitions of reflective practice, models and strategies for reflective practice, use of reflective practice in the personal tutor/tutee relationship.

Reflection can be defined as 'intellectual and affective activities in which individuals engage to explore their experiences in order to lead to a new understanding or appreciation (Boud, Keogh and Walker 1985, p. 3). Kemmis (1983) proposed that researchers should consider the relationship in a given context between thoughts and actions and also the interaction between the internal (our thoughts) and the external (the situation). Kemmis (1983) considers thoughts specifically, whilst the definition of Boud et al (1985) does not particularly feature thoughts. This further illustrates the complexities of a definition. Ghaye and Lillyman (2000) note that a determining a definition for reflective practice is problematic because of the number of reflective typologies, which make it complex and difficult to provide a definitive explanation as to what reflective practice is or should be. The difficulty in definition could stem from the different theoretical standpoints through which researchers are aiming to define the process. Dewey's naturalistic approach (1933), Kolb's experiential learning (1984), Mezirow (1991, 2000) and Moon (2004) are all influential in the development and conceptualisation of reflective practice. It was the purpose also of this study to consider the definitions of reflective practice presented by personal tutors. The aim being to gauge whether or not there may be an imbalance or difference in the understanding of the concept within a team of personal tutors.

Schon (1983), a leading researcher in the field of reflection, articulated that to successfully engage in the reflective process individuals require the consideration of professional knowledge (application of theories and techniques to practice and practical experience within a given setting) and craft knowledge (knowledge in-action). It appears that knowledge is essential to underpin thoughts and evaluations made because it provides justification for the behaviours and allows for different contexts to be considered to move towards macro reflection as indicated by Basile et al (2003). Saylor (1990) had suggested that reflective practice aims to create a link between the application of knowledge and

practice. Using the principles of critical analysis students could then be further encouraged to address their chosen behaviours/practices in relation to knowledge, the self and the environment. For deep reflection to occur it would appear that there must be evidence of applying theory to practice and an attempt being made to underpin reflections upon action and behaviour with theoretical constructs.

Schon (1983, 1987) also considers the importance of reflection on-action and in-action as having equal importance. It appears that these factors may be adopted more or less effectively based upon the type of learner a student is and the depth of knowledge that they already have in the context being reflected upon. Bligh (1993), Hays and Gay (2011), Honey and Mumford, (1995) and Kolb (1984) acknowledge that those with personality types and learning preferences that do not naturally support reflective practice are potentially being unfairly assessed or challenged because they will experience limitations in the depth of reflection that they can achieve. Equally, the level of engagement shown by tutors or students may be influenced by personality type and learner type, which may again differ between tutor and tutee, thus placing another layer of complexity to the reflective practice process.

Similarly Riley-Doucet and Wilson (1997) discussed that to promote self reflection a dual-staged analysis process should occur with immediate and delayed reflection on-action. Therefore, for the reflective process to work effectively and result in significant learning students should be encouraged to complete the immediate reflection and then tutors facilitate the delayed reflection. This could be through journal entry (Bulman (1994), Dictaphone or blogging (social media channels) so there is a record of reflection to refer back to in delayed reflection. It appears therefore, that when embedding reflective practice into a programme of study various methods of reflection should be utilised and considered in order to provide variety and flexibility for reflectors based on their individual needs. The effective integration of reflective practice will be considered within this article.

Galea (2012) warns of the drawbacks of formalising and structuring reflective practice suggesting it may become restrictive and forge resentment from practitioners. Coward (2011) discovered that 'reflection fatigue in learning and development amongst nursing students was prolific' (p. 883) and Davis et al (2009) and Ross, Machlachlan and Cleland (2009) highlight that students can be de-motivated by what they perceive reflective process as they are focussed on assessment and not process. It could be argued however, that formalised requirements within a professional environment force engagement which

should inevitably bring some outcomes that would not be achieved if there was an opt-in process rather than an opt-out process – as suggested by HEFCE (2012).

There are opposing theories as onerous paperwork. Burton (2000) also found that the term reflective practice for assessment can evoke emotions from gross ambiguity to positive enthusiasm in students. The concern here could be that this impeded their engagement with the presented in relation to how successful reflection is and how we engage students in the process. Kolb (1984) proposes that our experiences influence and initiate the reflective process; however, Dewey (1989) proposes that it is when a habitual behaviour fails to produce the required result that we launch the reflective process. Mezirow (2009) and Miettenen (2000) consider that critical reflection is triggered by a dilemma or real life crisis to challenge behaviours. In each of these researchers work a critical incident or event appears influential to commencing the reflective process. Therefore, are personal tutors equipped to support, challenge and facilitate the reflective process triggered by a potentially emotional situation and equally are students equipped to tackle these issues? Ryan (2001) highlighted the importance of pre-workshops and shared language across all staff and students to incorporate the reflective process, a factor that will be considered in this article. Mezirow (2007) also highlighted that the facilitator in the reflection process should focus upon highlighting the area/assumptions that have been made by students and not reflected upon to further challenge the reflector. Again are the personal tutors suitably trained to actively listen and highlight those assumptions made to challenge the student?

Basile, Olson and Nathenson-Mejia (2003) suggest that the process of developing reflection progresses from micro-reflection (simple observations with some placing of themselves) to self-reflection (self-efficacy and understanding their behaviours) through to macro-reflection (understanding different context, the bigger picture, the establishment and others. It could be argued that without support and collaborative working macro-reflection cannot be achieved, and that providing peer-learning groups, a personal tutor and/or a structured PDP process within an undergraduate programme of study may result in effective and influential learning. Such a process has been supported by Aspinall (1990), Haddock (1997) and Scanlon and Chernomas (1997) who all acknowledge that this use of a critical-friend or a forum for shared experiences can aid productive reflection and restrict limitations on the reflective process brought about by solely personal and individual reflections. In addition, this type of arrangement could also accommodate the previous consideration that gaps in knowledge might limit deeper reflection

when the options available to the student for alternative practices are limited based on their knowledge. Galea (2012) also acknowledges that 'reflective teaching is an effective tool in learning processes and moves away from authoritarian teaching' (p. 249)

Knowles et al (2001) proposed that in relation to using reflection in an undergraduate programme that the important factors to be addressed are the practitioners' goals, prior experience and knowledge, the quality of the mentor/personal tutor and their interactions. All of the research indicated that there was a need to gain staff perceptions relevant to their perceived competence in relation to facilitating the process and also how effective they felt the current processes were.

Methodology

The study used a qualitative questionnaire to gain staff perceptions because it provides 'unique and valuable insights' (Barbour, 2008 p. 9).

Sample/Setting

Teaching staff from the Centre for Sport, Dance and Outdoor Education at LJMU were used within the study and they formed a convenience sample due to 'the sample simply being available to the researcher by virtue of its accessibility' (Bryman 2008, p. 183). All of the staff teach on the programmes within the Centre and all have experience of Reflective Practice embedded into the programmes for student development and assessment purposes.

Instruments

The data collection method used was a questionnaire featuring open and clean questions developed to gain information-rich perceptions as suggested by Fontana and Frey (2008). Grove and Panzer (1989) originally developed and piloted Clean Questioning, a model which was further developed by Lawley and Tompkins (1997) and may reduce the use of leading questions or researcher bias in questionnaire design. The final response rate was N= 11 / 25.

Procedure

Before completing the questionnaire the participants were asked to read and sign participant consent forms. The participants were then able to complete the questionnaire on the hard copy they had been given or complete it electronically on an email copy. As the questionnaires were short and concise, the process of completing the questionnaire took no longer than 10 minutes. Once questionnaire information was obtained data analysis could commence.

Ethical Considerations

This study did not require ethical approval because they were not being asked for sensitive or intrusive information. However, participants were informed that they did not have to participate in the study and equally could withdraw at any point and that their results would remain anonymous and confidential.

Data Analysis/Justifications

As the interpretation of data is at the core of qualitative research (Flick, 2002), the first stage of analysing the questionnaires was to complete a thematic analysis process to find trends of patterns in the responses (Berg, 2009). These trends were then analysed to generate raw data themes, higher order themes and general dimensions leading to conclusions as to the key perceptions of the participants. The results were presented in tabular form based on the presentation format recommended by Knowles et al (2001).

Findings/Outcomes

The findings/outcomes will highlight key themes and topics discovered through the data collection process. The results will take into consideration the perceptions presented by personal tutors in relation to Reflective Practice and its use with undergraduate students.

Analysis and Discussion

Research Objective 1: To consider personal tutor definitions of Reflective Practice

Eleven respondents, 100% of the sample in this study, each provided a different definition of reflection (see Table 1), with only one personal tutor discussing the links to literature and it being an academic process, thus implying that there are indeed differences between individual perceptions on what reflective practice is. There is *'no agreed definition amongst staff'* (participant 2). Ghaye and Lillyman (2000) stated that a definition for reflective practice is elusive as the number of reflective typologies makes it complex and difficult to provide a definitive explanation as to what reflective practice is or should be.

Table 1: Staff definitions of reflective practice

Raw Data	*Groupings*	*Topics*
1- Learning what has happened 7-Seeking to learn from what has happened 8-Reflecting on actions to learn 10- Learn from actions	Learning (4/11)	Reflection On-action (9/11)
1- Looking back 5- Look back 9- Think about what has happened	Thinking (3/11)	
3- Understand a prior event 5- Understand what you have done 7- seeking to understand what has happened	Understanding (3/11)	
1- Reflecting on	Reflecting	
2- Examination of what you have done/ said	Examination	
3- Evaluate a prior event 5- Evaluate practice	Evaluate (2/11)	
2- Allows individuals to work to develop areas for improvement 3- future improvement/development considered 5- improve future practice 8- ability to think about change for t he future 9- develop knowledge	Student development	

The analysis process exposed the terms used to define reflection and whilst the different terminologies /adjectives used appear to demonstrate a similar theme ('learning, thinking, understanding, reflecting, examination and evaluation') they are distinctly different and implies that there is a need for the intricacies and complexities of reflective practice to be articulated more to a personal tutor team. The work of Basile et al (2003) would suggest that reflectors and facilitators need to consider three key stages to reflection and each stage would consider a deeper level of thinking and evaluation. The differences between these terms highlights key differences in understanding and perceptions amongst a staff team and this was further highlighted as 73% of participants at some point highlighted the need for CPD for a more standardised consensus on what reflection is.

Particularly of interest was that only one personal tutor made links to the importance of literature and of it being an academic process. Such a situation would be supported by Boud et al (1985) who considered reflection as featuring intellectual activities to explore experiences and equally Saylor (1990) who addressed the link between the application of knowledge to practice. The body of literature which covered craft and professional knowledge would imply that there is a stronger need for theory and knowledge gains to underpin reflective practices and cycles.

73% of participants also highlighted at some point the impact that reflection can have upon practice and future developments. Saylor (1990) suggests reflective practice links knowledge to practice for improvement so it would appear that the participants in this study do consider the principles of reflection featured in the literature. Participants imply a general consideration within their definitions that reflective practice should have some impact upon the individual and affect behaviour/actions

Research Objective 2: To investigate personal tutor evaluations of the current use of reflective practice with Undergraduate Students on their programmes.

Staff perceptions related to what worked well and what did not work well when implementing reflective practice were considered, analysed and interpreted across the sample group (see Tables 2 and 3).

91% of participants highlighted that the programme design worked well in implementing reflective practice. However, 83% of participants also acknowledged programme's design and features as areas that did not work well within implementation.

