Paper Presentations of the 2010 University of Huddersfield Annual Teaching and Learning Conference

Connect 2: [Teaching Learning Research Enterprise]

Monday 13 September 2010
Welcome by Pro-Vice Chancellor of Teaching and learning, Professor Tim Thornton

The annual teaching and learning conference is a good time to reflect on the past year, and consider some of the challenges for the year to come.

We have to begin by recognising the great success of all of us in the University in the QAA Institutional Audit. The highest level of achievement, recognised by the confidence rating, overlay a significantly large number of features of good practice identified by the auditors – the use of the strategy map to shape the development of the institution; the support offered to our students; the effectiveness of computing and library services in planning for excellence in their work; and very appropriately, considering this Conference itself, the ways in which success is celebrated here.

The strength of our culture of teaching and learning was also recognised in 2009-10 in continuing success in the National Teaching Fellowship competition. Christine Jarvis and Cath Ellis were among the 50 chosen, bringing the total number of colleagues who have been so recognised while working here to nine. There is a unique aspect to this success – we are the only institution to have achieved two successes in each of the past three years, 2008, 2009, and 2010.

And the quality the work of our colleagues means that our students are achieving as never before. Comparing the group who graduated in the summer of 2010 with those who did so in 2008, the proportion gaining 1st and 2i degrees was fully 10% higher. The result of this improving performance is also to be found in the employment outcomes, with 93% of our recent graduates in work or further study after 6 months in the most recent survey, the best record of any of the major universities in the region.

Students too are increasingly satisfied with their experience here. The overall average of our scores in the NSS increased again in 2010, while those in the UK as a whole did not move forward, and Huddersfield is now clearly in the second quartile of the overall ranking. For example, we again improved our scores for assessment and feedback, the area which institutions find most challenging, and I suspect...
that when all the data are analysed we will once again be up in the top 5 in the country for satisfaction with that area of work. And individual subject groupings shone, yet again, with no fewer than twelve leading the region.

But we are never complacent, and even in these areas we all know we have further to go.

We made a slow start, back in the early part of the decade, in developing and pushing forward our work in the National Teaching Fellowship competition, and so we still have ground to make up if we want to be amongst the leaders in the country: but we now have the likes of Lancaster, the OU and De Montfort, who are already into double figures, in our sights, and even the national leader, Leeds, with 16, is not too far away. However successfully we have raised the achievement of our graduates, we still only have 55% with 1st and 2is, and we know our goal is ten percentage points higher than that. And though our employment outcomes are outstanding, I cannot look at a table which shows Oxford just a very few ‘positive outcomes’ ahead of us without wanting to go that extra mile. On the NSS too, none of us can be happy that we have a few disciplines which consistently record satisfaction levels well below 80% and towards the bottom, or even at the bottom, of their subject group nationally; or that when asked a final question about their overall satisfaction our students, however satisfied they might be with individual aspects of their time here, appear less satisfied with their overall experience than the norm in the country.

Looking ahead, it’s worth mentioning briefly some of the key initiatives of the coming year, helping to move forward the Teaching & Learning strategy and our contributions to the Strategy Map. The Teaching & Learning Institute, led by a board including for example our group of NTFs, is getting under way, helping to coordinate, evaluate and disseminate work on T&L excellence; including organising this conference. A good example of what they have been able to achieve in the short time since they came into existence is the coordination of a successful bid to be part of the HEA evidence-informed quality improvement (EQUIP) programme. The Assessment & Feedback Strategy will begin to take shape, changing the way we design and develop our modules and courses, and providing a focus for work on best practice in this area. The effect of new progression rules will also impact for the first time. At the most recent CABs, any student not achieving 50 credits from their current stage of study was failed and should now be elsewhere, looking for a more useful way to employ their time. And we will be looking, through Thematic Review, at two key areas for the development of Teaching & Learning: implementing the review of the Virtual Learning Environment conducted last year under Prof. John Lancaster, and conducting a review on externality and the interactions of our work with stakeholders such as professional bodies, industry and government. One key theme of the strategy, as we move forward, is the ways in which research and enterprise and excellent teaching and learning are interdependent, and that is the theme for the Conference this year. The sessions allowed us to consider related issues:

- The ways in which research, professional practice and enterprise activities interact directly with our practice in teaching and learning
- The ways in which we develop our own students as researchers, as reflective practitioners, and as enterprising people
- The ways in which we conduct research into our own teaching and learning practice, including a range of forms of practice-based research and T&L related enterprise
Index

Teaching research ethics through reality TV .......................................................... 4
The Monograph: Creative Thought/Creative Practice – A Case Study ...................... 9
Impact of Business Simulation Games in Enterprise Education ............................. 11
Promoting Learning through Business Simulation Games .................................... 12
SimVenture - an overview .................................................................................. 13
Supporting professional identity in novice practitioners through reflective practice 21
Enterprising assessment: how journalism and PR students work with voluntary sector organisations in intermediate and honours level modules ........................................ 34
The Value of the Undergraduate Dissertation – Perceptions of Supervisors .......... 41
How pedagogical research can enhance teaching and learning: one academic’s personal account .............................................................................................................. 57
Learning by doing and learning from doing: The Development of a new degree in Enterprise Development ......................................................................................... 65
Embedding Enterprise Education into the Curriculum ......................................... 75
A Risky Business: preparing students for professional practice ............................ 82
Picturing Diversity .............................................................................................. 86
A Student- Centered Personalised Learning Space for Employability .................... 91
SORT:Ed - An Interactive Educational Game for HealthCare Students .................. 98
Exploring the marketing - entrepreneurship interface: bringing an understanding of small business marketing into the curriculum ...................................................... 102
Teaching research ethics through reality TV

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Abstract:
Given the success and popularity of reality TV, particularly with young audiences, we felt there was an opportunity to use this material in teaching. There is a growing literature demonstrating that material from popular TV can be an effective component of undergraduate teaching, including psychology. The idea was to show students a brief extract from a reality TV programme, to ask them to discuss the ethical issues they think it raises, and then to give them opportunities to apply their thinking to psychological research. The students evaluated these sessions very positively. The students commented that they found this a very engaging way of learning about research ethics, and we have since used this material in teaching research ethics to our psychology undergraduates as part of their Research Methods course. The findings from both our qualitative and quantitative analyses give support to the view that students can indeed benefit from using TV material. We intend to continue using this material in our teaching and to monitor its success.

Keywords: research ethics, psychology, reality TV

Introduction
So-called ‘Reality Television’ has become staple viewing today, with shows such as ‘Strictly Come Dancing’, ‘I’m a celebrity, get me out of here’, and ‘Big Brother’ enjoying numerous seasons. Many of these shows involve subjecting people to unpleasant experiences which must be endured if they are to stand a chance of winning a coveted prize, and the premise of some shows is simply a social experiment - to see what people will do if placed in unusual or challenging situations. It seemed somewhat paradoxical to us that, as social scientists, it would be highly unlikely that we would be able to gain ethical approval for similar experiments; there were a number of ethical issues raised by such shows that would not, quite rightly, satisfy a research ethics panel, such as informed consent, right to withdraw, and harm.

Given the success and popularity of reality TV, particularly with young audiences, we felt there was an opportunity to use this material in teaching. There is a growing literature demonstrating that material from popular TV can be an effective component of undergraduate teaching, including psychology. For instance, Poonati and Amadio (2010) used examples from TV programmes to help students understand operant conditioning, while Eaton and Uskul (2004) used clips from The Simpsons to teach social psychology. The study we are reporting on today is a pilot study which was funded by the HEA Psychology Network.

The idea was to show students a brief extract from a reality TV programme, to ask them to discuss the ethical issues they think it raises, and then to give them opportunities to apply their thinking to psychological research.

Research materials
We chose Big Brother (Channel 4) for our source material, partly because of its likely familiarity to students and partly because we felt it regularly pushes the boundaries of ethical acceptability. We chose an episode from season 9 broadcast in 2008, which involved a challenge for the housemates modeled directly on a test of attention and manual steadiness familiar from funfairs, which involves passing a metal wand over a convoluted wire from start to end in a set time. Touching the wire sets off a buzzer, requiring the player to start again (show picture).

The Big Brother challenge involved similar apparatus but on a much larger scale and with important variations. Two of the housemates were given the task of jointly passing the wand over the coil - much harder than for one person alone. The ‘feedback’ was not just a buzzer but an electric shock, and this was...
not delivered to those doing the task but to the rest of the housemates. At stake was the housemates’ food budget for the coming week - if they failed the task the whole house would have to live on a budget of £1 per person per day.

Method
Fifteen second year students were recruited to the study, which comprised two sessions, one week apart. Twelve students returned to take part in the second session.

Session 1
In the first session, the students were shown a 15 minute extract from the ‘Big Brother’ episode. They were then split into small groups and asked to discuss the ethical issues that they felt had been raised by the programme. The group discussions were facilitated by members of staff and audio recorded. The students were also given some guidance as to the key ethical issues they should discuss (for example informed consent, risk of harm and confidentiality).

Session 2
In session 2, the students were again split into small groups and each group was given a research brief; they were asked to consider possible research designs to answer the brief and to discuss the ethical issues that these raised. The briefs were designed to raise similar ethical concerns to the Big Brother extract. For example, in one of the briefs a school wants to commission a piece of research to examine the potential improvement to problem pupils’ behaviour that might be gained by punishing the whole class when one person misbehaves.

These discussions were also facilitated by a member of staff and audio recorded.

At the end of the study, the students were invited to give verbal and written feedback on their experience of taking part.

Analysis
In order to evaluate the extent to which the students had been able to transfer their thinking about BB to the realm of research ethics, we did two things:

Firstly, we analysed the group discussions to see if we could identify occasions where the students showed awareness of ethical issues and drew on the TV clip when discussing possible research designs.

Secondly, students were each asked to submit a research proposal in response to the research brief their group had discussed, focusing on ethical concerns. These proposals were designed to be similar to those submitted by our yr 3 students in preparation for their final year project. To gain some measure of whether the volunteer students had written better proposals than students who had not taken part in the research, their proposals were compared with a control group of 12 randomly-selected proposals written by previous Yr 3 students. The proposals were double blind marked by two people unconnected with the research, according to 4 criteria:

- The range of appropriate ethical issues addressed on the proposal
- The depth of analysis and discussion of the ethical issues addressed.
- The application of appropriate ethical issues to the specific requirements of the study
- The clarity and structure of the proposal.