This highlights an interesting area that whilst there appear to be effective practice there is also a feeling amongst the staff team that some changes need to be made. Interestingly 56% felt that over-assessment was the issue and not the integration of reflection itself into the programme. Cowards' research (2011) found prolific reports of reflection fatigue with nursing students, but the results can be transferred to any student group experiencing a high number of reflection assessment points. Similarly a lack of taught content featured as a programme design issue which may have resulted in the 45% of staff who felt that there was a general lack of student understanding as to what reflection actually was. It is not clear whether the issue is caused by the lack of teaching or if it is because of the difference in perception of what reflection is by the staff themselves, or even if it is a result of the combination of the two.

Table 2: What Works Well when implementing Reflective Practice

Raw Data /Themes	***Higher Order Themes***
1-Talking to students about work 1-Talking to students about problems/ challenges 3- PDP in tutorials 7-- Informal group discussions 11- Conversations about self 11- Good to share in PLG	Sharing in tutorials/ PLG (4/11)
2- Supported and underpinned with lectures/ workshops 3- Assignment in PE 7- Assessments tasks with prep work 7- Namibia project allows for learning in a block 8- Number of modules providing opportunities 9- Teaching tool	Integration into programme of study (5/11)
2- Think and act upon what they've done 10- Develop deeper understanding 2- Develop skill set 3- Assess strengths and weaknesses 5- Assess themselves 6- Questioning 11- Focuses on what they have done	Opportunities presented by Reflective Practice (6/11)

Table 3: What does not work so well when implementing Reflective Practice

Raw Data	***Groupings***
2- Too many pieces 4- Too many pieces 8-Overused 11-Too much 5- Too many assessment points	Over Assessing (5/11)
1-No formal teaching 2-Not taught the content of reflective practice 7-L4 tasks without support 11- Hard to teach	Lack of taught content (4/11)
1-No agreed definition amongst staff 1-Everyone does it differently 8- it's a complex process	taff differences in delivery (2/11)
1- If they don't get it 3- Students not understanding the term 'reflection' 1- Descriptive accounts 4-The students reflective pieces are often seen as the change to wrote a 'dear diary' 9- Student engagement and understanding 11- L4 students found it difficult	Students lack of understanding (5/11)

Examples of the primary strengths of integrating reflective practice outlined were '*conversations about self'* (participant 11) and '*talking to students about their problems/challenges*' (participant 1). Costa and Kallick (1993) considered the importance of a critical-friend in facilitating the reflective process, so in a development to these quotes outlined from the study, 'talking to' and 'having conversations' should be critical and structured with challenging questions (Boud and Walker (1998). Further investigation could consider the construct of the session outlined in the data.

There was also a sense that the outcomes of reflective practice work well in current implementation such as '*develop a skill set'* (participant 2) and '*develop deeper understanding*' (participant 10). This deeper level of understanding could link to the work by Basile et al (2003) who considered the importance of macro-reflection and the consideration on ones' self in relation to different contexts and others. However, is this idealistic when considering that there seemed to be an opinion from staff that students did not perform particularly well in reflective tasks, and that there was a general lack of understanding? It could be considered as to how reflective practice is measured and indeed should it be, or is there a hope that experience produces learning as opposed to committing to the process? Knowles et al (2001) concluded that the area of measuring or assessing reflective practice is contentious and needs further consideration.

Research Objective 3: To assess whether personal tutors feel suitably trained/ qualified to facilitate and assess reflective practice with undergraduate students.

In relation to *Research Objective* 3 of the study, it would appear that staff do feel suitably equipped to facilitate and use reflective practice as 100% stated that they were confident in relation to marking a piece of reflective writing effectively. However, it does appear that there is a need for '*consistency in terms of staff understanding'* (participant 3), '*greater guidance on writing reflectively'* (participant 4) and '*a staff guide to reflection for levels 4-6'* (participant 10) at programme level. Equally staff noted that there was a general lack of student understanding as to what reflective practice is '*the students' reflective pieces are often seen as the chance to write a "dear diary*"' (participant 4) which may be caused by the programme/modular design of '*no formal teaching'* (participant 1), '*more taught* workshops' (participant 8) and a need for '*dedicated sessions'* (participant 9) and '*greater module content'* (participant 3).

Participants acknowledged that reflection on-action was important as highlighted by Schon (1953), and could bring about change and future developments.

However, there were no occasions where participants considered reflection in-action as important. This may be due to the fact that the facilitator may only be concerned with delayed reflection as opposed to immediate (Riley-Doucet and Wilson (1997), and so therefore personal tutors in this study may be thinking of reflection within their individual practices rather than on a general level. It appears possible that tutors could consider the greater integration and accommodation of immediate reflection or reflection in-action (Schon 1983) and this may occur through the requested CPD for staff, (82% of participants mentioned this at some point). It was observed through analysis of the results that that 100% of staff felt happy to mark a piece of reflective work effectively; however, if this is correlated to the 73% of the sample who wanted more staff training, then there is an informative discrepancy in the data. It would appear from interpreting this finding along with the different definitions that on an individual basis staff feel that they can effectively deliver, mark and facilitate reflection, but that the team as a whole are not in agreement as to what they believe and are promoting.

One area that did not feature highly was the perceived ability by the personal tutors to facilitate a reflective conversation, or as proposed by Mezirow (2009) to be able to identify areas for further exploration and probing. In support of this there is a general theme throughout the results that it is at modular and programme level that there needs to be more specific guidance to ensure equity for students in support and assessment, with 82% of staff at some point during the questionnaire highlighting a need for programme change.

Conclusion

In summary from the data analysis there appears to be individual differences between tutors' perceptions and definitions of reflective practice and whilst this appears consistent with the literature there is potentially a gap in the cohesion of tutor delivery and assessment marking. Participants in this study appear to suggest that they feel equipped to mark and implement reflective practice effectively but that there may be programme design weaknesses preventing reflective practice from being as effective and influential for students as it could be and with a lack of guidance for tutors collectively as a team. There appeared to be a consensus that the principles of reflective practice are valuable to students and that in general the benefits are present for students to obtain however, there are some key programme design issues and a general lack of understanding by the students as to what reflection is and the impact that it can have.

As a result of the study, recommendations would be:

- To cross reference all modules across the programme to audit the assessment points, reduce the number but make those that remain more thorough and meaningful for students.

- To formulate a staff guide as to what is expected in reflection assessment at L4-L6 and also how to facilitate reflective conversation with personal tutees. This may be using Clean Questioning more readily or providing a list of possible questions that could be asked to encourage deeper reflection but staff will be engaged and involved in this process acknowledging the experience of the tutors highlighted in the study.

- To provide staff development related to the idea that the lack of an agreed definition of reflective practice is in line with the literature; however, the principles of reflection do appear to be universal within the literature. Some areas need to be highlighted such as the use of consistent language and terms across all tutors and some areas need to be highlighted such as the importance of professional and craft knowledge and literature to underpin learning and development.

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The use of technological based assessment in developing the self-directed learner: a case study in sport coaching

Ryrie, A., Cullinane, D. and Roberts, S.J.

Evidence has suggested that 'the nature of the assessment in a course has a profound effect on the way students learn' (Russell, Elton, Swinglehurst, and Greenhalgh, 2006, p. 465), with the perceptions of students' having a marked impact on the success and/or failure of a specific assessment task to engage and encourage meaningful learning (Combs *et al.,* 2008). McClellan (2001, p. 307) has also suggested that 'students' experiences of assessment do not occur in a vacuum', but provide links to contextualise their work, analyse the time and effort required to effectively manage tasks, which provides a platform to support autonomous learning (Gibbs 2006).

In recent years, there has been a shift to assessment using web-enabled platforms (Alexander, 2001; Bivosky and Schaffert 2009; Ellis, Ginns and Piggott 2009), with one such method being e-portfolios (Hosie, Schibeci and Backhaus, 2005; Meeus, Questier and Derks 2006). E-portfolios are now prevalent across Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) within the UK, with some evidence suggesting that e-portfolios are helping students to become critical thinkers and aiding in their personal development through the use of a multimedia approach to learning (Lorenzo and Ittelson 2005). Although other commentators (see Butcher, Davies and Highton, 2006) have identified that this method of learning and assessment may not suite everyone. Within education settings, Meeus *et al.* (2006) have highlighted the need for e-portfolios to meet the following conditions that they are: (1) student-centred; (2) competence oriented; and (3) cyclical in nature.

The aim of this short paper is to highlight and reflect on the multi-dimensional nature of the methods used in supporting and enhancing sport coach learning within two undergraduate programmes.

Nash, Sproule and Horton (2008, p. 539) have identified that changes in sport

coaching over the past twenty years have had a profound impact on the manner in which sport coaches 'perceive their function and responsibilities in the coaching process'. Evidence has also suggested that there are important distinctions in the skills and attributes needed based upon the context in which sport coaches operate (Lemyre, Trudel and Durand-Bush 2006; Lyle and Cushion 2010). Roberts and Ryrie (2011) have also identified that there still remain issues associated with the notion of self-directed learning within sport coaching, in particular within HEIs. The recent explosion in the number of universities in the United Kingdom (UK) providing undergraduate sports coach education courses has largely been accredited to the emergence and recognition of sports coaching as a profession (Taylor and Garratt, 2008). Within the UK, at least, the legitimacy of sports coaching as a *bona fide* profession (Chesterfield *et al.,* 2010) has increased since the introduction of a national coach license scheme (i.e., the United Kingdom Coaching Certificate) and the recent emergence of a profession-led endorsement scheme for sports coach education (e.g., the Active Endorsement Scheme for Higher Education). Despite the recent proliferation of HE sports coach education courses (Nelson *et al.,* 2006) and attempts by coaching scholars to 'intellectualize' sports coaching through professional education (Jones, Armour and Portrac, 2003) there are only a small number of studies which have investigated student learning and engagement within undergraduate coach education courses (see Jones and Turner, 2006; Knowles, Tyler, Gilbourne and Eubank, 2006; Roberts and Ryrie, 2011).

In this instance, a delivery model was created based upon the concept of communities of practice (Culver and Trudel 2008; Culver, Trudel and Werthner 2009), the learning objective criteria of the United Kingdom Coaching Certificate (UKCC; Levels 1-3) and a tripartite approach (see Figure 1) to supporting the development of self-directed coach learning (via formative tutor feedback; summative assessment; and peer supported mentoring).

This tripartite approach has been constructed to incorporate the power of coaches' experience in the development of their practice, alongside the need for students to further develop their expertise in observation and feedback as well as delivery. The model encourages them to consciously embrace this dual role, acknowledging Cushion, Armour and Jones' (2003) proposal on the use of both self and peer assessment as an important way of promoting reflection on coaching practice. However, as Knowles, Borrie and Telfer (2005) indicate, reflection is not an automatic production of such practice, and so other factors are necessary to drive the model.

A common theme of successful communities of practice within coaching contexts is the need for visionary leadership (Callary, 2013). Gilbert, Gallimore and Trudel (2009) identify that for a person to be an effective facilitator they should ideally be someone from within the peer group for reasons of contextual credibility and participation in the generation of solutions. However, they also recognised that issues such as "lack of time and perceived competence" (ibid 2009, p. 9) may inhibit less experienced people (students) stepping into that role, and so this delivery model uses tutors who have relevant field experience as a catalyst for interactions. The tutors' role is in shaping the learning activities, and then in providing formative feedback within a collaborative process between themselves and the students (Asghar 2010).

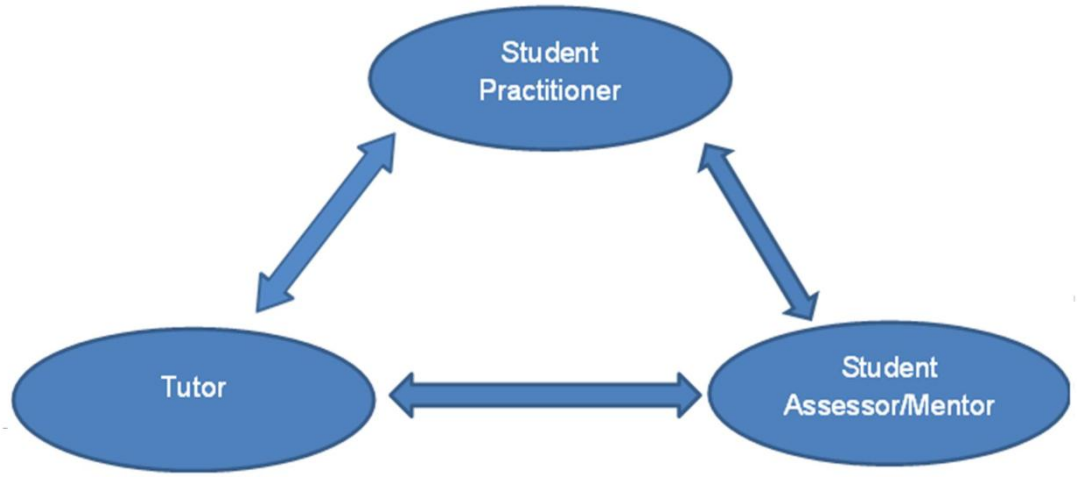

Figure 1: Tripartite relationship between Student Practitioner, Student Mentor and Staff

This model has enabled the teaching team to evaluate student effectiveness in the use of behavioural assessment tools and the evaluative skills associated with improving performance (via the biomechanical tool DARTFISH) in addition to wider coach development processes (such as communication, critical analysis and mentoring). However, more importantly, the structure has enabled students to encounter, evaluate and solve issues within their own and other participants' coaching pedagogy and in doing so develop the skills, knowledge and understanding, as well as wider developmental processes (highlighted above) to improve coach/practitioner performance. In addition, the format has enabled the students to reflect on their practice. The rationale for this is based upon the contextual nature of sport coaching highlighted by Côté, Bradley, North and Duffy (2007) who have suggested that sport coaching roles have evolved to become more pedagogical, more technical and therefore coaches are required to develop a broader set of competencies to be classed as effective.

Therefore, in the development of the students within the programme, the use of e-learning as an assessment method it is suggested has enabled the teaching team to evaluate student effectiveness in the use of behavioural assessment tools and the evaluative skills associated with improving performance.

An important aspect to highlight of any e-portfolio is to ensure that it meets the needs of the student (Meuss *et al.* 2006), with other research (Boyle and Hutchinson 2009; Dermo 2009; Gunasekaran, McNeil and Shaul 2002) detailing the importance of student engagement. Within the process adopted on the courses, it is suggested that there are also generic educational benefits, as there is a requirement for students to plan well in advance, utilise a wide array of analytical skills in the mentoring process, the use of a variety of mediums (video analysis, audio etc.) to enhance the e-portfolio (see Figures 2 and 3), which has wider implications for learning (Raiker 2009). Table 1 highlights the detailed interactions that have supported the learning process and the roles undertaken by the personnel involved.

Table 1: Roles and responsibilities of personnel in the module

Tutor Roles	Coach/Practitioner Roles	Assessor/Mentor Roles
Provide formative feedback to the student assessor on the tools and methods used to assess and develop the pedagogy of their subject	Plan, deliver and evaluate own coaching over an extended period of time (two assessed sessions plus at least one observed session in WRL environment)	Design and plan (using appropriate tools) effective strategies to assess and mentor a student peer
Provide formative feedback (using Dictaphone) of the coaching performance of the coach	Work with student assessor/mentor to recognise own strengths and areas for improvement.	Evaluate and highlight the strengths and areas for improvement of the processes used to capture effective and useable data about the practitioner
Give formative feedback at the end of each session to all participants within the group (as a developmental tool)	Instigate agreed intervention and strategies to improve own coaching pedagogy	In conjunction with the practitioner construct an effective intervention to develop coach pedagogy
Liaise with IT support staff to ensure workshops and support are available to support all students	Become a reflective practitioner	Become a reflective practitioner

Table 1: Roles and responsibilities of personnel in the module

This process has developed and evolved over a number of years to ensure that it remains relevant to industry best practice, has technological currency, addresses student expectations and fully supports high quality learning and assessment. There are three key areas that it is suggested need to be acknowledged as important in providing an effective assessment mechanism. These are (1) ensuring that students' understand the links between the task and wider educational and vocational development (2) minimising barriers to learning and (3) effective support and development mechanisms to effectively utilise e-portfolios.

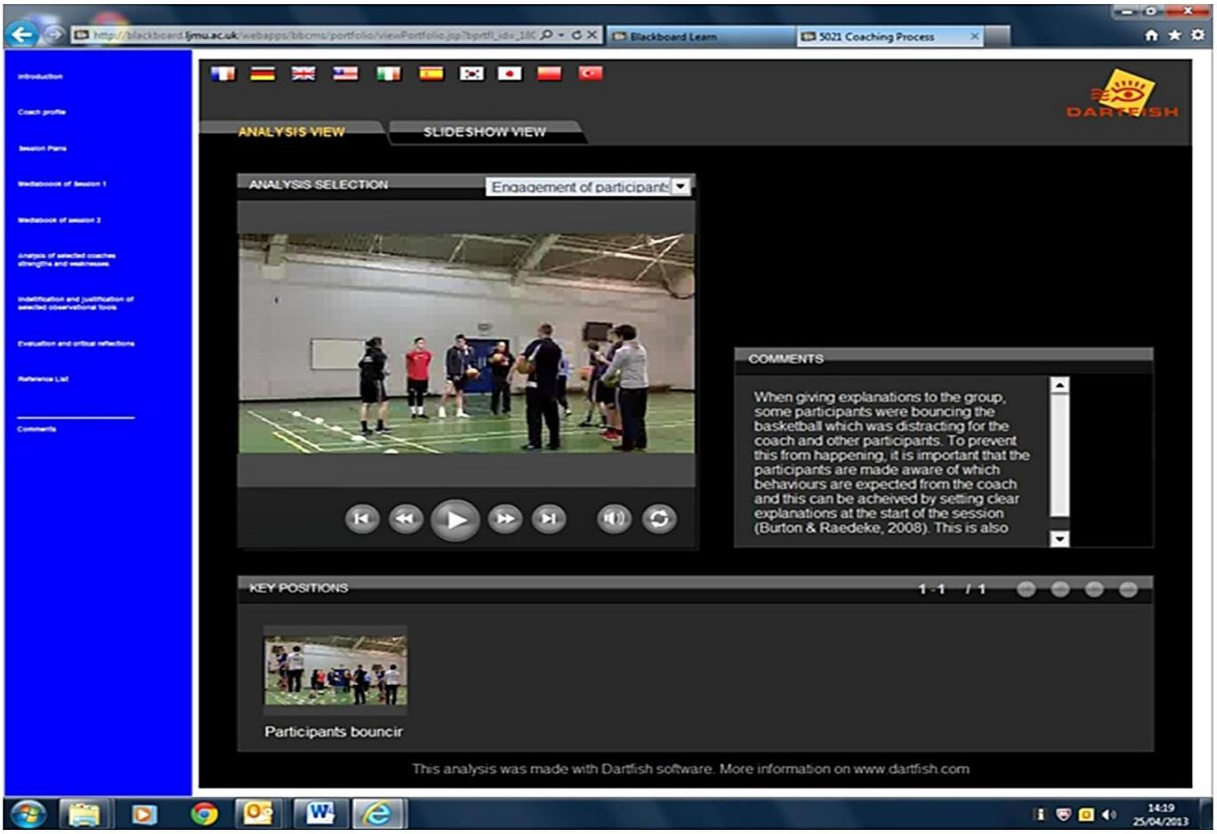

Figure 2: Example of the use of an integrated DARTFISH media book to highlight practitioner strengths and areas of improvement

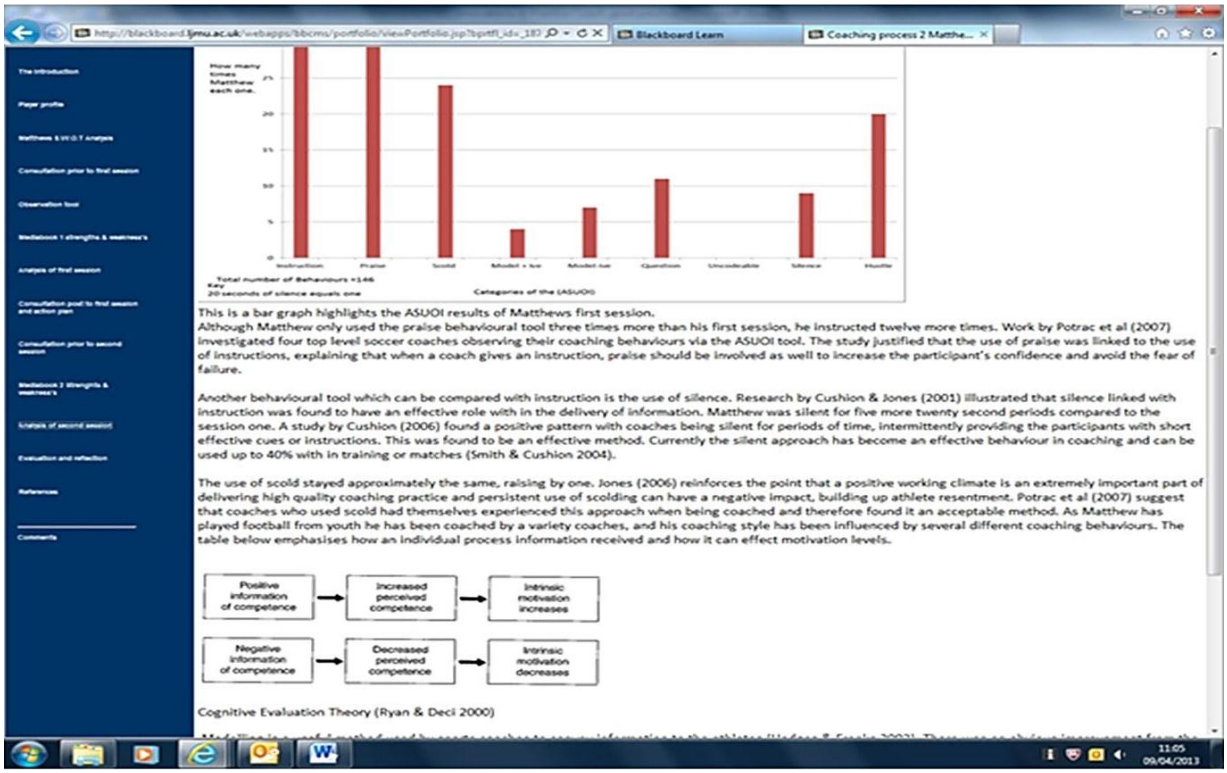

Figure 3: Student evaluation of practitioner session linked to appropriate academic theory and observational data

One key facet that has arisen from this process is the self-determination of the vast majority of students, which suggests that autonomy of action plays an important part in motivating individuals to participate fully in the process (Ellis *et al.* 2009; Meuss *et al.* 2009). This has ensured that this self-directed and informal learning provides a 'sound practical base' underpinned by academic rigour that supports vocational practice and longitudinal development (Schön 1991). What also needs to be articulated to the students' is the recognition of the transformational learning benefits (academic and vocational) that they accrue from using a multi-dimensional learning process, a factor Raiker (2009) feels is of paramount importance. The module team feel that the skills and attributes developed through this process are some of the higher order skills required to be an effective sport coach (Côté *et al.* 2007), in addition this platform allows students to develop a plethora of skills associated with their own learning and development (for example, evaluating data, using technology to enhance learning, reflective practice, communication and development of their peers and time management)

.