Students were given a mark out of 5 against each of the criteria.
Findings

Research brief discussions

1. References to BB
   During the discussions of the research briefs, the students showed that they were drawing on their experience of watching and discussing the Big Brother clip in their thinking about the research ethics issues. For example, this is a quote from a group discussing a research brief about the timing of a stressful alarm in a Fireworks Factory:

   B1: I think you have to factor in the distress...if it’s unexpected people are going to jump, but I think we need to be realistic as well and this is a fire alarm for ten seconds, it’s not electric shocks that we saw last week [in BB extract]

   Here, the student is directly comparing the likely level of stress to the factory workers with that observed in the BB task. In response to a different brief, this time about pay incentives for apple pickers, students in another group similarly make a direct comparison, drawing on their previous experience:

   A5: It’s not like it’s a competition, is it? It’s just as many apples as you can pick, that’s what you get paid for.

   B4: In Big Brother, if one person went out, everyone else failed so it was more...
   Lecturer: So you think that makes the right to withdraw less of an issue here than it was for the programme?

   A5: I don’t think that many people would withdraw...[if] people saw each other’s results anyway then people probably wouldn’t be bothered and it’s everyone for themselves really.

   The third group discussed the school punishment brief, and although they did not make explicit reference to the Big Brother clip, they picked up an issue that had been very visible in the clip- that making people bear the consequences of other’s behaviour can lead to conflict. The first student also raises the issue of the researcher’s responsibility:

   C3: ...but once they’re in the lab. You’re responsible for them so if some of the kids don’t like the fact that they’re all being punished for one person...they might just get violent...

   Lecturer: In the lab?

   C3: In the lab.
   C1: Because it’s more contained?
   C3: Because – well, firstly yes...

2. Key Learning Moments: Sophisticated ethical reasoning
   The group discussions also showed instances where the students seemed to show a sophisticated understanding of the ethical issues. In this quote, the student is talking about the number of complaints that were received from viewers when Shilpa Shetty was the victim of allegedly racist comments from Jade Goodey. The student compares this with the electric shock test, showing that they have made an ethical connection and comparison between two distinct BB issues:

   A2: The thing is, how many people in that [i.e. Shilpa Shetty racism row] were jumping on the bandwagon? I wonder how many people complained about the electric shocks? What’s really the difference? It’s still someone being harmed.
In the next quote, the student shows they are thinking about the possible psychological impact of the abuse created by the housemates’ task in the context of the longer term dynamics of the group:

**B1:** I think psychological impacts come...after when people start to withdraw and you get this whole kind of shouty thing where “you’re just a baby, so you say you’re a strong woman, but you’re just a baby!” and that is going to live with that woman for the rest of her time in that house, and perhaps after.

Discussing the effect of the incentives to take part in BB, another student shows an understanding of the potentially far-reaching effects of incentives:

**C2:** They want to win that [prize money etc] so they’re changing all their own values and what they believe in just to win. Some of them didn’t seem to care about the well-being of others, they just cared about themselves. It’s like the incentives have changed who they are as a person.

### Research proposal marks

Mean scores for the two groups of students are as follows, with probability values from one tailed t-tests:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion</th>
<th>Research group n=12</th>
<th>Control group n=12</th>
<th>1 tail t-test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Range</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>3.66</td>
<td>p = .42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depth</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2.08</td>
<td>p = .04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applicability</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>p = .21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarity</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>p = .06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>13.83</td>
<td>11.70</td>
<td>p = .07</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mean scores for the research group were higher than for the control group for all criteria. In the case of “depth” this was significant (p=.04) and it was close to significance for “clarity” (p=.06) and for the “overall” score adding the four criteria together (p=.07).

### The student experience

Students rated their experience on three 5-point scales and also supplied further comments. The feedback was very positive:

1. How interesting did you find the sessions? Mean response **4.75**
2. How useful did you find them in enabling you to learn about research ethics? Mean response **4.7**
3. How appropriate do you feel it is for students to learn about research ethics through these teaching methods? Mean response **4.8**
Comments included:

“Although I have been taught about ethics many times before I thought the sessions had a new and more interesting way of teaching ethics.”

“Taking part in the research study was incredibly enlightening because it sort of re-assured me that there was a way for learning to be fun and interesting since it involved things that I find interesting on a normal day ie watching reality shows. It is actually mind boggling when you have to think about the number of ethical issues that are raised in a single episode of a reality show. “

“[the sessions] helped me to understand ethics in a more applied manner, making me think of the ethical issues in a wider context rather than how they are taught in a research methods lecture.”

Conclusions
The students evaluated these sessions very positively. They commented that they found this a very engaging way of learning about research ethics, and we have since used this material in teaching research ethics to our psychology undergraduates as part of their Research Methods course. Previous research using TV as a teaching tool reports that students generally like this approach, and that although, statistically, the effects on learning may be slight, these may well translate into crucial extra marks in assessments (Poonati and Amadio, 2010). The findings from both our qualitative and quantitative analyses give support to the view that students can indeed benefit from using TV material. We intend to continue using this material in our teaching and to monitor its success. We’ll also shortly be putting our research materials on a website, so that other teachers can access them, although for copyright reasons we can’t include the BB clip in these.

References

The Monograph: Creative Thought/Creative Practice – A Case Study

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Abstract:
The Monograph recognises the primacy of practice as the decisive motivation for student practitioners. Our students are ‘practical theorists’, for they reflexively theorise through and from the practical experience of making work. Typically, this process results in diverse outcomes embodied as objects, artefacts, images, writing and speech. The Monograph’s integration of theory with the studio experience strengthens the relevance and the meanings students are able to grasp and articulate. By broadening the definition of what theory can be for practitioners, and allowing the dynamic nature of studio practice to drive theoretical interests, the Monograph is increasing students’ confidence and capacity to theorise.

Please note that the presentation by Rebecca Matthews (the case study) is available to download from the Teaching and Learning Institute website.

Keywords: monograph, assessment, dissertation, studio practice, community of practice

“Members of a community of practice are practitioners. They develop a shared repertoire of resources: experiences, stories, tools, ways of addressing recurring problems—in short a shared practice.” (Wenger 2010)

For several years the Monograph has replaced the dissertation as the major critical assignment undertaken by final-year Textile Crafts’ students. The substantial difference between the Monograph and a dissertation is that the Monograph recognises the primacy of practice as the defining motivation for student practitioners; and that theoretical involvement begins in understanding the nature of that practice as key in identification of critical sources and emerging themes relevant to a student’s particular way of working.

Synthesising practice and theory
Writing about their own practice opens students to a range of challenges as they negotiate the more familiar forms of critical writing with methods such as phenomenological description and interview formats that better permit discourse and reflection on ideas developing in the studio. Our students are ‘practical theorists’, for they reflexively theorise through and from the practical experience of making work.

Outcomes are rigorous in terms of academic standards but it is the dynamic nature of studio practice which drives the theoretical interests of students. The ability to understand and situate their work becomes evident in the 5000-word submission made at the conclusion of term 1; but it is in the presentation the Monograph also requires at culmination of the degree, that the impact of this way of synthesising practice and theory becomes clear.

Typically, this process results in diverse outcomes embodied as objects, artefacts, images, writing and speech. Therefore, a student’s theoretical engagement is particular to their way of thinking, envisioning and making work. The Monograph reinforces that individuality. However, the overall diversity of students’ intentions, academic skills and studio outcomes requires diversity in the critical forms by which they can articulate their understanding. The Monograph is responsive to this diversity. This has led Monographs to include a range of research methods and written forms such as phenomenological description, experimental narrative, and discourse analysis of formal and informal audio interviews.

The Monograph’s integration of theory with the studio experience strengthens the relevance and the meanings students are able to grasp and articulate.
By broadening the definition of what theory can be for practitioners, and allowing the dynamic nature of studio practice to drive theoretical interests, the Monograph is increasing students’ confidence and capacity to theorise.

**Monograph: Final Year/Level 3 (30 credit module)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term 1</th>
<th>Term 2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Studio and Professional Projects</td>
<td>Major Studio Project</td>
<td>Exhibition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monograph Part 1: 50% (5,000 words)</td>
<td>Monograph Part 2: 50% Presentation</td>
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</table>

**References**
Impact of Business Simulation Games in Enterprise Education

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Abstract
This paper evaluates the impact of usage in teaching and learning of a business simulation game, SimVenture, on developing enterprise skills and attributes among undergraduate management students. The entrepreneurial learning outcomes set by National Council for Graduate Entrepreneurship are taken as a benchmark to assess the effect of SimVenture. The findings represent the preliminary results from the last two years. The paper examines student responses to the use of the game for learning. The paper provides an insight into how the use of SimVenture impacts on the students’ perception of entrepreneurship alongside the development of their business skills. Overall, SimVenture is found to be a stimulating and engaging vehicle of teaching and learning. It allows students to play a role, not just read books, listen to lectures and analyse case-studies. A simulation forces students to synthesise and integrate what they read and make actual decisions based on facts or data presented in the case.

Keywords: enterprise, simulation, management, games

Introduction
As an educational tool, business simulation games have grown considerably in use since the mid 1950s and have moved from being a supplemental exercise in business courses to a central mode of business instruction. (A.J. Faria et al., 2009)

Information technology has changed the way we live our lives. There is a growing body of evidence that students today have grown up in a media rich environment surrounded by video, consoles and computer games. According to a US based survey “by high school 77% of respondents had played computer games and over two-thirds (69%) had been playing video games since elementary school. By the time the current cohort of college students graduates, virtually all of them will have had some kind of experience with gaming” (Jones, 2003) The current generation of students (ages 18-22) tend to be experiential learners - they prefer to learn by doing, as opposed to learning by listening. In this respect games have many attributes of effective learning environment. Games include elements of urgency, complexity, learning by trial-and-error and scoring points. They also support active learning, experiential learning and problem-based learning. Games make it possible to use information in context and are inherently learner-centred and provide immediate feedback. Surveys show that students who use the games find that difficult tasks can be engaging, intriguing - and amusing - when incorporated into a story and a meaningful context.

While there is general agreement among experts that business simulation games deliver benefits to the learners when used appropriately, there is little understanding of the impact of the games on the learner’s skills, behaviours and attitude. Scanning of the existing literature on use of simulation in enterprise/entrepreneurship education reveals that most of them are written by developers and evaluate predominantly the characteristics and features of the games without assessing the benefits to students.