Although there are a number of positive aspects associated with this model of delivery, one issue that needs to be acknowledged is that of student perception. Within the programmes of study, anecdotal evidence through module team conversations and modular evaluations, would suggest that this presents itself in two major forms – the time taken to develop the task for summative assessment and technical issues associated with working in this medium. Ellis *et al.* (2009, p. 306) identified the need to 'ensure consideration of the interaction between students, teachers and technology within the design framework'. One key factor is related to 'time taken' which manifests itself across two levels: actual time barriers and perceived time barriers. Therefore, it is important to ensure that a clear rationale exists and is explained for using this platform for assessment purposes, with a need to support students in an effective manner. This is to ensure that less time is spent on the process (formatting the e-portfolio), 'rather' than developing the academic content (Lorenzo and Ittelson 2005), an issue that always needs to be acknowledged.

This method of delivery and assessment, through the use of e-portfolio, facilitates students to undergo a longitudinal supported process that enables them to reflect on-action (Schön 1991). In addition, the platform aids in the development of a range of skills and attributes linked to improvement in self-directed learning and being a reflective practitioner (Knowles, Borrie and Telfer 2005; Knowles *et al.* 2006). It is proposed that this process could be utilized in a variety of academic settings to develop autonomous learning capabilities in Higher Education students.

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Engaging in real-life practice within the University environment as a means to increasing student motivation and success

Leaver, F.

During the week of Teaching and Learning in January 2013, on behalf of the LJMU Dance Team I presented some examples of good practice with regards to student engagement as part of the Dance Practices degree programme. It was a difficult task to choose only a few examples from a programme that thrives on exploring the relationship between the teaching and learning within the educational environment; that is the University, and the wider dance community. Ultimately, the examples chosen as well as being models of good practice, demonstrate how the University can be used as an 'interactive worksite' in relation to teaching and learning and the students' relationship within the world of work. As Zepke and Leach state 'When institutions provide opportunities for students to learn both autonomously and with others, and to develop their sense of competence, students are more likely to be motivated, to engage and succeed' (2010, p. 170). With specific reference to the examples in this paper, as Edmond states (2001):

> The primary task in a practice-based discipline is ensuring that students have enough academic preparation and enough 'real life' practice experiences so that they can ground and develop particular knowledge and skills, put the basics together and manage the work of practice (cited in Budgen and Gamroth, 2008, p. 273).

In the explanation and rationale of the four examples below, it should be evident that there is an academic-underpinning in addition to the 'real life' practice that Edmond refers to.

The first example (Figure 1) was a specific Level five module, Facilitator as Performer, in which the students create a piece of work, guided by the tutors and as Hockings et al (2008) say 'teachers need to create rich educational experiences that challenge students' ideas and stretch them as far as they can go' (cited in Zepke and Leach, 2010, p. 171). It is also an example of a faculty-supervised practice model which, according to Budgen and Gamroth

(2008), is where a faculty member works with a group of students in an area of practice in which they have expertise. In this instance a dance theatre piece based on Eric Carle's 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar' was created for an audience of pupils from Key Stage one and two. The work itself was created on campus, which emulated the industrial model, as many dance companies create their works within the confines of their own professional space. Once created, the work was taken out into the community, to a number of primary schools across the North West, so emulating an outreach model of practice within the world of work.

Figure 1. The Hungry Caterpillar 2012

The second example (Figure 2) in contrast is a wonderful example of in-reach, where members of the community come to the University to participate with LJMU students in an integrated dance company. The Company, JUMP IN(tegrated) Dance is an on-going project that engages students across all three years in the development of an educational module called an 'in-reaching community'. Students propose their own assessment proposal through an individual negotiated learner plan against an agreed number of set modular assessments. Previously students have gained credits for teaching modules, work based learning, and performance, finding synergies across modules, transferring learning in context and allowing inter-dependency between the learning experiences across the modules.

Figure 2. JUMP Integrated

The third example (Figure 3) has some similarity to the previous one in that it runs across the year groups and modules and enables students to negotiate their learning across the modules. This example is an on-going Telematic Performance Project, which is directed by one member of staff at LJMU and another at either Temple University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania or Nova Southeastern University in Fort Lauderdale, Floridia, U.S.A. Through the use of video conferencing it has allowed good practice to be shared between continents and Universities, and has since expanded into offering master classes to schools via video conferencing links. It enables students in Liverpool to work creatively with other students in America and it allows for time to really experiment with the concept of telematic work and how choreography can be adapted in different situations and new spaces. This project also involves students in work that is cutting-edge in research, and so keeps them abreast of developments in the performance arena.

Figure 3. *Bing, Bang, Bong*! Telematic Performance, December 2012 (Photo: N. Jones).

In all three of these examples as Zepke and Leach suggest there is:

> a democratic-critical conception of engagement that goes beyond strategies, techniques or behaviours, a conception in which engagement is participatory, dialogic and leads not only to academic achievement but to success as an active citizen. (2010, p.173)

The final example is that of the Dance Forum, which was initially set up by tutors and as Hocking et al say (2008) 'teachers need to create rich educational experiences that challenge students' ideas' (cited in Zepke and Leach, 2010, p. 171). However, the forum was also supported by students pursuing project management experiences.

The Forum itself, is a platform where all the students and staff to come together as well as allowing the opportunity for people from the industry to come to the University either as spectators or to promote their own area of expertise. It has enabled graduates of LJMU dance to return and to either talk or perform to the students – which allows for an engagement between those in the workplace and those who will enter it in the future. It has allowed for possibilities, questions to be asked, and concerns to be shared – all within a student-centred environment. As Hockings et al (2008) also say: 'students who reflect, question, conjecture, evaluate and make connections between ideas whilst drawing on the ideas, experiences and knowledge of others are most deeply engaged' (cited in Zepke and Leach, 2010, p.171).

This people-centred Forum is now been trialled as a media orientated environment, where social media is being used to communicate between existing students, graduate students, future students and the staff and University.

The Dance Practices programme is rich with examples of outreach and in-reach environments and the above is only a small selection, but they hopefully exemplify the breadth that this engagement allows for a deeper level of student learning.

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Successes and Challenges of Developing Entrepreneurial Skills within the curriculum in Higher Education

Dinning, T.

Abstract

How universities develop programmes of practise in enterprise education has been much debated (Gibb 2005, Rae2007a, Gibson 2009). For one faculty in a NW university the development of an enterprise education programme was in response to the university being awarded a Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) in 2004. The Campus Enterprise (CE) programme was developed as an approach to enterprise education that could either be embedded in the curriculum and /or directly accessed by students. Developing such a programme does not come without its challenges— which included staffs' understanding of the subject area and competing with other university initiatives for staff and module engagement. Overcoming such challenges proved to be a key factor contributing to the success of the CE programme. Over the past six years whilst the programme has been developed, a three tier model has emerged that has subsequently been used as a basis to transfer CE across a range of subjects, with over 900 students having some form of enterprise education in 2012/13. The future of the CE programme is extremely positive with a new university strategic plan being introduced in 2012 that puts entrepreneurship at the heart of the students' experience at the university.

Background

Over the past decade research would indicate that the recent economic climate and rise in unemployment rates has led to a need to offer undergraduate students an entrepreneurial experience as part of their programme of study within the Higher Education Institution (HEI) sector (Gibb 2005, 2007, Rae 2007a, Nesta 2008) although such an idea had been raised some eight years prior in the Dearing Report (1997). Hannon (2006) suggests

that the entrepreneurial experience is needed to create a culture of entrepreneurship and to drive the economy based on knowledge within our education system, whilst the Lisbon Strategy (2008) lays out the need to stimulate entrepreneurial mind-sets of young people in order to see a growth in the economy. Such theories have led to universities acknowledging the importance of developing entrepreneurial potential that can raise students' aspirations and also arm them with suitable skills focused around innovation (Cooper 2004). The vehicle most commonly adopted that underpins this activity-driven agenda is through enterprise education programmes and associated activity (Gibb 2005).

How universities develop programmes of practise in enterprise education has been much debated (Gibb 2005, Rae2007a, Gibson 2009). Historically the teaching of entrepreneurship has sat within the business school and economic related subjects. Gibbs (2005) recognised a need to move enterprise education out of the domain of the business school and for programmes to adopt a more flexible model, thus moving the focus more to the development of enterprise skill development rather than business skills. More recently Wilson (2012) reports similar findings to Gibbs (2005) and supports the need for enterprise skills to be taught across disciplines. Attempting to put this into practice, in a paper presented by The National Council for Graduate Entrepreneurship Gibbs (2002) describes two very clear models. Firstly, the traditional business model, where the key subject areas taught are related to setting-up a business, business planning and business growth. Secondly, the alternative model which lends itself towards teaching the entrepreneurial skills, and focuses more on an entrepreneurial way of teaching, such as problem-based learning and project group work. Moreland (2006) describes enterprise activities as either focused or dispersed, where focused is similar to that of Gibbs' (2002) traditional model and dispersed more in line with the alternative model. However, in the same paper, Moreland (2006) recognised that in fact entrepreneurship needs to be adopted as a whole curriculum approach and not just an addition to those few students who displayed early entrepreneurial tendencies. There is a need to integrate entrepreneurial skills across different subject areas through practice-based pedagogies (Moreland 2006, Rae 2007a). As a consequence of giving students the experience within the curriculum it is suggested by Rae (2007), that this can pose opportunity-centred entrepreneurship and he further suggested that for some, graduates will see that they can shape their own future through changing an employer's perception of who they are, rather than changing themselves to fit with what employers want. Gibbs (2005) had

earlier introduced such a notion when he suggested that students need to be equipped for a complex world of uncertainty and greater changing job status. Entrepreneurial skills are needed for both self-employability or employability, and equally for profit and non–profit based businesses (Kuratko 2009).

For one faculty in a NW university the development of an enterprise education programme was in response to the university being awarded a Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) in 2004. As literature at the time was suggesting there was need for universities to drive an entrepreneurship agenda within the curricular of its students (Gibb 2002, European Commission 2004, Rae 2007), it was no big surprise that one of the CETL aims was to develop students as entrepreneurs

Development of an Enterprise Education Programme

Due to the diverse nature of the undergraduate programmes within the Faculty, the work was initially anchored within the sports development programme after which the intention was to disseminate across the other Faculty undergraduate programmes. With no direct business related degree programmes within the Faculty, it would remain the purpose of the Enterprise Education Programme to develop the entrepreneurial skills and mind-set of the students and in doing so, develop a curiosity around entrepreneurship and business start-up, rather than it be the focus. Key to the activity would be giving students the opportunities to develop and run their own ideas and projects, empowering students to develop links and connection with external businesses and organisations themselves (Munro and Cook 2008) within a safe and controlled environment, where both success and failure is celebrated, through reflection of the experience.

As enterprise education had never been adopted before within the Faculty, it was felt that the programme warranted a brand title and logo that students could relate to. Armstrong and Kolter (2011) suggest that branding will increase a product or service has to a consumer, which was to be the case with the Enterprise logo and name. The name chosen for the programme was Campus Enterprise (CE), see Figure 1.

Figure 1: Campus Enterprise logo

The Campus Enterprise (CE) programme was developed as an approach to enterprise education that could either be embedded in the curriculum and/or directly accessed by students, it was very much in line with Gibb (2007) as an alternative model of enterprise education, or a dispersed approached as described by Moreland (2006). It was both a philosophy and a set of strategies set out to engage, enthuse and empower students and staff in this hugely important area. Its objectives were to:

- De-mystify enterprise for staff and students by promoting a model of enterprise that emphasises the development of an enterprising mind-set.
- Support students in recognising and developing entrepreneurial skills, attitudes and behaviours.
- Provide a framework for students to develop their own business ideas.
- Support academic staff in delivering enterprise education.
- Develop stronger links with the LJMU central enterprise team.

The activity included:

1. **Developing students as entrepreneurs through 'live projects' and student- company type settings.**

'Live Projects' were developed by the key CE member of staff that formed part of a module activity where students were required to undertake some work-related learning as part of their curriculum if the learning outcomes of the module allowed, or ran by the students as extracurricular work. It was the intention that these projects would be student-led, with minimal input from any external parties and staff; in most cases they would involve the students running a mini-business around one of their own ideas, within a set timescale, to a set budget agreed in advance between the students and the CE member of staff. In some cases where the module learning outcomes dictated students had to submit a short business case for their project to gain approval from the staff.

2. **Development of entrepreneurial skills/developing an entrepreneurial mind-set through one-off bespoke sessions that could be run as part of induction, curriculum or extra curriculum.**

In order to support this activity the CE member of start started to compile a toolkit of resources that could be repeatedly used across different subjects. European Commission (2006) in the Oslo Report strongly recommends that teachers need a toolkit; the toolkits should be designed to contain activities that promote creativity, managerial skills and project work. The CE toolkit included a series of resources that could be easily used across other Faculty subjects; a network card game, a restaurant placemat task, some generic

finance challenges that could be made subject specific, entrepreneurs on sticks, the CE member of staff also became a licensed Zing Trainer. Zing is a business strategy game that simulates the set-up of a new business giving students the opportunity to consider all area involved in setting up and running a new business.

3. Support to staff in the delivery of the session.

The activity was delivered by the key member of staff leading the programme in consultation with module leaders; it blended standard teaching with bespoke material that enabled sessions to suit both the module and the learning outcomes of the session. During these early adoption stages, staff did not have to deliver material that they were not comfortable with, they could observe the key CE member of staff, with a hope that in the future they would be able to deliver independently from the CE member of staff. According to adoption theory, the CE programme was merely at the initial stages of awareness (Jobber 2007) at this point, and it would be key for its success to ensure the preliminary work would create an interest in the staff, in order that they would go on to develop such activity as part of their own teaching in the future.

4. Development of extracurricular activity.

With little extracurricular enterprise activity offered through either the University or the Student Union, the Faculty launched an annual ideas competition that would provide interest in CE, and also access to a process through which students could develop their idea should it be viable.

From this initial work over the first two years, a three-tier model emerged where the first year was based around fun activities that introduced the idea of being enterprising, developing skills such as initiative, creativity, risk taking. The second year saw the development of the key business skills and third year opportunities for those students who wanted to explore business start-up, see Figure 2. This was reflective of some of the work by the European Commission (2004:6) who state that ‘the teaching of entrepreneurship can be adapted to the different levels of education’. They go onto suggest, these will encompass the promotion of qualities such as creativity, showing initiative, risk–taking, of skills required for business and open the students’ minds to not only employment, but also becoming an entrepreneur.

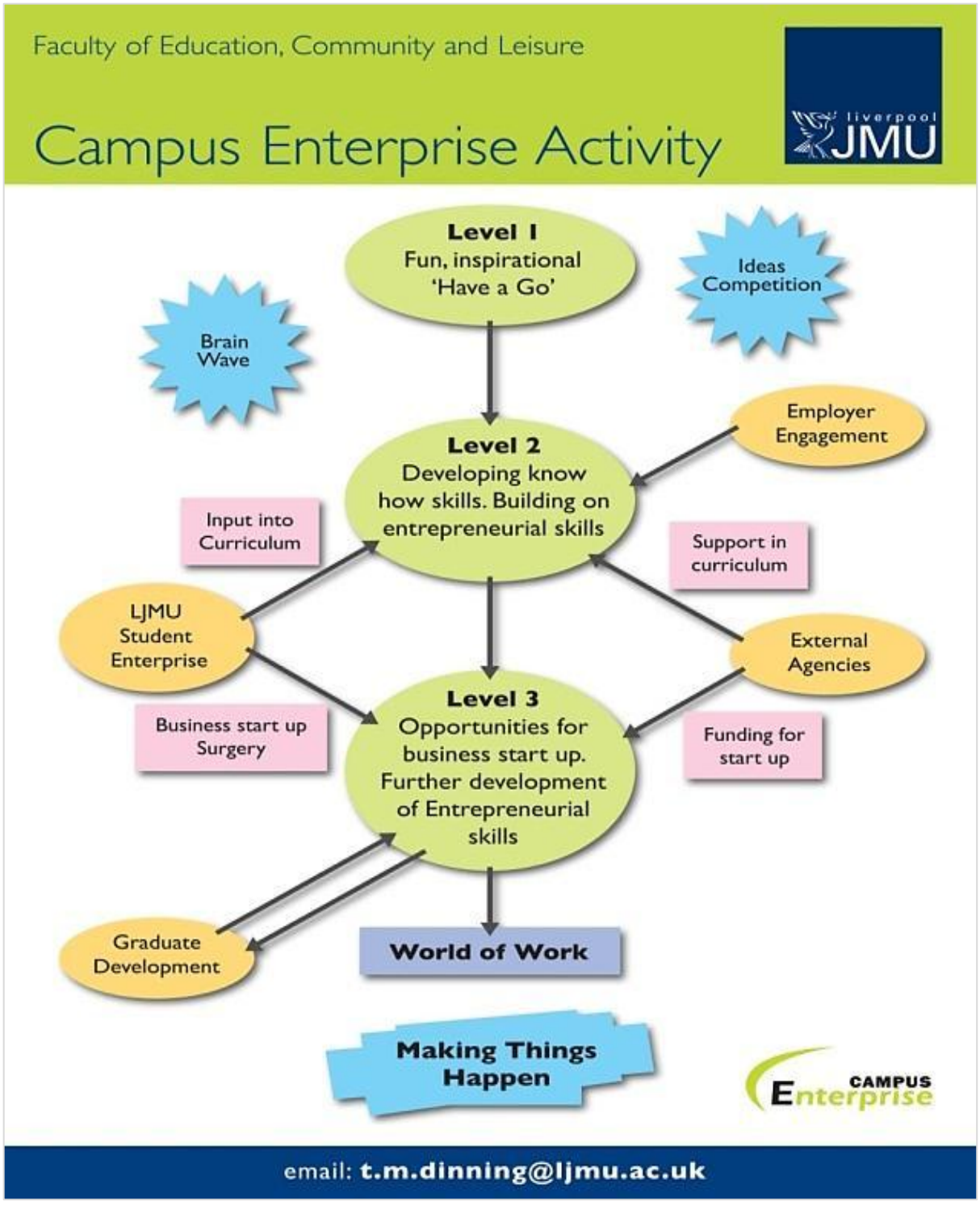

Figure 2: The Sport Model for Enterprise Education

Whilst the approaches are developing the skills needed for self-*employability,* at the same time they are explicitly linked to employability within a workplace giving the students an opportunity to explore their entrepreneurial side. Wilson, Llewellyn and Robertson (2002) suggest that employability and transferable skills need to be part of an enterprise education programme in order that they can become sustainable. This outlook is important for this particular university so that the CE programme can sit alongside the university's employability programme.

Interestingly enough, the European Commission (2008) suggests that there are five sub-dimensions to the teaching of entrepreneurship these are: entrepreneurial courses, entrepreneurial programmes, extra-curricular activities, curriculum development and teaching methods. On reflection, the Campus Enterprise programme was addressing the latter three, leaving the first two as areas to develop within the faculty and for future consideration.

Challenges

The Faculty where the CE programme was developed was not one where business related/entrepreneurship degrees were taught, consequently staff did not see entrepreneurship as something they wanted or even needed within their curriculum. Adding to this at the time was another university initiative called the 'World of Work' that was being driven from senior management down, whist the initiative from the CETL was a bottom-up approach. Niras (2008) acknowledged in a survey conducted across Europe, that whilst currently enterprise education is been driven by passionate individuals with a bottom-up approach, this approach still remains immature and vulnerable. The Quality Assurance Agency (2012) suggests quite clearly that whilst driving such an agenda from the bottom-up can have some effective results, there are barriers to overcome within such an environment and model. Having both initiatives at the same time, it became apparent very early on that there was going to be competition over which initiative was adopted by the programme teams, and certainly as the CETL developed its activity, the challenge that emerged was how to use the 'World of Work' initiative to support the development of the CE programme.

Another key challenge that arose as work started was that around terminology. If staff were going to engage then they needed to understand what entrepreneurship was and how it could relate to their subject. The word entrepreneurship to academics is often seen as a 'very foreign concept' (Hutton 2008, p. 37), and can be mis- interpreted as having a focus on business

start-up, identifying opportunities for innovation and change, such as setting-up a new firm (Pittaway and Cope 2005). If such views were to be held by the faculty staff, working on non-business subjects the challenges could prove too great. Further challenges came from the transferability of the programme due to different structures with each programme, constraints of module learning outcomes, and staff perceptions. Nesta (2008) outline several challenges and opportunities to the delivery of enterprise education, see Figure 3, on consideration of these there are areas that clearly this university would draw similar conclusions to.

Figure 3: Challenges and Opportunities to the delivery of Enterprise Education (Source: Nesta 2008)

Overcoming the challenges

There is key evidence (Rae 2007b) that suggests tangible links between enterprise skills and employability, with Rae (2007b) arguing for a more holistic and connected approach to employability and enterprise development for both students and staff. Using the synergy between employability and entrepreneurship skills, staff could see how one could benefit the other, and became more open-minded to the ideas. This synergy also became the selling point for the CE programme, so that the activity was not competing against the university's employability initiative, but working to support it.

Definitions adopted by the CETL at the start of this work were: 'Entrepreneurship: the process of uncovering and developing an opportunity to create value through innovation' (NCE2003). Moreland (2006) in his definition of Entrepreneurship Skills clearly stated that such skills include: ability to use one's own initiative; team work;

- working under pressure;
- adaptability;
- attention to detail;
- planning, coordinating, and organising.

Whilst Moreland's definition makes for easy understanding, a far more detailed list of skills had been posed earlier by Gibb (2002), where Gibb categorises the skills into subsets of behaviours, attributes and skills, see Table 1.

Behaviours	Attributes	Skills
Opportunity seeking and grasping	Achievement of ambition	Creative problem solving
Taking initiatives to make things happen	Self-confidence and self-belief	Persuading
Solving problems creatively	Perseverance	Negotiation
Managing autonomously	High internal locus of control	Selling
Taking responsibility for and ownership of things	Action orientation	Proposing
Seeing things through	Preference of learning by doing	Holistically managing business/ projects/ situations
Networking effectively	Hardworking	Strategic thinking
Putting things together creatively	Determination	Intuitive decision making under uncertainty
Using judgement to take calculated risks	Creativity	Networking

Table 1: Entrepreneurial skills, behaviours and attributes (Gibbs 2005)

It was through the use of these clear broad definitions that staff could start to understand what the CE programme was trying to achieve. In addition staff from other programmes started to show an interest in this subject area, which gave the CE key member of staff a handful of colleagues from across the faculty to act as champions. Whilst these colleagues supported the development of the CE programme in the first instance, the key turning point was the approval of an entrepreneurship strategy by the faculty management team, which empowered the CE key member to make more demands on programme teams.