This paper addresses the gap by evaluating the impact of usage in teaching and learning of a business simulation game SimVenture on developing enterprise skills and attributes among undergraduate management students. The entrepreneurial learning outcomes set by National Council for Graduate Entrepreneurship are taken as a benchmark to assess the effect of SimVenture.

The findings represent the early result over last two years. The paper examines student responses to the use of the game for learning. The paper provides an insight into how the use of SimVenture impacts on the students’ perception of entrepreneurship alongside the development of their business skills. The paper considers the implications arising from the early results.
**Promoting Learning through Business Simulation Games**

The direct predecessors of the modern business simulation game can be dated back to 1932 in Europe and 1955 in North America (A.J. Faria, et al., 2009).

Following the development of business simulation games in North America, from mid 1950s the number of business simulation games in use grew rapidly. In 1961, it was estimated that more than 100 business games were in existence in the United States alone and had been used by more than 30,000 business executives and countless students (Kibbee, Craft, & Nanus, 1961 cited in A.J. Faria, et al., 2009). A survey conducted in 1995 (A. J. Faria & Nulsen, 1996) suggested that 97.5% of all member schools of Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) were using at least one simulation game. In the UK, according to Burgess (Burgess, 1991), 92% of business and managements departments of former polytechnics and nearly 50% of the universities were using some forms of simulation games in their curriculum. Unfortunately there is no information to assess the most recent usage of business simulation games. However it might be reasonable to anticipate even greater and more complex use of the simulation games in business and management education due to the advances in gaming industry itself. The key milestones in the recent history of the business simulation games are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Phases in the Development of Business Gaming
Source: Faris et all (2009, p. 467 p. 467)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Developments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>1955 to 1963</td>
<td>Creation and growth of hand-scored games</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>1962 to 1968</td>
<td>Creation of mainframe business games and growth of commercially published games</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>1966 to 1985</td>
<td>Period of fastest growth of mainframe games and significant growth in business game complexity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>1984 to 2000</td>
<td>Growth of PC-based games and development of decision making aides to accompany business games</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>1998 to present</td>
<td>The growth of business game availability on the Internet and run through central servers (e.g., CAPSIM and the CAPSTONE series of business games and INNOVATIVE LEARNING SOLUTIONS and the MARKETPLACE simulations)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The changes of business practices shapes the demand of the labour market requiring students to learn from experiential education such as internships, business plan competitions and business simulations among other educational techniques (Summers, 2004). Therefore, the success of business games in most recent year can be attributed to the extent in which they address the shifting focus of educational process toward experiential learning, development of decision making skills, promoting teamwork, motivating students, applying theory in a practical fashion, involving students (active learning).

“As vehicles for instruction, business simulations remain as powerful today as they were when first introduced. They allow for dynamic business decision making where players formulate a strategy and then carry out a series of decisions to implement the strategy. Game participants receive feedback that demonstrates the consequences of their decisions, and the participants are able to evaluate their strategies and, if necessary, reformulate their strategies. The experience gained from the repeated iterations of decision periods provides direct feedback to players, from which they are able to learn”. (A.J. Faria, et al., 2009 p. 480)

The use of business simulation games also followed the shifts from the traditional teaching-and learning paradigm where the learning process was viewed fundamentally in terms of information transfer to more
experiential learning which occurs through transformation of experience, when a learner is actively engaged in some kind of practice (Clarke, 2009; Lainema & Makkonen, 2003; Thatcher, 1990). Business games generate a dynamic environment which presents a series of decision-making activities. Every cycle creates a new situation with a new problem to solve or decision to make. Simulations not only construct nearly “real world” experience but also help to bring theory and practice together by developing an ability to use acquired knowledge/skills appropriately (Ruben, 1999 p. 499). Business simulations recreate a Kolb’s experiential learning model where a business game generates a series of micro-experiences followed by instant feedback and reflection and the application of the reflective to a new situation as the game develops (Thatcher, 1990). On a practical level there are strong evidences to support business games as a valid learning methodology (Washbush & Gosen, 2001; Wood et al., 2009).

Nowadays business simulation games are used to teach a broad range of business and management disciplines such as strategic management, marketing, project management, economics, and international business. Ironically despite the “unprecedented growth” (Solomon et al., 1994) of entrepreneurship education after the WWII period and a wide recognition of the value of experiential learning for entrepreneurship education, relatively few simulations are available for this purpose (Wolfe & Bruton, 1994). The real-life focus and experiential learning have been at the core of entrepreneurship education since its origin in business schools (Hindle, 2002; Katz et al., 1994; Solomon, et al., 1994). It would appear that business simulation games can be advantageous as pedagogical instruments. A good business game can be complex and comprehensive as well as flexible where an instructor can set the pace, complexity and pedagogical focus of the simulation (Thavikulwat, 1995).

SimVenture - an overview

SimVenture is Windows-based software that was launched in October 2006. According to the company at present over 100 UK Higher Education institutions use the game in their curriculum. The philosophy behind SimVenture is helping young people to develop their business, enterprise and entrepreneurial thinking engaging minds and making learning enjoyable, personal and meaningful.

The business simulation operates much like a perceived ‘leisure time’ game. It requires users, working as individuals or teams, to make decisions and deal with consequences in a simple to understand and coherent manner. The game has multiple difficulty levels which ensure that students are continuously challenged at a level which suits their ability. This depth of problem solving combined with the richness of information contained within SimVenture means students must deal with a breadth of issues but can monitor and evaluate their own progress at all times. Importantly, SimVenture has a ‘save and load’ function and report printing is straightforward.

![Figure 1: SimVenture "Office"](image-url)

Figure 1: SimVenture "Office"
Authenticity, challenge and engagement are at the heart of everything SimVenture offers students. By mirroring reality closely and making appropriate demands on learners, the software does not patronise, but instead seeks to embed analytical wisdom and foster the development of practical skills that can be applied both in and outside the class.

Critically, the software allows teachers to facilitate learning. This means they have time to stand back from their traditional role and support and guide where necessary. At the same time students have much greater control over what they are learning and are thus more motivated and responsible for their work. By creating this dynamic, students are able to understand, through experiential learning, what previously may have seemed complex and unreachable theoretical content. Such understanding makes for successful learning, builds self-confidence in students’ ability and allows people to contribute and share thinking when discussing how they ran their own virtual company. The Figure 2 shows the screenshot of overview of business activities for a month.

![Figure 2: Business Activities Overview in SimVenture](image)

### Features of SimVenture

The simulation covers all main business areas such as marketing and sales, organisation, finance, and operations. Business areas within the game:

- **Marketing and Sale** (Market Research & Target Markets, Competitor Research, Customer Feedback, Pricing, Sales Channels, Sales Promotions)
- **Operations** (Product Design, Purchasing, Production, Quality Control)
- **Finance** (Banking, Accounts, Credit Control, Fund Raising Strategies, Financial Analysis tools)
- **Organisation** (Location, Resources, Legal requirements, Recruitment, Training, Time Management, Efficiency)

SimVenture is a flexible teaching and learning tool providing different level of difficulty, allowing to set starting conditions (amount of start-up capital, for example). To make game even more realistic SimVenture is equipped with unexpected events option. Every new game generate variable and dynamic data, no games are the same. In addition to initial Start-up game, the simulation has several built-in scenarios to illustrate a specific business problem such as cash-flow crisis, business growth pain, etc. An experienced instructor can also generate own scenarios tailored to a specific discussion topics. The latest version of SimVenture allows a greater degree of customisation for instructors. This facility allows
an instructor to link own web or Windows-based content to pages within SimVenture such as documents, video, audio and web-links to inform, support and enhance the user’s experience of the software. In addition, a new function 'Tutor Events' allows the tutor to provide information, give instructions or request feedback from users at pre-defined times.

**Teaching and Learning Activities**

SimVenture has been used in conjunction with other pedagogies to deliver the Planning and Entrepreneurial Skills module for second year undergraduate students. The aim of the module is to instil in each student the belief that upon completion of the class that they possess a foundation of skills and knowledge that will enable them to effectively evaluate new venture opportunities and increase their odds of successfully starting a business. Among others the objectives set to achieve by using SimVenture are:

- Identify and determine the driving forces in a new venture.
- Evaluate and determine how successful entrepreneurs and investors create and build value for themselves and others.
- Determine the critical tasks to be accomplished, the hurdles to be overcome during start-up and early growth, and what has to happen to succeed.
- Apply the opportunity screening criteria to actual start-up ideas, and subsequently develop a feasibility report and presentation suitable to present to investors and industry participants.

The module was delivered over twenty-four weeks (two terms); the delivery was organised in two-hour seminar. Overall 37 students were enrolled to the module. During first terms students were exposed to different concepts of entrepreneurship and had to accomplish a range of tasks including interview with an entrepreneur, research of support for SMEs in the UK and opportunity evaluation exercises. In the second term they were introduced to SimVenture. First, a two-hour seminar was assigned for introduction of the game and to run a "Driving Lesson" scenario allowing students to familiarise with the software. Subsequent seminars were alternated between discussing analytical tools and practicing them using SimVenture. Initially, all activities were limited by use of Driving Lesson as this scenario would provide uniform market and competitive conditions for all players. When a degree of familiarity was achieved students started running their own games. The starting capital was set to £10,000 (default for the software which could be altered) and played at an Easy level. The “Random Events” generator was turned off. The game was played in teams of three-four; the students were given an advice to delegate functional responsibilities within the teams. In reality, in most groups decisions were taken together. However, in some groups nobody would take responsibility for decision-making process and those groups struggled with the game blaming the software. On its own this was an interesting observation relating to group dynamics worth further investigation.

Throughout the game students required to keep a log where they had to record what decisions were made and why these decisions were made. At the end of the game every team made a presentation focused on how a team performed as a group and what individuals learnt about themselves. The presentation should outline the original business strategy and how, if any, it evolved through the course of the game.

The game contributed towards forty percent of the overall module mark where the performance of the game as such constituted only ten percent (the feedback sheet outlining the criteria for assessment is included in appendix 1).