Successes of the Campus EE programme

Campus Enterprise has made a difference to over 60% of programmes within the Faculty and its students since its inception six years ago. Whilst the programme is not primarily focused towards supporting students in pursuing business start-ups, the growth in numbers coming forward to business start-up events and ideas competitions as evidence of impact beyond its original intent is compelling. Over the six year period of the programme being in place, there has been a 15% increase in the number of students enquiring about business start-up through the University central enterprise team

The ideas competition which is part of CE programme has had over 200 entries over the six years, with one entry going on to win the University competition for business ideas in 2008. Such a growth provides a strong indication that the students are now thinking differently and taking action, so in terms of the process of adoption this change indicates that the action phase has been reached (Jobber 2007).

The Campus Enterprise programme has taken enterprise from being an 'add-on' activity undertaken by a few enthusiasts, to being something that most programmes can see relevance of and engage with. It has been held up as a programme of good practice by the University and in 2011 the CE key member of staff was highly commended by Enterprise Educators UK for their work. The programme has ensured that the opportunities are available to large numbers of students within the curriculum, thus promoting consistency in the student experience now operating across nine degree programmes within the Faculty the programme now impacts on over 900 students each year.

Impact factors

Developed now over six years, the initial passion and drive from a non-academic member of staff has enabled the following entrepreneurial achievements:

- Academic staff are now given work-load hours to champion student entrepreneurship.
- Five undergraduate student companies have been formed, all of which operate under the direction and drive from students within programmes.
- Over £10,000 has been generated from a range of activities of student-managed events.
- Over 150 students run a range of community-based sport projects.
- In 2012/2013 twelve students ran mini-businesses as an alternative to a traditional work-based learning placement.
- In 2012/2013 over 900 students had enterprise education included at some point in their curriculum.

The key factors influencing success

Overcoming the challenges have been key to the success of the Enterprise

Education programme within the Faculty; by aligning the programme with the 'World of Work' initiative has gained valuable support from the Faculty Management Team. The support has enabled the continued development of the EE programme through three key strategies. Firstly, by ensuring the sustainability of the job roles – initially created and funded as part of the CETL initiative, to provide a dedicated member of staff to drive the agenda with a student Project Coordinator for additional support. Secondly, by allocating hours to the Faculty workload allocation model for Academic Enterprise Champions within programme teams. Thirdly, by supporting the key EE member of staff to complete both the European (3EP) and International Enterprise Educator's Programme (IEEP) and so become an Enterprise Fellow to drive the agenda. Gibb (2002) proposed a template for such a programme in his 'Towards the Entrepreneurial University' paper to the National Council for Graduate Entrepreneurship (NCGE) suggesting that staff who intended to lead on such work would gain value for their institution by attending. More recently the introduction of the University's Strategic Plan for 2012 – 2017 stated quite clearly that as a civic modern university it will deliver a curriculum that has links to entrepreneurship. Such a key strategy will provide the foundation for the future development of the CE programme, it will no longer need to be seen as a support to the 'World of Work', but have its own importance within the university strategic plan.

The Future

Moving forwards with a new University Strategic Framework that promotes

entrepreneurship for all students, the CE programme has both the need and capacity to grow. At a Faculty level a new three year plan is needed that uses existing frameworks of good practice together with new practice ideas and language such as entrepreneurial awareness, mind-set, capability and effectiveness (QAA 2012) to mould and shape the future of the programme. Educators need to be flexible to respond to the changing landscape, have a range of resources available to them if entrepreneurship is going to be taught within the context of the subject studies, as would be the suggestion of the authors sited in this paper (European Commission 2004, 2005, 2008; Gibb 2002, 2005, 2007; QAA 2012).

A few of the key features moving forwards will need to include:

Using real entrepreneurs as role models and mentors to students, it is suggested that this can make up for the university teacher's lack of experience (European Commission 2004).

Introducing students to the concept of social entrepreneurship and revisiting the five sub-dimensions as described by the European commission (2008) in particular the dimension of teaching methods, as very often staff will not perceive a method of teaching as being entrepreneurial, so presenting a missed opportunity to be explicit with the students.

Further developments of the toolkit to ease delivery of sessions for staff, with a particular focus on developing activities that promote student's innovation and making things happen. Bessant and Tidd (2011) suggest that coming-up with an idea is a feature of human nature it is *doing* something with it that starts to make the activity more complex. Students need to be given opportunities to develop their ideas, to innovate. Drucker (1985) describes innovation as the entrepreneurial tool that enables the entrepreneur to capitalize on change and opportunities, a series of tools are required that support the students understanding of a process, rather than just having ideas (Bessant and Tidd 2011).

Further research needs also to be undertaken to give the area of work a real clarity of purpose within the Faculty. Areas of work to be explored include clarifying the value of enterprise education to students – do they actually see the value of it? There is also a real opportunity for looking at specific models of student-led projects against the traditional placement opportunity and problem-based learning. Such research would add to the body of knowledge in this area and help shape the future of the programme.

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Is working in partnership really worth it? For me it was!

Walker, C.

What follows is a personal reflection on the establishment of a collaborative partnership with Greenbank College and Sports Academy, Liverpool. For a number of years discussion had been on-going regarding the establishment of a Foundation degree at Greenbank College in Liverpool. Greenbank is an innovative College specialising in provision for people with disabilities. It was the intention of the collaboration to utilise this expertise and establish a Foundation Degree that proactively encourages students with disabilities to enter Higher Education and ultimately complete a Degree with LJMU.

The Foundation Degree was originally designed as a collaborative venture between Liverpool John Moores University, Faculty of Education, Community and Leisure (ECL) within the Centre for Sport, Dance and Outdoor Education (SDO) suite of programmes, and Greenbank Further Education College. Under New Labours' regime since 1997, the issue of social inclusion rose up the statutory and political agenda. This culminated in a whole raft of new disability legislation being crystallised and brought to the fore over the last fifteen years. For example the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (2001), Human Rights Act (1998), the Disability Discrimination Act (1995), and the recent Equalities Bill (2010) have all made a significant impact in raising disabled peoples entitlement and accessibility to goods and services of which sport is one of many facets.

The degree offers an innovative and non-traditional way to undertake a degree in Sport Development and proactively welcomes students with disabilities, mature students, students who are elite athletes and students who may have been out of education for some years but who wish to reinvest in their education and qualifications.

Much time and effort was invested in the development of the initial programme, including broad-based research conducted specifically to identify skills expected by employers at this level, involving a wide range of partners in the sector throughout

the Merseyside and North West region. The whole ethos of the Foundation Degree is the employability focus of students; this was to be reflected both in contextualised teaching in the classroom, practical coaching experiences and in the design of the assessments. It was designed that it could be accessible on predominantly a part-time basis and available to both students and employed people alike. In particular previous research (Higher Education Statistics Agency [HESA], 2005) has outlined that disabled students generally have not aspired to apply to Higher Education institutions.

The Foundation Degree in Inclusive Sport Development attempts to widen participation to students who might not previously have considered undertaking a Higher Education course. Many of these students, some of whom may have been away from education for some time, are understandably apprehensive over what will be expected of them and their ability to meet these commitments. The programme is also aimed at elite athletes with or without disabilities, who due to training and the competitive nature of their sports a part time degree is better suited. Additionally whilst being inclusive to all, the Foundation Degree is proactively marketed at students with disabilities. Although disabled students have been entering Higher Education (HE) in greater numbers since 2007 when the programme was first validated, students with disabilities still remain under-represented and their experiences are variable in HE. It is argued that the FDA at Greenbank College in partnership with LJMU is working well at attracting these students towards a Higher Education degree. The programme itself has been running for five years and a number of students have graduated with many completing the articulated route in Sport Development (BA Hons) at LJMU. The discussion points that follow are personal thoughts from the Link Tutor (myself), who also was responsible for developing the course, its content and delivery mechanisms, in partnership with Greenbank College. There have been a number of challenges throughout this process together with some lessons that colleagues may wish to reflect on and use for future collaborations.

How and why did this original partnership with Greenbank form, and grow? Clearly, Greenbank College, LJMU (ECL) and I started out "on the same page" in terms of understanding what such partnerships should be and importantly why we felt a collaboration was required. In a previous career as Disability Sport Development Officer, I had worked closely with Greenbank Sports Academy (a part of Greenbank College) and as such, both the programme team in Sport Development at ECL (including myself), and Greenbank College were aware that very few students with disabilities were

accessing Higher Education, and all parties wished to change the situation. Very early on, we had shared a common commitment to improving opportunities for this target group and were sympathetic of each other's needs. From the start it became apparent that we shared the same visions and values of what we wanted to achieve, even if we did not necessarily know it fully at the time.

Right from the beginning I stressed that I was not at all interested in being an "advisor" but someone who could work with Greenbank in developing a new innovative degree programme that would not only meet the University's needs, but importantly attract new students to Greenbank – in particular students with disabilities. Reassuringly, they were looking for someone to help them learn the needed knowledge and skills to do that by working with them collaboratively in designing and implementing the new degree. We would all learn from each other.

Partnership can be viewed in many ways but arguably it is vital that there is an acknowledgment that all parties have the knowledge and skills to contribute to the process of working together. To that end, a number of planning meetings were held to prepare and validate a new LJMU Foundation Degree that would be delivered at Greenbank College. Foundation degrees (FD) are designed to encompass work-related learning in addition to being part-time and also providing a non-traditional route through to Higher Education. Furthermore, at that time the Government was encouraging Higher Education institutions and Further Education colleges to share expertise to develop such provision. Consequently, an enthusiastic and committed group of individuals chose to take up the challenge. In 2006 the Office of the Third Sector noted that: 'Third sector organisations have an enormous amount to contribute to our public services, both in the ways they are designed and delivered and in the ways they are improved and held to account', thus it was recognised early on that Greenback College had huge expertise in engaging with the disabled community and importantly, a network of contacts that LJMU could use to market the new degree.

Through collaboration both parties could share the risks and pool resources and talents in order to enhance the delivery and implementation of the FD programme. Partnerships exist when the parties identify a corresponding commitment to contribute key capabilities in order to achieve a more effective solution to an issue or problem. Greenbank College therefore brought their knowledge of the needs, challenges and aspirations of disabled people, whilst I and LJMU brought the knowledge of quality assurance processes, the HE sector and

the processes necessary for the successful validation of the programme.

Johan Zetterström, (CEO, Projectplace 2012) argues that Collaborative Planning is based on clear roles, transparency and participation. This clarity means that it is obvious to everyone involved who is able to make which decisions. From the beginning of the planning process, clear roles and allocated tasks were agreed between Greenbank and LJMU. Examples of these tasks included market research, community consultation, clear identification of the validation process, writing of subject content, production of modules etc. These were allocated on expertise grounds e.g. Greenbank undertook market research and work on identifying recruitment issues, whilst LJMU staff structured the subject content and the pulling- together of the course validation documents. This ensured that progress towards the aims could be advanced quickly. I would argue that this was an excellent use of resources, but additionally this partnership approach was useful because of its potential for considerable 'added-value' in that the consultation process also informed the course content and student recruitment issues ensuring that the programme became more connected and "joined-up".

The demarcation of tasks was effective in maximizing resources because each party had a clear understanding of their own information, however, this occasionally meant all parties did not always have an understanding of the other's information. For example, this meant that on one occasion when I was not available to attend a meeting, that Greenbank staff were not aware of some of the processes or requirements of the quality assurance for the validation process. This delayed some of the preparation of the documentation and could have been avoided with a more regular agreed coming together and exchange of information. Not only would this have ensured a greater knowledge of the whole programme from both parties, but this would have assisted the ultimate delivery of the programme on validation, as less time would have to be spent by the Link Tutor in terms of detailing required academic processes.

Despite such minor complications, on completion of the gathering, researching and production of the documentation, the FD in Inclusive Sport Development was successfully validated in 2005. This partnership and collaboration has continued throughout the last five years in the delivery of the Foundation Degree. Regular discussion continues throughout the summer planning period about the currency of the programme, recruitment challenges, model delivery and good practice in teaching and learning. The Greenbank College programme team meet with me as Link Tutor at least twice a semester, and marking and moderation

processes are agreed for each module. Guest lectures from Staff at ECL are delivered to the FD students and formal procedures such as Board of Study and Assessment Boards are coordinated by the ECL Administration staff. Moreover, some modules are delivered by staff from ECL. In response to feedback from students on research methods modules, and the connectivity to the articulated route at Level 6 at ECL, the research methods lectures are delivered by the Sport Development programme team. The delivery of the research methods component of this module is best delivered by LJMU staff to ensure linkages with the Level 6 dissertation, but also in response to the small teaching team and their specific expertise in other areas. As a consequence of the relationships that had been built up over the duration of the collaboration, Greenbank staff were not threatened by this development and agreed that the expertise and knowledge of staff at ECL would be more effective for the FD students.

It has been my experience that sensitive treatment of partnerships is as much about managing relationships as it is about any theorising about organisational policy. Good personal relations are important for making these partnerships work. Brinkerhoff reiterates this when he writes: 'Partnership is a dynamic relationship among diverse actors, based on mutually agreed objectives, […] encompasses mutual influence, with a careful balance between synergy and respective autonomy, which incorporates mutual respect, equal participation in decision-making, mutual accountability, and transparency' (2002, pp. 19-30).

I would not argue for Collaboration in all circumstances. It is not some 'magic pill' that is, in some way a short cut to community engagement. Partnerships are hard work. They take a huge investment from all parties. Any hours-allocation staffing model does not account for the hours spent meeting or planning or even 'just getting to know' each other. However, with careful planning, enthusiasm and often a stoic sense of humour, they can bear fruit. The initial precursory meetings were a useful way to build belief and communal understanding. We were lucky as a previous relationship had existed, albeit informally. There was an awareness and trust which occurred from the beginning of the collaborative process and a real commitment to want to make the partnership work. Both parties acknowledged that the other had something relevant to contribute to the process, but at the same time they had their particular interests to promote, so that it is reasonable to expect that there would be challenges at times. This recognition that actually things 'won't go swimmingly' all the time and that there will be disagreement or misunderstanding, ensured that when things did not 'go to

plan' that there was not a blame culture but a commitment to move forward and put it right. Again I cannot stress the significance of personal contact and the establishing and preservation of relationships, is vital to working successfully with partners.

From my experience there are a few 'do's' and 'don'ts' that should be followed (bye-the-bye, I propose these based on the mistakes that I made, so take heed):

Do's

- Make sure that you spend time getting to know the key individuals in the partner organisation.
- Ensure that you agree key roles and responsibilities at the start of the partnership.
- Make sure you have an agreed vision of what it is you want to achieve.
- Take advice from whoever wishes to give it (you don't have to act on it always!)
- Be realistic in estimating the time needed to establish the partnership.
- Trust the partner to deliver their end of the bargain.

Don'ts

- Think that everything will work-out without any problems or challenges.
- Give up when things go wrong.
- Over-promise what you cannot deliver.
- Lose your sense of humour.

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Exploring the Impact of the Integration of Dance within the Primary Curriculum, to Support Experiential Learning

Grannell, E. (Final year undergraduate student: Dance Practices)

Introduction

The following report will outline the aims and objectives of the research project, discuss the research strategy used and analyse, interpret and conclude the researchers' findings. As the project progressed, it became clear that dance was the predominant tool being used to facilitate the content of the practical sessions, with props and music used for support and so the focus of the research question shifted slightly, from a broad idea of the impact of experiential learning, to more specifically the impact of the integration of Dance into the primary curriculum. However, the researcher acknowledges that dance can exist as a tool to promote experiential learning and therefore believes that experiential learning remains a key aspect of the project. The National Dance Association agrees with this and states that 'The experiential learning that dance promotes allows opportunities for critical thinking and creative ways to express thoughts, feelings, emotions and ideas' (2010, p. 84).

The research was completed within the Key Stage two department of an inner city primary school, with a group of mixed gender pupils, aged eight and nine and focused on facilitating curriculum content through dance classes, to discover the impact, if any, that this had on the learners. Whilst the pupils cover a variety of subjects at this stage in their education, the researcher chose Mathematics, Science, and English as the curriculum focus and also touched on aspects of History, in order to maintain the correlation with the learning taking place in the classroom.

The researcher was motivated to create and complete this investigation by a strong personal interest in creating and delivering lesson content that is inclusive to all individuals, regardless of their preferred learning style. It was this interest that helped to shape the project, as the researcher believes that dance can be

engaging for all learners and therefore prevent individuals from feeling excluded, as Kazu explains can sometimes be the case: 'A person educated in an area having no relationship to his/her learning style may lack confidence and s/he may be less successful; s/he may as a result become frustrated' (2009, p. 90). For the purpose of this project, the researcher chose to focus on the sensory VAK model for defining learning preferences, and therefore refers to this model throughout this report when discussing learning styles and preferences. The VAK learning style is outlined by Malone as one that is 'developed by practitioners of neuro-linguistic programming (NLP), [and] stands for Visual, Auditory and Kinesthetic' (2003, p. 305). The researcher also has an existing passion for facilitating within primary school education and hoped to extend current knowledge and experience of working with Key Stage two pupils, by completing the project.

Research Aim

To complete a piece of research investigating the impact of experiential learning on Key Stage 2 pupils.

Research Objectives

- To complete a placement in a primary school
- To deliver dance classes via experiential learning, based on observations of curriculum informed classes
- To collect data via a range of qualitative methods from class teacher and pupils, as well as participant observation and weekly, reflective evaluations from the researcher.

Methodology

The research was collected using qualitative methods, as the researcher placed themselves in the existing school environment in order to explore an impact on the pupils, which fulfils Neergaard and Ulhøi's definition of a qualitative researcher which states that: 'qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them' (2007, p. 5).

The first methodology used by the researcher, was non-participant observation, defined by Kothari as 'when the observer observes as a detached emissary without any attempt on his part to experience through participation what others feel' (2004, p. 96). The observation consisted of the researcher spending one full school day each week observing the pupils in their classroom environment to develop an understanding of the current curriculum content of the lessons being taught by the class teacher. The purpose

of gaining this understanding through observation was to ensure that the researcher could include relevant content in the practical dance sessions, therefore providing the opportunity for pupils to learn curriculum content experientially.

Non-participant observation was also used to collect objective feedback from the class teacher. This was done through the use of a structured observation sheet which the class teacher filled in each week whilst the pupils took part in the practical sessions, led by the researcher. From these observations, the researcher hoped to receive honest opinions on the success of each session, in addition to opinions on whether the session proved successful in its aim of supporting curriculum learning and engaging all students. Additionally, the same structured observation sheet was completed by the researcher immediately after each practical session, in order to provide feedback from a varying perspective. Some of the information provided by these completed observation sheets also aided the researcher in planning further sessions, such as the comments made regarding the 'Use of [the] school behaviour management policy'.

A further method that the researcher utilised was participant reflection, in order to gain feedback from the perspective of the pupils. To collect this feedback the researcher led a short focus group after each practical session, with a small group of pupil participants. Kruger and Casev suggest that for a focus group to be successful 'The group discussion is conducted several times with similar types of participants so the researcher can identify trends and patterns...Group members influence each other by responding to ideas and comments of each other' (2000, pp. 4-5). Consequently, the researcher held five small scale focus groups, invited different pupils to engage in each and allowed and encouraged participants' freedom to discuss their ideas and opinions with their peers.

When first proposing this research project, the researcher stated that a semi-structured interview would be held with the class teacher at the end of the project. This was replaced by a large focus group with the whole class of pupils. The researcher chose to make this change as a large amount of feedback had already been collected from the class teacher via the observation sheets, whilst the weekly focus groups were less consistent in providing valuable data. Therefore, the researcher felt that it would be more beneficial to hold an additional focus group, providing the opportunity for participant reflection for the final time.

Finally, the researcher chose to complete reflective and evaluative observations of the practical dance sessions and maintained a written record of these observations after each session was complete. These reflective observations

were carried out in order to supply the researcher with a record of information and data to support the findings and progress of the project. Moreover, maintaining a record of these observations supported the researcher when planning and leading subsequent sessions, providing feedback on the positive and negative aspects of each session; thus aiding the researcher to learn and develop from experience as agreed by Dewey, Kolb and Schön 'reflection is a fundamental component in human learning and development' (Cited in Dannelle and Cooper, 2009, p.19).

Findings and Discussion

Hayes considers that '…a combination of attractive lesson content and a persuasive teaching approach creates the best circumstances for enjoyment' (2006, p. 77). This idea of the importance of lesson content when striving to create an enjoyable learning experience for pupils is agreed by Tanner and Jones, who discuss that 'Enjoyment is generated by tasks that are of interest to the pupils and provide a level of attainable challenge' (2000, p. 52). In line with these definitions, the researcher maintained pupil enjoyment as an objective when planning each dance session, whilst retaining the overall aim of supporting experiential learning of curriculum content. For example, as the opening to a session which focused on Mathematics, the researcher used a game which combined physical activity with addition and subtraction calculations. The pupils sat in a circle, each holding a card featuring a one digit number, whilst the researcher called out calculations. When they believed that their card held the correct answer to the sum given, they performed the corresponding amount of star jumps on the spot and ran around the edge of the circle until they arrived back at their original space. The researcher hoped that the task would not only engage the pupils in Mathematics, but also promote a feeling of team work, as the pupils were encouraged to count out loud whilst their peers completed the star jumps and cheered and supported them whilst they ran around the circle. Immediately, interest and enthusiasm in participating in the game was displayed by the pupils, as was a desire for their number to be called so that they could carry out the physical aspect of the task; as Pupil C expressed '*The maths game I enjoyed...it was quite exciting...fun education*.' (Focus Group 3 - Part 1). In addition, the requirement of correctly solving the calculations provided a challenging, yet achievable aspect, which Tanner and Jones discussed as important.

As described, the researcher strived to ensure that pupil enjoyment was present throughout the project and believes that this aim was successful. This belief is supported by the following pupil comments

regarding the sessions: '*I enjoy all of them because it's good exercise and it's a lot of fun as well*.' (Pupil A, Focus Group 3 - Part 2), and '…*I really like dancing and I think it was a really good way to learn*.' (Pupil F, Focus Group 6 - Part 1). In addition, the class teacher stated that '*All pupils enjoy these sessions*' (Teacher Observation Sheet) and observations carried out by the researcher show that '*all pupils remained enthusiastic and gave fantastic creative input*.' (Researcher Observation Sheet). Furthermore, MacDonald supports the belief that pupils enjoy the process of experiential learning, by stating simply that 'children are enthusiastic about learning through dance' (Cited in McMahon et al, 2003, p.106).