**Results and Discussion: Did SimVenture Have Impact on Students?**

As a part of impact assessment a questionnaire was developed based on National Council for Graduate Entrepreneurship entrepreneurial outcomes and then distributed to the students at the beginning and the end of the academic year. The initial results indicate a significant impact on the development of entrepreneurial skills (see Figure 3 and Table 2).
It is easy for me to see a problem as an opportunity 3.286 5.714 1.912 0.002
I have a strong desire to see things through 3.714 5.571 1.781 0.004
I have a strong orientation to achieve 4 5.286 1.393 0.004
I use social networks for career advantage 3.429 5.857 1.692 0.005
I am an optimist, failure doesn’t discourage me 4 5.143 1.016 0.005
I have a strong sense of independence 4.571 5.857 1.311 0.012
I am good at analysing market data 2.857 4.857 1.748 0.013
I can set an appropriate business strategy and manage it 3.143 5.429 1.816 0.015
I am capable to make judgments based on limited information 3.857 5.571 1.49 0.023
I have a strong sense of ownership (of events and actions) 4.333 5.857 1.345 0.025
I am able to take an initiative 3.571 5.571 1.869 0.027
I always have lots of ideas 4.167 5.429 1.573 0.03
I am good at persuading others in my ideas 3.714 5.5 1.808 0.034
I am able to assess financial needs of the business and finance the business appropriately 3.857 4.857 1.499 0.038
I know that I am in full control of my own destiny 4.333 5.333 1.267 0.041
I am good at thinking creatively 3.714 5.143 1.651 0.058
I am able to price a product/service 3.571 5.143 1.737 0.072
I am able to appraise and learn from competitions 3.714 4.714 1.369 0.086
I am forward looking 4 4.714 1.393 0.182

Table 2: Impact of the module on Entrepreneurial Outcomes (in order of significance)
The questionnaire included a mixture of attribute/behaviour and skill related questions. Based on evaluation of literature and the software itself it was reasonable to assume that SimVenture would contribute to the development of business skills such as planning, market analysis, pricing, etc. The results suggest that overall SimVenture did have an impact both on skill level and attribute level as well. More over it appears that the module contributed significantly to students’ personal development, their ability to see problems as opportunities, see things through, desire to achieve, and optimistic tendencies. With very few exceptions most of the indicators demonstrated significant differences. At the same time students did not feel that they are able to think more creatively and look forward. Surprisingly pricing the product as well as learning from competition did not appear to have any significant differences. This is should be taken into account in future lesson plans.

In addition to the quantitative survey, students were required to keep a reflective journal to record their experiences and lessons learnt. Here are some students’ comments on their experience with SimVenture:

SimVenture has changed my ideas and views on small business ... The (initial) complication soon shifted to complexity and I was pleasantly surprised by the logical construction and intricate capabilities of SimVenture and how well it related to real life business situations. The overwhelming feeling I have taken away regarding running a small business is that it takes patience, hard work, planning and incredible organisational skills.

(Class 2008–2009)

I found it was really challenging playing this simulation game as you have to make serious decisions which determine the success or failure of the business and it absorbs you in very high authentic world of business. At times I was stressed and frustrated because things did not work in the way I/we wanted to be e.g. when we incurred loss and falling into massive debt it was really stressful situation as we couldn’t manage to bring business back to its effectiveness apart of modify different simulation. ... I have learned lack of enthusiasm, determination and motivation lead to unsuccessful outcome, so next time if I’m going to do something like this I’ll make sure I put all my efforts and focus into it. This simulation is a fun and an excellent way to learn how to start your own business and understand different aspects of the business before investing in real business.

(Class 2009–2010)

What I found difficult with this task (SimVenture) was liaising with four people in total on every decision as this was time consuming and two members of the group were very indecisive with let to M and myself making most of the business decisions. Which poses the question, would business decisions be more difficult in reality if there were too many cooks in the kitchen? I believe so, this particular task has therefore force me to carefully consider who I go into business with.

(Class 2009–2010)

There were no comments on how SimVenture impact the development of the hard business skills however the students’ reflected mainly on understanding and appreciation of business, the attitudes required for running the business and the role of team work. Hence the qualitative data confirm that SimVenture had an impact on the soft skills such as team work for example.

Limitations and future research
This paper presents only initial results and does not claim to produce ultimate findings. The issues which could be questionable is the objectivity of the responses to the questionnaire, in other words, do students give a realistic assessment or “expected” outcomes especially when it concern end of the module questionnaire. The intention is to collect data over longer period (2–3 years) which provide a bigger sample.
As it was mentioned earlier in first term students were exposed to other active learning pedagogies. The failure to include mid-year questionnaire made it difficult to separate impact of SimVenture. However when students were asked to assess which tasks had a greater impact, the response was unanimous: SimVenture.

The quality of qualitative data is very much dependant of individual students to provide a meaningful account of their learning experiences. Accumulated experience and existing reflective comments could be used in the future to guide students to produce better reflections which could be used for future research.

Overall, SimVenture is found to be a stimulating and engaging vehicle of teaching and learning. It allows students to play a role, not just read books, listen to lectures and analyse case-studies. Simulations generate much more energy among students than traditional lectures or case discussions. Students make decisions and see the results of their decisions in the outcome of the game; they can explore the impact of multiple decisions at the same time. Simulations also allow students to validate their common sense relative to a particular situation. A simulation forces students to synthesise and integrate what they read and make actual decisions based on facts or data presented in the case. Simulations give students a temporal dimension, an opportunity to experience outcomes that change based on their inputs over time.
References


## Appendix 1

### Assignment Feedback Sheet

**MODULE**  Planning and Entrepreneurial Skills  
**Code**  BIS0004  
**ASSIGNMENT**  SimVenture  
**STUDENT NAMES**  
**Tutor**  Dr. D. Williams

#### Comments and feedback

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<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
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<tr>
<td>Company performance (profit/turnover/conversion rate) (10%)</td>
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<td>Justification of target market (20%)</td>
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<td>Justification and evaluation of product design with reference to competition and customer feedback (20%)</td>
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<td>Justification and evaluation of promotion strategy (20%)</td>
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<td>Justification and evaluation of logistics and supply (10%)</td>
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<td>Timing of setting up limited company 10%</td>
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<td>Other (recruitment, finance, resources, etc) 10%</td>
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**Additional Comments**

**Assigned Mark**
Supporting professional identity in novice practitioners through reflective practice

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Abstract
This study investigates how full-time students on the Foundation degree (FdA) in Early Years develop a professional identity as early years practitioners, including how they conceptualise and judge good practice and how they evaluate and reflect on their own performance. The overall purpose of this study is to examine how students use the reflective processes they have been taught when on work placement, and how the teaching of reflection supports the development of their individual professional vision, values and ethics.

Data were gathered from Year 1 and Year 2 students undertaking the full-time FdA Early Years, using semi-structured questions in interviews, questionnaires and focus group discussions. Good practice is conceptualised as a combination of academic knowledge, interpersonal skills and intuitive responses to individual situations. The students feel they understand the processes of reflection and are growing in confidence in their use of some of the models they have been taught. However, the data also indicate that students continue to rely on other people to confirm that their practice is competent or good, and are reluctant to use or trust their own judgements about their performance.

The results of this investigation indicate that a new pedagogic approach is required to instil in students greater acceptance of their placement experiences as vehicles for learning, and more confidence in their own abilities and authority to judge professional practice. Such an approach will support the development of the more mindful and reflective lead practitioner the early years sector and individual employers need.

Key words: reflective practice, reflection, evaluation, early years, workplace learning, good practice

Introduction
Graduates of the FdA Early Years course are expected to be able to model good practice for their colleagues and play a lead role in the planning and delivery of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) requirements for all children in their care. The Childcare Workforce Development Council (CWDC) has identified the need for reflective lead practitioners who "review, analyse and evaluate their own and others’ practice" (CWDC, 2008, p.5). These practitioners must have a strong understanding of how children learn and develop, how best their individual developmental needs may be met, and how observation and assessment can inform the planning process to support children’s learning and development. In particular, they need to be able to identify the key elements of good practice in their own and others’ work, to be able to share these with their colleagues and to encourage the development of a setting-wide culture of mindful practice and continuous improvement. Above all, for early years practice to be driven forward, and for the early years practitioners to develop their professional credibility, they need to be able to reflect on the wider implications of their practices in meeting not only children’s individual needs but a broader social and educational agenda.

To begin to do this, practitioners need to be able to reflect on their own actions, and draw from their analysis a vision of how this practice can be improved upon or shared. This investigation therefore considers the role of reflection in supporting the development of the professional identity and values of novice practitioners. In Year 1 of the FdA Early Years students are taught to use reflection to develop their competence as practitioners. In Year 2 they move on to use reflection to plan their own professional development. To be able to do this they need to develop their own concepts of good practice and appropriate professional standards, and value and learn from their personal experiences.
Reflection and Learning

Many theories of learning assume a hierarchy of knowledge, moving from the mastery of skills through to conceptual and applied knowledge, and ultimately to metacognitive knowledge. Typical of this approach is the revised Bloom’s taxonomy (Anderson and Krathwohl, 2001) which breaks down and orders the thinking strategies required for effective learning, from remembering through application and analysis to the creation of new knowledge. The approach is offered as a tool for teaching and assessing learning.

It is, however, limited in its application to teaching as it deals with learning as ‘knowledge demonstrated’, a deductive approach, rather than learning as an inductive process which is more typical of professional development. Although a hierarchical approach acknowledges that knowledge is a process of construction, it is not clear how the construction takes place. Indeed the arguments surrounding the processes of learning suggest there may be many ways of building up expertise in a given field of study.

Robert Glaser suggests that, in general, expert knowledge is built up over time through perceptual abilities and knowledge organisation which results in the ability to recognise familiar patterns and anticipate a range of consequences. Combined with the ability to constantly self monitor and regulate behaviour, the learning process can become automated or adapted as appropriate, (McCormick & Paechter, 1999). The role of reflection then is fundamental to the development of expertise. However, it is difficult to find a clear and succinct definition of what reflection actually is. As Moon (1999, p. viii) points out, “the following words can apparently be synonymous with reflection – reasoning, thinking, reviewing, problem solving, inquiry, reflective judgement, reflective thinking, critical reflection” and so on. Indeed, it is even debateable whether there should be a single, universal definition for what is essentially a personally driven process, based on the professional learning needs of an individual.

Consensus allows that reflection is a retrospective and critical practice (Proctor, 1993, cited in Moon, 1999), where previous experience is brought to bear on new and unfamiliar situations. Reflective practice incorporates noticing elements of one’s own practice, especially those that cause surprise for the practitioner (Jaworski, 1993). Reflection is a continuous process that, when used with intent, allows the practitioner to understand their actions better and analyse their practice for its effectiveness and for the values it represents (Johns, 2004). In early years practice, the purpose of reflection is to provoke thought about past and present practice in order to improve it in the future. It reframes thinking by working, at a distance from the event, through behaviour, feelings and thoughts, (Boud et al 1985), to produce a more mature learner with more sophisticated understanding. However, the nature of the learning will vary with the individual and will contain elements of serendipity, depending on what the practitioner considers worthy of reflection.

For early years students’ the reflective process should involve the application of domain specific knowledge, understanding and skills appertaining to child development and well being, as well as more generic ones such as communication and empathy. It should manifest itself in actions and future modifications of those actions, which if shared can empower practitioners to improve practice. The Early Years Foundation Stage (DCSF 2007) was promoted as a tool for ensuring quality play based provision, but it can also be viewed as a regulatory tool in a sector which is exceedingly diverse in its provision and the qualifications of its staff. Many early years professionals would identify an inherent technical limitation as being at the heart of the discussion around quality in early years provision. Peter Moss identifies "the reflective practitioner, [as being] in marked contrast to the worker-as-technician," (Paige-Smith and Craft, 2008, p xiii).

In young children’s learning Moyles (1991) defines the mix of unconscious situated learning through play and conscious learning through teaching, as a process of ‘accretion’. This geological term echoes Dewey’s description from 1910 of ‘a learning spiral’. His idea that learning develops from ‘common-sense’ explanations of situations experienced, and that with repetition became solidified, explains how unconscious learning takes root. Dewey suggests, however, that to advance thinking, common sense should be further refined through the application of more reasoned and objective consideration. Situated repetition may be needed to reify learning, (Wenger 1998) but timely and appropriate intervention also offers the opportunity for modification before custom and practice become set, and opinions impervious to modification as can happen in more experienced workers (Wilson (1990) cited in Bethelsen and Brownlee (2006)).
According to Moon (1999) a deep, metacognitive approach to learning demonstrates intent or purpose, linking both the discipline and organisation of the subject knowledge with the impulse and motivation required for progression. Dewey, though he took a pragmatic approach to learning, did not appear to pay much attention to motivation. More modern perspectives on engagement such as those expressed by Laevers (2003) consider motivation to be vital for learning and for motivating children to learn. The Effective Early Learning (EEL) project developed from his work identified among other attributes that sensitivity was required from adults working with children to promote learning, including qualities such as empathy, and behaviours such as showing respect and positive regard, (Pascal and Bertram 1997). These are thought to raise self esteem and efficacy in learning.

The study of confidence and self esteem, deemed soft skills, is a relatively recent area of investigation. The influence of these attributes is acknowledged, though it is hard to quantify that influence. A study by Eldred et al at attempting to ‘catch confidence’ developing, defines it in this way:

Confidence is a belief in one’s own abilities to do something in a specific situation. This belief includes feeling accepted and on equal terms with others in that situation.

(Eldred et al, 2004, p.6)

There does appear to be a symbiotic relationship between the confidence and self esteem. A healthy self esteem, one that is accepting but realistic towards the self, is said to promote confidence. The reference implies that confidence involves thought actions and feelings, those attributes of efficacy also present in learning and reflection.

Russell (2005) argues that reflection can and should be explicitly taught despite the fact that for many educators advocating it, it remains an invisible process. He adopts an approach of encouraging students to describe their experiences in the form of a free-hand diary, with the inclusion of questions at regular intervals to guide or structure their thinking. The success of this approach lies in the empowerment offered to the students. By having no models or plans to follow there are no right or wrong answers, no right or wrong way to focus their ideas, just the opportunity to think about their practice experience and what they have gained from it. However, this approach still relies on students being able to evaluate their experience within a framework of what they consider effective teaching to be. It also relies on the novice practitioner having the confidence to accept that they have the right to present and interpret their experience as they consider appropriate, and to use this as a base for their professional learning.

Reflection, then, draws on an ontology and epistemology where the social world of work is created through the interactions and negotiated shared meanings of its participants. There are no universal rules for good practice in early years. Wenger, (1998, p217) states, “The combination of engagement and imagination results in reflective practice.” Russell (2005) shares with his students the belief that they can negotiate and create their own professional and personal identities Practitioners must make their own sense of the social and professional world in which they operate. As both Dewey and Habermas (Moon, 1999) argue, reflection is making sense of the world, and reflection is an empowering process. However, such personal responsibility can also be a daunting prospect. The question remains: how can the teaching environment support Foundation degree students in developing or articulating their visions of practice, in order for their reflections to be effective?

Research Themes
A survey conducted with a group of Year 2 full-time students at the start of their second year of studies identified that one of the main barriers they felt they faced in reflection was knowing how to judge their performance, and feeling confident that if they were satisfied or dissatisfied with their performance this was both an accurate and a valid judgement. These were students with a full year of academic study behind them, including 240 hours of placement experience, during which they had felt free to comment on the practice they had seen in early years settings, and to pass judgement on the effectiveness of the support offered for children’s learning and development and the quality of adult/child interactions. They were also well-versed in the planning and evaluation of learning activities against the framework of either the National Curriculum or the EYFS, as well as conducting observations, and indentifying
children’s individual learning needs. Yet when evaluating their own performance on such tasks as these they felt uneasy judging themselves and unsure about the standards they should be applying.

This indicates that as yet these students have not adopted the ontology and epistemology required for reflection. Without this development, if novice practitioners continue to rely on external validation for their actions they will be held back from ever acquiring their own value system, and still further from evaluating and developing it as their experience grows. Furthermore they will be inhibited from describing their concepts of good practice to future employers, sharing them with future colleagues, and contributing to the future development of the sector in which they work.

This development can be achieved through a combination of evaluating their own performance over a period of time in the workplace as well as reflecting on the actions of others in the same setting. Initially, this inevitably leads to a somewhat situated concept of good practice, defined in terms of working with a particular set of colleagues and children, in a single setting. However, it also enables the practitioner to develop their own set of principles, transferrable to any professional setting or situation, which will underpin their professional practice throughout their career.

Essential elements therefore of the teaching of reflection would seem to include discussion on how to value the experiences individual students get from their work placements, and a discussion of the concept of good practice, based on individual values and priorities of students. Whilst it is not the role of the learning environment to state categorically what good practice is and always will be, it is within the teacher’s remit to raise awareness of what such a concept might include and guide students to articulate this in their own ways. This study therefore aims to investigate:

1. how FdA students conceptualise good practice in early years and how they judge this in others
2. the role of work placement in supporting the development of professional practice
3. how/if they use their own experience and concepts of good practice when reflecting on their own performance

Methodology

The aim of this study was not to uncover a single, shared approach to identifying good practice and its use in reflective thinking, nor was this an investigation focussing on the use of particular strategies or categories for conceptualising good practice. Rather, an in-depth investigation of individuals’ perceptions was more appropriate, that focused on each individual’s sense making of their professional world and their individual approaches to self evaluation.

Participants needed to be given the opportunity to express their ideas freely and at length, with little overriding structure if their ideas were to be truly their own, with no leading from the researcher, no imposition of terms and constructs that encourage the participants to feel they must include in their answers required terminology and content. Thus the use of semi-structured or open-ended questions, by means of interview or questionnaire, provided participants with the opportunity to formalise and articulate their views. Since the questions were only semi-structured they offered shape and focus to the data gathering process, the support of some possible terms and constructs for participants when expressing their ideas, and yet did not constrict the answers given to a limited set of options or to notions of ‘right’ or acceptable answers. Semi-structured questioning also offered the researchers the opportunity to gather a detailed description of experiences and emotions, through a process of being open to new ideas presented by the respondent and following these through, with the opportunity to clarify ambiguities (Kvale, 2007). This individual approach also ensured that even the quietest voice, the least confidently formed opinions were heard.

This approach was further supported by the use of a focus group discussion, which offer:

“a way to better understand how people feel or think about an issue” and “a permissive environment ... that encourages participants to share perceptions”

(Krueger and Casey 2009, p.2)
The interaction of such a discussion offered the participants the support they required to clarify and articulate their views without the risk of researcher-bias in the expression of constructs and concepts.

The researchers also acknowledged the emotional framework of the interview process and accepted the need for a researcher to adopt an attitude of “attentive openness” (Ezzy, 2010, p.168) rather than seeing the interview as an opportunity for probing and intrusion. It was particularly important in this investigation that the participants regarded the researchers as individuals with a genuine interest in and acceptance of their understanding and their experiences, and as individuals open to hearing their ideas. To ensure this, the researchers have implemented their methodology adopting Kvale and Brinkmann’s (2009) notion of the interviewer as a fellow traveller, who “walks along with the local inhabitants, asking questions and encouraging them to tell their own stories of their lived world” (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009, p.48).

All five individual interviews were carried out by the same researcher who conducted the initial survey in response to students’ early experiences of the teaching of reflective practice. The focus group discussions were moderated by one researcher only, and the questionnaires were analysed and discussed by both researchers. Table 1 (Appendix 1) shows the interview schedule adopted for this study, identifying the overall broad questions to be used, the possible prompts and exploration that might be needed to help participants articulate their views and how these two are related to the research aims for the investigation. A copy of the questionnaire and questions for the focus groups can be found in Appendices 2 and 3.

The participants in this investigation are Year 1 and 2 students undertaking the FdA Early Years, which includes two modules teaching reflective practice and professional development and a minimum of 480 hours of work placement. The selection of participants for this study was based on previous knowledge of these individuals. Each participant was offered the opportunity to decline at the start of the study or to withdraw at any point up to data interpretation.

**Approach to Data Analysis**
Data analysis for this investigation follows the 5 stage approach Schmidt (2004) advocates of setting up categories for analysis in response to the data, testing and revising these, coding all data then identifying individual cases for further analysis and finally selecting cases for discussion and from which conclusions can be drawn.

Bohm (2004) argues that in-vivo codes, “colloquial interpretations of the phenomena … taken directly from the language of the field of investigation” (Bohm, 2004, p. 271) are most valuable to the researcher, as these are presented in the language of the participants themselves, in part addressing the ethical issue of whose interpretation of the data is being presented. Bohm (2004) also advocates the use of memos “based on the coding notes … and on broad interrelations that are gradually revealed by the investigator” (Bohm, 2004, p.271). By taking this emergent, inductive approach to the data analysis the researchers have been able to avoid pre-empting the research findings, and leading participants’ responses in the course of the data gathering.

**Results**
The initial in-vivo coding of the interview data shows much variation in how each Year 2 participant conceptualises good practice in early years, and the differing balance between skills and personal qualities considered by all participants to be important. Codes drawn from the initial data analysis include child centred, child focussed, child enjoying, rapport, relationships, a love of children, communication, team work, planning, and observation.