The researcher observed that another impact of the pupils' participation in the dance sessions was that their curriculum learning, in the relevant subject areas, was supported. For example, a science based task during the first dance session focused on pupils working in groups to randomly link each of the planets of the solar system to each of the movement type listed on a worksheet. They then proceeded to use this order to structure a short sequence with the corresponding movements. This visual reminder of the names and arrangement of the planets, along with the requirement of rehearsing and performing the dance sequence from memory, aimed to support the pupils in learning to recite the correct planets order from memory, which they had been working on through written work in the classroom earlier that week. When reflecting on this session, Pupil K said '*I think it helped me…remember the order of the planets more…to know them off by heart*.' (Focus Group 6 - Part 2) and pupil B agreed stating '*I learnt loads about the solar sy*stem' (Focus Group 3 - Part 1). Karsten further discusses the possibility of such a connection between dance and curriculum learning, stating that '…dance can be a highly successful method of instructional support in many core subjects' (http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org), whilst Rhodes agrees that 'dance may indeed play a powerful part in students' understanding of more traditional subjects' (2006, p. 48). Furthermore, the class teacher suggested that the sessions successfully promoted and supported pupil learning, confirming that '*The varied range of physical activities enabled all the children to learn through experience*' (Teacher Observation Sheet).

The positive feedback from both the pupils and the class teacher regarding the success of this original session in supporting the curriculum learning of the pupils was helpful to the researcher when planning further sessions. For example, when planning the first session, the researcher had hoped that ensuring the use of visual props and movement for explanation and idea stimulus, in addition to using spoken instructions and

discussions that the pupils are accustomed to, would enhance learning opportunities, being inclusive to all learners. The success of the session in doing this was supported by feedback stating that:

The session included clear, spoken explanations…as well as visual props (worksheets and flash cards) to enable pupils to explore and develop sequences of movements. The practical, kinaesthetic nature of the activities proved useful in engaging many pupils who struggle to learn through text and verbal explanations alone. The inclusive nature of the session was a particular strength. (Teacher Observation Sheet)

Consequently, the researcher continued to ensure that such inclusive practice was continued throughout the sessions, as observed by the class teacher who stated later in the project that '*All sessions have included a range of visual props and opportunities to move [and] spoken explanations are always clear'* (Teacher Observation Sheet). As well as providing explanations and information to the pupils via this range of sensory methods, the researcher also encouraged pupils to contribute their own ideas through kinaesthetic, visual and auditory means rather than just via their preferred style. This was intentionally encouraged, as Kyriacou explains '…it is important to help pupils to develop the skills to learn effectively in their non-preferred learning styles, as pupils who are taught overwhelmingly in their preferred learning style may not be able to develop a full range of learning skills' (1998, p. 41).

In addition to aiding the researcher in creating equal learning opportunities for pupils, the use of visual, auditory and kinaesthetic stimuli also ensured that the sessions met part of the National Curriculum guidelines for Dance within Physical Education at Key Stage two, which outline that 'Pupils should be taught to…respond to a range of stimuli and accompaniment' (http://www.education.gov.uk).

Throughout the project, the class teacher observed that '*Generally, [the] children's behaviour does not change dramatically in these sessions which I feel is a good indicator that the lessons are engaging*' (Teacher Observation Sheet). Based on expectations gained from personal observations and interactions with the pupils in their classroom environment across the length of the project, the researcher agrees that '*The children behaved as expected on the whole*' (Researcher Observation Sheet). The opportunity to complete these classroom observations provided the researcher with the opportunity to understand and prepare, for not only the expected behaviour of the pupils, but also their abilities and relationships with their peers. This knowledge proved beneficial to the researcher when planning and leading

dance session content, helping to ensure that it was appropriate, as agreed by Brownlie et al who believe that 'As teachers, we plan with the class in mind and make adaptations and modifications' (2006, p. 127). However, further observations showed a slight change in the expected behaviour of a small number of male pupils, as '*three boys who can sometimes be distracted and boisterous, especially when together, worked sensibly and creatively together with fantastic results*' (Researcher Observation Sheet). The researcher considers that the characteristics of learning displayed by the three boys could be due to their gender. Gurian's idea that 'Boys get bored more easily than girls; this quite often requires more and varying stimulants to keep them attentive' (2011, p. 46), connotes that in the case of the three boys discussed, they are becoming bored and consequently distracted in the classroom due to the restraints of the environment, whilst the fast paced nature and creative freedom presented by a dance session provides the stimulant that they need to remain focused. Gurian also continues to say that 'Boys spend less time than girls managing team process…focusing right away on goal orientation' (2011, p. 49), which could be a further indication of why the three boys were able to work well together to successfully complete their goal of creating a stimulus based group choreography within a short time frame. Furthermore, Perrett comments during a discussion which compares boys and girls in Dance classes in a particular school, that 'The naughty boy group produces something that makes up for a lack of precision by a vast amount of high energy and risk taking' (2004, p. 5). This correlates with the researcher's experience of the three boys discussed, as the researcher had a pre-conceived opinion that the boys were likely to be distracted and therefore 'naughty' due to the behaviour that had been observed in the classroom and the choreography that they produced 'consisted predominantly of strong punching and kicking actions and masculine sound effects' in comparison to the 'literal, precise movements' used by the other groups (Researcher Observation Sheet).

The researcher further reflects that this improvement in focus could possibly have been due to the practical aspect of the dance classes providing a more appealing learning experience for these individuals. LeFever explains this theory, stating that 'When students are taught with methods that use their preferred strength…they learn more and enjoy learning more' (2004, p. 100). Therefore, as Materna says, kinaesthetic learners who '…learn best by getting physically involved in doing things' (2007, p. 52), may be prone to become distracted or disinterested during classroom learning, as the opportunities to learn kinaesthetically are limited. Whereas a practical dance class provides the

opportunity for movement and physical tasks and is therefore more suited to their hands-on approach and could consequently prove more engaging.

Coherent with Flore's idea that 'Students learn much more when they're allowed to use their bodies and movement' (Cited in Overby et al, 2005, p. 2), the researcher believes that pupils gained subject knowledge outside of the Mathematics, Science and English focus of the project. '…*with all children displaying progress in the creativity of their movements; incorporating levels, dynamics and travelling in different directions'* (Researcher Observation Sheet). The class teacher stated that '… [the children*] also develop their skills in relation to dance and P.E through these well planned, engaging sessions'* (Teacher Observation Sheet). Furthermore, Ford explains that 'Almost all children will come to school with a wide repertoire of movements which they already associate with mood and feelings' (2010, p. 103) and Pupil O expressed that '… [the project] *taught me new dance moves'* (Focus Group 6 - Part 3), thus displaying those pupils were supported to increase and develop their existing movement repertoire through the sessions. As a result of this positive display of pupil learning, the researcher aimed to continue to encourage this additional learning throughout the project. One strategy used was to introduce key Dance vocabulary to the pupils throughout the sessions, providing definitions both verbally and through written worksheets. The researcher then prompted pupils to recite these definitions from memory at various points in order to cement the knowledge, as '…children learn through repetition' (Charlesworth and Lind, 2010, p. 609).

Moreover, Kiennen discusses that taking part in dance can help to develop social skills, explaining that 'Because dancers typically work as a group, a dance program may teach skills in interpersonal intelligence' (2000, p. 295). This is reflected in the evidence collected by the researcher, as Pupil Q stated '…*I learnt to be in a team with other people and share the ideas*' (Focus Group 6 - Part 3). This concept of pupils working together and developing team work skills was also observed by the researcher who stated that in the final session '*All pupils worked well together, with no fuss, which is an improvement on previous weeks'* (Researcher Observation Sheet).

Additionally, the researcher observed that many pupils expressed, both during classes and reflective focus groups, that the part of each dance session that they most enjoyed was performing the creative movement that they had produced, *'I enjoyed performing…because I like showing everybody how good me and my friends are at working together as a team'* (Focus Group 3 - Part 1), thus suggesting

that they felt confident in both the work that they had produced and their abilities.

Finally, the researcher observed that the pupils found the actions of their peers to be the biggest disruption to their learning. This was reflected in comments made by a variety of pupils throughout the project, when prompted to discuss any aspects of the sessions which they did not enjoy; '*I didn't like it when people fussed…it put me* off' (Pupil P, Focus Group 2). For example, during a session where the pupils were required to work in groups to solve a worksheet of Mathematics calculations, some groups found it difficult to work together with disagreements erupting due to all pupils being keen to hold the equipment and write down the answers on behalf of their group. In response, the researcher elected one member from each group to be the scribe in the following session which proved successful in reducing the disruption, as the class teacher observed; '[the researcher] *has extended her range of strategies for managing behaviour and this has increased each child's enjoyment of dance'* (Teacher Observation Sheet). To further support the success of this strategy, the researcher aimed to choose a pupil known for sensible behaviour, with the hope that this would influence the rest of the group, as Mayesky explains that 'Children learn through example. Many things, such as manners, are "caught" not always necessarily "taught" ' (2012, p. 106).

Conclusion

On reflection, the researcher is positive that the research strategy provided the collection of adequate data from a number of perspectives, helping to outline and support the findings discussed throughout this report. Firstly, by noting that pupil enjoyment occurred during the dance sessions was in line with Mayesky who states that children 'enjoy and learn best from activities that use the body and involve movement, such as dance' (2012, p. 90). This was then supported by the class teacher who observed that '*The collaborative element was enjoyed by all the children'* (Teacher Observation Sheet) and Deiner's belief that 'The arts provide a lifelong means of expressing feeling and gaining enjoyment' (2013, p. 107).

Secondly, the data collected by the researcher confirmed that '*The sessions[s] gave pupils the opportunity to apply and expand their classroom learning'* (Researcher Observation Sheet), whilst the class teacher believes that '*The sessions present opportunities for pupils to develop social and emotional skills through collaborative work*' (Teacher Observation Sheet) and Pupil B stated that the sessions '…*really helped me learn how to dance*' (Focus Group 6 – Part 3).

Thus, confirming that 'Dance does not exist as an isolate entity...Students can learn in, about and through dance' (Hanna, 1999, p. 107) and such learning was present throughout the project.

Finally, the researcher aimed to ensure that the Dance sessions were inclusive to individuals of all learning preferences, in order to provide the best opportunities for experiential learning, as Call says, that 'If a balance of all three styles [visual, auditory and kinaesthetic] is offered over a period of time, then each child will be catered for' (2003, p. 117). This particular aspect of the sessions had the positive impact of gaining and maintaining the focus and enthusiasm of the pupils throughout the project, as observed by the class teacher; *'Visual learners benefit from the use of props and demonstrations. Auditory learners benefit from* clear, *spoken explanations [and there is a] Strong kinaesthetic element to the session*' (Teacher Observation Sheet).

Regarding the impact and relevance that this research has on the bigger picture of Dance in primary education, the researcher believes that whilst valid and positive benefits of the integration of Dance in the primary curriculum have been suggested and subsequently evidenced, the opportunity to run the project for a longer period of time would have enabled further exploration of both the findings discussed and perhaps the uncovering of additional benefits. Furthermore, the opportunity to repeat this project and also complete identical projects with both pupils of the same age and pupils of a variety of ages within key stage two, would result in the collection of more reliable results and as Babbie states 'The replication of inquiry provides… [a] safeguard…as a further test, the study can be completed under slightly varied conditions' (2011, p. 7).

Overall, the project explored and evidenced a variety of positive impacts regarding the integration of Dance within the primary curriculum supporting curriculum, artistic and inter-personal development through experiential learning.

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