Participant 1 makes it clear that her view of good practice concentrates largely on meeting the individual children’s needs and forming good relationships with children:

*“the majority of it should [be] that the child’s enjoying [it] the child’s learning from it /erm/ and they’ve got a good rapport with the /erm/ the, the person, the adult that’s working with them”*
She also makes it clear that good practice stems from a desire to work with children:

“you need to be passionate about children”

Similarly Participant 5 defines good practice in terms of approach to children and enthusiasm for the job:

“caring about children, caring about their development, not just caring about their educational performance, caring about their personal life as well”

She sums it up at the end of her interview as “I think commitment, that’s about it – the biggest thing for me”. Both these participants then feel good practice is largely a socially defined concept, dependent on the relationships between participants in an event or situation.

Participant 5 is also the only Year 2 participant in this study to see good practice as emerging over time, based on experience:

“there’s no way I’ve got the in-field experience that they’ve got working in the field all day every day”

She feels her own lack of experience limits her authority to judge practice in others and undermines her confidence in judging her own performance.

By contrast, Participants 2 and 3 explain good practice in terms more of context-free skills and competences, with Participant 2’s conceptualisation being couched in terms close to the language of The Common Core (REF) and the learning outcomes of the FdA Early Years she has just completed.

“offering praise and encouragement to all children /erm/ being able to work as a team again /erm/ being able to work with parents appropriately /erm/ ... and just general all round having their own initiative”(Participant 2)

“They need to be caring /erm/ being able to share information appropriately /erm/ listen to other team members as well”(Participant 2)

“giving children choices, listening to them, ensuring that they are free to explore everything that they want to, that they can take any learning further and any interest that they’ve got within that learning further as well”(Participant 3)

“I think a good set of empathy skills is important so you can connect with the child and get to know then quite well”(Participant 3)

Again both these participants make it clear that practitioners need to know the individual children they are working with, to understand their different needs, to be able to follow up their interests when planning future learning activities, i.e. to place these children at the centre of their practice. However, it seems that for them good practice comprises a set of skills and competences a practitioner brings with them to a situation rather than something which emerges in response to a situation.

It is clear across the five interviews that the participants differ in their conceptualisations of good practice when it comes to including ensuring children meet externally set educational or developmental targets, and which aspects of development are more important for practitioners to support than others. Whilst Participant 1 felt it was most important for practitioners to support and promote a child’s self-esteem, Participants 3, 4 and 5 all considered good practice to be measurable in terms of how children were progressing in their learning as well as their confidence.

The Year 1 students’ definitions of developing early years practice identified from the questionnaire encompasses a mix of personal qualities and practical skills in a similar way. Participants 6, 7 and 8 focus on tasks:

“I use my initiative, more setting up activities, etc”(Participant 6)

“Helping children when stuck with work”(Participant 7)
“Making sure I was always buy doing jobs” (Participant 8)

Similar concepts were identified when considering their own developing role on work placement:

“Helping the lower ability children, reading with the children” (Participant 8)  
“Support for the children when [they] need it, and help their learning where [I] can” (Participant 10)

Other Year 1 participants identified more interpersonal qualities as key aspects for developing good practice:

“I managed to develop my people skills ... I developed my teamwork skills ... and sensitivity to others” (Participant 11)

These interpersonal qualities were again identified as key aspects of their role on work placement:

“I feel good working with the children. I can talk to the staff and ask for help” (Participant 6)  
“Got on with all staff” (Participant 7)

The role of the placement supervisor is also regarded as a key factor in the development of good practice by the Year 1 students:

“I’m not sure what it would be like if my supervisor wasn’t so helpful” (Participant 9)

Clearly the development of competence in early years practice is regarded as dependent on the nature of the workplace the novice finds themselves in and the support they get from forming relationships with their colleagues.

Participant 11 also acknowledges the need to allow time for development of good practice and perspective in judging performance:

“I think developing initiative and sensitivity to others comes in time ... Once you establish the routine and become familiar you begin to use your initiative more. You know when things are out of place”

However, this acknowledgment of time and experience being key factors in good practice also stresses the situated dimension of this judgement. What this participant regards as important is not just time and experience in any workplace, but time and experience in a specific workplace. Good practice may develop in one place but for it to be transferrable elsewhere, time and experience again may be equally important.

Some overall shared concepts were identified. Knowledge of children as individuals, including their interests, home backgrounds, abilities was a key aspect of good practice as was the meeting of individual needs and the use of planning. All participants discussed the need for high quality interaction/relationship between practitioner and child although this is never more clearly defined.

The Year 1 participants reported that they felt placement experience had enabled them to link theory to practice and they regarded their placement colleagues as individuals they could learn from:

“I made the supervisor aware of what activities I was going to be doing and reflected on this with the supervisor.” (Participant 9)  
“How to improve and get more from them” (Participant 10)
They also felt they had contributed their ideas to the setting:

“Swapped ideas for activities” (Participant 7)

“I suggested they could put a dark sheet over the den and let the children go in with torches.” (Participant 11)

Good practice is judged by the Year 2 students in terms of children’s outcomes and feedback, – children’s enjoyment, progression in their learning, enhanced self-esteem, good rapport and relationships with practitioners:

“I think a lot of it depends on how the child reacts to them” (Practitioner 3)

“Look at how the children, say they’re doing an activity and how the children have interpreted what they’ve been told to do, like if the practitioner gives them loads of detailed instructions and see how they come about with the result of what they’re going to do” (Practitioner 4)

“I’d be looking for people going ‘oh I’ve got to observe again, ergh, I’ve got to do my planning again, ergh’ which everyone gets stressed now and again but if it’s a regular occurrence then it don’t seem to be like that ... that they’re very into it” (Practitioner 5)

None of the Year 2 participants would use formal documents such as inspection reports to judge practice but they all prefer to rely on some external source of evidence for their judgements – practitioners’ behaviour, children’s reactions and progression – rather than comparing the practice they see to their own values of beliefs.

All five Year 2 participants discuss their use of the reflection process and models of reflection but seem unsure of how they judge their own practice. Some of the reported reflection that takes place is informal:

“I just tend to look back at what I’ve just done, just informally in me head” (Practitioner 3)

“I used to use Johns’ model of reflection but now it’s more, I think ’cos I’ve tried a couple of different ones I’ve like adapted a few of them” (Practitioner 1)

Some of the reflection is guided by particular models:

“Gibbs, yeah, that one I used /erm/ and I found the questions really easy to identify with” (Participant 5)

“I use the first one we did – is it Gibbs” (Participant 4)

Much of the reflection that takes place is in response to what is considered to be poor practice – activities that do not achieve their intended outcomes, behaviour management situations, things that go unexpectedly wrong, reflecting Jaworski’s view that reflection should be initiated by surprise. Whilst the participants acknowledge that their practice is often successful there is little discussion of them reflecting on these occasions.

The most striking aspect of the Year 2 participants’ self evaluation, however, was their reluctance to use or trust their own judgements. All five participants preferred to use observations and feedback from their mentor/supervisor, even Participant 2 with the most skills-based approach to defining good practice:

“Participant 2: You probably ask other people in your setting to you know observe you for a while on different aspects

Interviewer: For them to choose the aspects or for you to decide?

Participant 2: For them, probably for them to decide ’cos they can see from a different point of view from than what you can”
Other participants also reported using feedback from children – rapport, confidence, relationship and interaction, progression in learning – to measure their own performance:

“basically have the children understood what I’m trying to do with the activity” (Practitioner 4)

“I can look at something and know that child has said to me at the end of it ‘I really enjoyed that’ or ‘I can do this now’, ‘I can do that now’ and that’s how I judge it” (Participant 1)

There would seem then to be no overt link between the participants’ own conceptualisations of good practice and their evaluation of their own performance. Again this suggests that although these participants are recognising when they might review practice and what means they can use to do so, they are not truly reflecting against their own standards or values.

The Year 1 students’ focus group also reported being drawn to reflection by surprise:

“Something extreme – happy or sad. Something interesting or different.”

However, these students are more prepared to accept that this can include situations that go well, or even that their own ideas or opinions are valid, as one participant reported reflecting on “Supervisor’s ideas about children – whether I agree or disagree”. It would seem that for these students reflection could be a process offering validation of their own values and beliefs, rather than simply an opportunity for critically reviewing their performance.

It is interesting to note, however, that the one Year 2 participant who admitted she found reflection and its emphasis on self-evaluation particularly difficult and undermining to her confidence, was the only participant to report on reflection as an empowering process (Habermas, cited in Moon, 1999):

“it said you a lot and I never thought about it like that before, I just, seeing, you know, this child behaved negatively, this is ... I could have done that ... but I didn’t think I could have that much influence on a situation? So now I’ve realised I can influence a situation, especially where children’s behaviour is concerned. It’s a lot easier for me to understand what I can and can’t do in certain situations” (Participant 5)

Clearly the process of reflection has demonstrated to this participant that she has abilities and authority she was unaware of, but she remains reluctant to trust own judgement without further experience and external validation in the form of qualifications:

“Interviewer: ... you want someone else to tell you whether you’re measuring up to it?

Participant 5: ... until I’m properly qualified”

Although her whole interview suggests she is a very committed and conscientious practitioner with ambitions to emulate her mentor, she does not make any claim in her own practice to the level of commitment she admires on others.

Conclusions
Concepts of good practice and reflection
Good practice then is something these students seem to see as belonging to experienced practitioners, and which they will develop through placement experience. It combines specific, context-free knowledge and an individual response to the social situation of the early years setting and its inhabitants. Students vary in their conceptualisation of how these two elements are balanced in an overall definition of good practice. At present their reflection on their own practice is a process of identifying and addressing weaknesses, responding to events that take them by surprise (Jaworski, 1993) and a process of reviewing and problem solving (Moon, 1999) rather than a process of evaluating practice within current regulatory frameworks and policies, or against personal values and beliefs (Johns, 2004).
As yet reflection is not the empowering process it could be for these participants. These students need to understand how reflection can support them in acknowledging and using their experience from the workplace, and to be able to see strengths as well as weaknesses in their practice. They need to be more aware of what they consider good practice to be and how this can be measured by themselves rather than by others.

The processes of reflection are known to all these students, and some of the models and processes they have researched are being implemented. Their reflections now need to focus on how they as individuals make sense of and respond to unique social situations. However, without greater awareness of how this measures up to their concepts of good practice it will not offer them transferrable knowledge to take to different situations or even new employment.

Implications for Teaching
These students need to develop the self-confidence identified by Eldred (2004) in order to accept that their own professional experience is a valid and effective learning tool. Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1986) argue that expertise is a combination of context-free knowledge and experience of many new and different situations, so that what appears to be an intuitive yet appropriate response to a situation is in fact the drawing on situated experience and context-free knowledge. These students need to accept that whilst as yet they are beginning this process, their own experience and learning are still as valid and important as the views of more expert others.

The pedagogic approach to be adopted in the teaching of reflective practice should now include a focus on the sharing of personal experiences from placement and the learning drawn from it in a non-threatening environment – either by means of open discussion, anonymised written accounts, or personal placement diaries. There should also be greater emphasis placed on the exploration of context-free frameworks – Early Years Foundation Stage (DCSF, 2007), the Every Child Matters agenda (DFES, 2004), The Common Core of Skills and Knowledge for the Children’s Workforce (DFES, 2008) – to support the articulation of individuals’ definitions of good practice and to support their judgements of practice in specific work situations.

Such an approach will increase the students’ confidence in and acceptance of their own judgements, their own experiences, and their own professional learning. By being less reliant on the opinions, values and judgements of others, they are more likely to develop their own vision of good practice and their own professional ethics and values, so that with experience and the learning it brings they become the confident lead practitioners that the early years sector and individual employers seek.

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### Appendix 1

#### Table 1: Interview Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MAIN QUESTION</th>
<th>PROMPTS/FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS</th>
<th>TO INVESTIGATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What do you consider to be good practice in early years?</td>
<td>Is there a particular person you would say is a good/model practitioner – why, what makes them so special?</td>
<td>Is this an overall vision of practice or set of external criteria from Common Core, NVQ Level 3 standards, etc?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Are there particular skills/knowledge that you think a good practitioner needs? Is there something else that makes a good practitioner – personal qualities, imagination? Why are these important?</td>
<td>Is good practice knowledge/skills or personal qualities and talents?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Does the Common Core define good practice, or any other set of criteria?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Are there 'grades' or different degrees of good? Essential or optional elements of good?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How/when do you review your practice?</td>
<td>Regular intervals – weekly, each placement, each term? When something goes wrong/surprises you? Hardly ever? SWOT, feedback, personal crisis/feelings, appraisal, inspection?</td>
<td>Use of vision/criteria?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 2

Questionnaire to Year 1 students

1. Practitioners (in a previous survey) identified the qualities they look for in students as follows: good people skills, teamwork, using initiative, sensitivity to others. How have you developed these through your placement?
2. How have you found a role for yourself in the work of your setting? You might consider your relationships with the children, the staff routines and procedures.
3. How have you developed your knowledge and understanding of children’s learning and development through placement?
4. What activities/experiences have you shared with other practitioners? What have you learned from that?
5. What do you feel you need to find out more about or to get more practice in?
6. How could the University support your efforts?
7. How has your understanding of being a professional in Early Years developed or changed as a result of placement?

Appendix 3

Questions for Focus Group Discussions

1. What were the barriers to reflection – what would have helped you to learn to reflect?
2. How have you developed the skills for reflection?
3. How do you deal with any discomfort or feelings raised by the process?
4. How do you act on your reflections?
5. How did you learn what was significant to reflect on?
Enterprising assessment: how journalism and PR students work with voluntary sector organisations in intermediate and honours level modules

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Abstract:
Students following degrees in journalism and Public Relations are adapting to a multi-platform, multi-skilled professional environment in association with a number of charitable and voluntary sector organisations.

In both second and third years, they are working individually or in groups to apply theory to practice in “real-life” situations, gaining valuable professional experience and enhancing their own personal development. They are applying entrepreneurial and enterprise skills, mainly in the non-for-profit sector where such skills – along with a talent for creativity – are essential in the competition for funding and public donation.

Key words: enterprise, undergraduates, journalism, public relations, vocational

Learning by doing: contextualising business and enterprise
This paper explores enterprise and assessment in relation to a number of modules delivered by the Journalism and Media subject area to students on courses across the campus. The modules are:

- AIC2213 Magazine design and production
- AIC2501 Public Relations Practice and Management
- AIC2505 Media Relations Management
- AHC3002 Media Practical Project

Students taking these modules are following a number of degree pathways including Public Relations, Journalism, Event Management, Sports Marketing and PR, Advertising and Media Relations, and Business and Journalism.

What is meant by enterprise activity in the educational context? First Partnership, a not-for-profit Education Business Partnership who supply and deliver educational support to schools and colleges through a variety of creative programmes which bring business and education together, state that enterprise should focus on developing skills attitudes and knowledge in three areas:

- Enterprise capability – innovation, creativity, risk management, risk taking, a ‘can-do’ attitude and a drive to make things happen
- Financial literacy – the ability to manage one’s own finances and to become questioning and informed consumers of financial services
- Business and economic understanding – the ability to understand the business context

Their philosophy encourages active student engagement, the approach of “learning by doing”, providing a real business context to support teaching and learning, support corporate social responsibility, inform education about the requirements and expectations of business, and help students become aware of the skills, career opportunities, attitudes and sectors relevant to a business. (firstpartnership.com)

In teaching undergraduates on degree programmes, of course, it is essential that the academic content is not diminished by the requirements for personal development and vocational readiness: we do not offer training courses. According to Kneale (2004):
Being enterprising involves being proactive, developmental, creative, making things happen and generating ideas in any and every part of life. It is about grasping opportunities and influencing change. Innovating through generating new ideas is an integral part of academic life and as such can be seen as integral to any curriculum. Enterprise learning involves letting staff and students use their potential for creativity and innovation as part of a degree, and to make explicit how the related skills can be used throughout their working, social and sporting lives.

It is interesting that Kneale includes “social and sporting lives”, reinforcing the original notion of a “universal” education.

And according to Banks, Raffo, Lovatt and O’Connor (2000), in most cases effective business learning for cultural entrepreneurs was achieved through working out problems as they arose, through the everyday routine operation and organisation of the business and, particularly, through making mistakes. “As could be expected, these experiences were formative.”

In examining the factors that seem to help cultural entrepreneurs learn and then develop their business practice, our evidence clearly points to... the opportunity of working out how to do business in the context of solving real business problems that face individuals, and then reflecting on these solutions – what in shorthand might be referred to as learning by doing and making mistakes. (Banks et al, 2000)

Importantly in the context of enterprise informing teaching and learning, their studies demonstrated that entrepreneurship is not just about acquiring technical creative and business skills,

...but it is also about the process of developing appropriate social and cultural capital (Coleman 1997; Bourdieu 1984) that comes about by being embedded in the networks of community of practice. In other words, that it is about the acquisition of a particular set of knowledges, understandings and behaviours which allows the person to operate in the cultural field with a certain expertise. But this social and cultural capital is not just about the formal knowledge transmitted by education and training, it is about a way of acting, a way of understanding and a way of conceiving one’s self-identity. (Banks et al, 2000)

**Developing students’ business practice**

There are some relevant examples of work undertaken by students for AIC2213 Magazine design and production. Their brief is to create a proposal for a new publication which they believe has commercial potential, based on their own market research, as well as providing a platform for quality journalism and design skills. (Appendix i). The module sits alongside the more academic content of Media Business, Media Technology, Journalism Principles etc. The students work in groups, assigning roles according to the relative expertise of each individual – editor, designer, advertising, finance and so on. What we do not teach, and what they have to learn and develop for themselves, through experience and contact with professional practitioners, are the basics of marketing, advertising, budgeting, and as we shall see, there is valuable cross-campus collaboration and co-operation in the assessment and feedback process here.

Each group devises a business plan based on responses from potential advertisers; if this were a real proposal, would you be prepared to buy space? Likewise, the budget has to be based on estimates from printing companies, given the requirements of pagination, paper size and weight, frequency, distribution and so on. The students prepare a dummy version comprising at least eight pages, to include both editorial and advertising, and a front cover. It is interesting to note that very few groups submit the required minimum; the module tends to generate a high degree of enthusiasm, as well as competitiveness based on previous years’ offerings. For example, one group produced a 68 page, A5 glossy magazine and had a number of copies printed commercially.

They are assisted by guest sessions with journalists, designers, publishers and printers, some of whom join a “Dragons’ Den” style panel for the final presentation, and it is here that we are grateful for the input of colleagues in the Business School with whom we have an informal partnership. They volunteer
their services each year because they are so impressed by the enterprise, creativity and enthusiasm of the students. They are infectious qualities.

Bridging the gap between learning and professional practice
The skills learned here are developed in the final year Practical Project when the students have to find an outside client for whom they create a “product”. These might include a training video, a magazine, a PR campaign, a series of newsletters, a strategic publicity plan etc. Three recent examples illustrate the progression from putative to actual projects:

- Two students produced a magazine for the Forget Me Not Trust, sold advertising to cover the cost of printing and publishing 10,000 copies, and organised a launch party at the Galpharm stadium where a charity auction raised more than £1000 for the Trust. The students developed skills in journalism and magazine production and event management. They subsequently shared the national Xcel awards Student of the Year prize in the creative, media and arts category.
- A student who worked for the Calder Valley Youth Theatre to promote their production of West Side Story. While this is an amateur group, the total cost of the production was more than £15,000 so it was essential that ticket sales were maximised. The student designed publicity posters, wrote regular articles for three local newspapers, and designed the show programme, for which she sold more than £500 worth of advertising. The four performances averaged 98% seat capacity.
- A student who organised an awareness-raising event for the British Heart Foundation, targeting an identified group of publics, and raising funds for the BHF at the same time. She used her own skill as a cheer-leader to organise an event for school-children, who do not traditionally identify with the BHF. She hired Gomersall Town Hall, promoted the event among a number of schools, promoted the event in the local media, arranged for her own CRB check, and staged a successful day for some 60 young people and their teachers. The activity stressed the need for exercise, the material was all BHF branded, and sponsorship has so far brought in more than £800 for the charity.

In each case, students were meeting the requirements of summative assessment, bridging the gap between learning and professional practice, and winning accolades from professional practitioners, while developing entrepreneurial and enterprise skills. They are also developing impressive professional and portfolios, which enhance their CVs. The students listed above, since graduating, have had the following successes:

a) both gained places on the magazine journalism MA course in Leeds;
b) has two paid internships in PR, including working for two months with the Yorkshire Agricultural Society, staffing the press desk at the Great Yorkshire Show
 c) was appointed lead volunteer in charge of recruitment by the BHF, and subsequently a post in event management with Hilton Hotels.

External collaboration: exchanging expertise and experience
In the PR subject area, groups of second year students (AIC 2501 and AIC 2505, Appendix ii) were originally asked to devise publicity campaigns as an academic exercise. Now they deliver their campaign proposals to representatives from external agencies who subsequently develop those strategies in their own organisations. In recent years these have included the Laura Crane Trust, the RSPB, and the Lawrence Batley Theatre.

This year we developed our collaboration with the national road safety charity, Brake, and groups of students devised media strategies for the Too Young to Die campaign, aimed at 16-25 year old road users. An incentive was that those students who could raise a minimum of £100 for the charity could have their campaigns entered for a national competition. In fact, three out of six groups did engage with the fund-raising, and two of them have just been “highly commended” runners-up.
The process works particularly well with voluntary sector organisations who cannot afford professional help with publicity and marketing, but whose expertise provides a mutually beneficial experience. In addition, what the students learn, and bring back, from their opportunities serves to enhance the tutor’s knowledge base. Even those who are still part time practitioners in a professional field struggle to maintain pace with technological or other changes in the field, and students who practise entrepreneurial skills in a real situation can then disseminate their own experience among the class.

The benefits when students are involved with outside agencies are highlighted by Oliver et al: “they identified the people they encountered and the problems that arose in that situation as requiring the new solutions to be created, or existing ones to be adapted; it was also suggested that personal style could be expressed in such situations in a way that was not always possible within the formal educational component of the course” (Oliver et al, 2006/49)

We encourage the students to consider themselves trainee professionals during class sessions, operating the seminars as, perhaps, a public relations agency or a magazine editorial office. This has an impact on attendance, engagement and performance. Some students rise to the challenge sooner than others. One group of first years formed their own PR agency (Raw Sunshine) for which they devised a brand logo and website, and found a client, the Alopecia Society, for whom they organised an awareness campaign. The created an event, Bad Hair Day, with the support of the model, Gail Porter, and had considerable media coverage including a 15 minute discussion on GMTV.

Conclusions
The impact on the students is manifest in both their effort (rewarded by consistently high marks) and in their feedback, where they often comment positively on the practical nature of the work, the challenges to which they rise, the involvement with outside agencies, and the contributions of professional practitioners. However, there have been comments from other tutors that some students put in too much effort on these modules, at the expense of their engagement with others.

Further, from a teaching and learning perspective, the experiences constantly add value to the content of the modules, which develop and improve year on year. They also enable students to develop their creativity, a feature which cannot be taught but which can be encouraged. This was the subject of a previous T&L paper, see Appendix iii.

References


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Appendices

Appendix 1
Learning outcomes for AIC2213 Magazine Design and production

Knowledge and understanding
1. appreciate quality issues in design for publication
2. understand the economics and practices of text design and production
3. understand the nature of organisation and ownership within the magazine publishing industry
4. understand market analysis, and readership and advertising patterns;
5. understand the nature of page and document design

Abilities
6. create text materials using advanced DTP packages
7. create, plan and cost the production of a magazine
8. work with a group to present a proposal for a new publication.
9. express ideas cogently and coherently in writing and in presentation

Appendix 2
Learning outcomes for AIC2503 Strategic Media Relations (new module which combines and updates AIC2501 and AIC2505):

Knowledge and Understanding
1. source advice and information on PR issues and media planning
2. appreciate the importance of using proven techniques;
3. understand major aspects of the PR functions and related quality criteria, particularly in determining and maintaining an organisation’s reputation;

Appendix 3
Summary of: Teaching Creativity
September 2008

Rationale
It is well accepted within the University that we have some excellent examples of good practice of learning, teaching and assessment but that we do not celebrate or disseminate or share practice as much as we should. The assessment methods of this module are a prime example of this, and should be both shown off internally and externally and also properly evaluated and disseminated to other departments/Schools to further enhance the quality of teaching and learning.

As 50% of the assessment on a core module in both the Public Relations degree (MHM) and the Fashion & Media degree (ADA), the students have to run a PR Campaign for a town or area of a city, and create a portfolio of material for this including the following items: press releases, feature article, event management, a press pack for journalists. This assessment has had very positive outcomes:

- The students have produced some outstanding and very creative portfolios, which far exceeded expectations.
- The students have been really enthusiastic about undertaking this work, and as a result have put a great deal of time, care and effort into their portfolios.
• It embeds effective employability and transferable skills into the curriculum.
• It appeals to a wide variety of learning styles and needs.
• Similarly it allows students to develop and showcase their varying talents and is not just based on writing skills.
• The module therefore appeals to the non-traditional student cohort like international and mature students, so encourages and welcomes widening participation.

**Student satisfaction**
The research conducted by Clare Jenkins and Eileen Jones confirmed the students’ general enthusiasm for this assignment. The following points were made by the students who were interviewed:

• Increased confidence in dealing with people and projects
• Made good contacts in the profession
• Opportunity to learn from mistakes
• Good career preparation
• Breakdown into component parts made the project more manageable than a long essay
• Practical application: “You can read as much as you want about the subject but you learn a lot more when you are out there doing it for yourself”

**Room for improvement?**
There were several suggestions made by the students and these are listed below, along with the author’s initial response.

• **Work placements of at least two weeks would be beneficial.**
  Students are encouraged to take every opportunity for work experience, but it would be unwieldy to build this as an essential requirement into the module. However, there is an increasing argument for adapting the PR course as a whole, to include an optional third year work placement, and this needs to be discussed by the course committee.

• **Formative group work would help preparation for this assignment.**
  A good suggestion, and one that will be adopted this year.

• **There is an imbalance in the assessment marks.**
  Yes, it has been acknowledged that the press pack is a far more substantial part of the project and marking has been adjusted accordingly

• **Prizes for the best ones**
  Yes, why not?

• **The work could be displayed to show other students, and on open days.**
  Indeed, it is. Part of the funding application was for a display case in the foyer of the JM building and I understand this is still pending. At the moment, items are stored in the Newsroom (JM2/03) and are exhibited regularly. A poster showing photographs, and outlining the rationale of the assessment, was produced for the T&L conference, and has also been supplied to the Creativity Café.

• **We need more time, and individual tuition, to help develop this project.**
  True. The classes are large, and there is a wide range of abilities within each. Unfortunately we are all teaching extra hours this year, and facing extra administrative demands, so the opportunities for individual help have actually decreased. This is an important student satisfaction issue and needs to be addressed.
Conclusion
The report clarified and documented the student satisfaction with and enthusiasm for this piece of assessed work. It has now been incorporated in a very similar format into the second year media relations module, AIC2505, although it has proved time-consuming to explain the intricacies of the component parts to other staff, particularly PTHP who have not taught or assessed in this way before.

It is clear that the assessment addresses issues relating to different learning styles, and the difficulties sometimes posed by widening participation; many of the respondents were pleased to be assessed on something other than their writing skills. It also clearly encourages creativity, though I would argue that this is a concept which cannot be taught, only encouraged.

It would be a real tribute to the efforts made by the students if we could have a permanent display area for their work. The poster prepared for the T&L conference is now on display in the JM corridor.

Abstract
Dissertations are a common feature of final year undergraduate study, but there has been little research into their impact on student performance and satisfaction (Hammick and Acker, 1998; Webster et al., 2000; Pathirage et al., 2004), and even less into the perceptions and attitudes of their academic supervisors. The research reported in this paper is part of the project entitled: 'Dissertation in the Business and Management Undergraduate Curriculum: Value Adding and Value for Money?' The second phase of the project complements a quantitative study of student achievement (see Anchor et al., 2009), by investigating perceptions of the undergraduate dissertation by members of staff. The data for this part of the project was collected by means of a questionnaire survey sent to staff within the Departments of Leadership & Management and Strategy and Marketing at the University of Huddersfield Business School; a sample for follow-up interviews was also self-identified in the responses to the questionnaire survey. Issues focused upon in the questionnaire and interviews include whether students have the capacity to undertake a dissertation, their perceptions of its values and impact upon their results, and staff views of the demands that dissertation supervision places upon them. This paper focuses particularly on staff perceptions of value. The main findings are that the dissertation still has currency today, but needs to be evaluated to ensure that it is meeting the needs of different stakeholders. Further, that despite the perceived academic rigor of the dissertation, the lecturers believed that it gave students the ability to reach a level whereby they become autonomous learners.

Keywords: supervision, undergraduate dissertation, undergraduate research, business, management, academic skills, employability

Introduction and Context
This paper is part of an ongoing study 'Dissertation in the Business and Management Undergraduate Curriculum: Value Adding and Value for Money?', which was funded by the Teaching and Learning Committee at the University of Huddersfield. The focus is primarily on the Departments of 'Leadership and Management' and 'Strategy and Marketing', as these two departments employ a dissertation module as part of their curriculum and assessment.
This paper builds upon research already undertaken by Anchor et al. (2009) entitled 'Undergraduate Dissertations and Student Performance in Business Studies and Marketing, 2004–2009: Evidence from the Business School.' ¹

¹ However, the earlier study relates only to business studies and marketing students. The reason for this was that during the period that the evidence was collected, the 'marketing department' was for a time, part of the management department. In addition, during this period, management students were only allowed to undertake a project, which is distinct from the dissertation in both word length, and in credits. The dissertation is a 40-credit module and the project a 20-credit module. It was only in September 2009 that
Anchor et al. (2009) reported on the association between dissertation marks and final year average marks. Additionally, the report explored if the ‘sandwich placement’ year, undertaken by some students, influenced the dissertation grades compared to those who had not undertaken a placement year. The dissertation is compulsory for business studies students, and optional for both the marketing, and management students. Anchor et al. (2009) found no statistical difference between those students, where the dissertation was compulsory, and those who had a choice. Although the data will be subject to more sophisticated analysis, the initial result – that the dissertation seems to make no statistically significant difference to overall marks – calls into question its value, especially if it is in some way, for either students or staff, more ‘costly’ to undertake. Therefore, the project has complemented the quantitative phase by means of a qualitative study of staff perceptions. In doing so, a large amount of data has been collected, upon which this paper draws.

The purpose of this particular paper is to examine and discuss supervisors’ perceptions of the value of the dissertations. The remainder of the paper is structured as follows. First, some relevant literature is reviewed. Second, the research method is outlined. Third, the findings are presented. Finally, the conclusions are presented.

Overview of Literature
When researching various texts on the value of dissertations, it soon became evident that there is little written on this subject. Of those texts that do address undergraduate dissertations, many authors approach the subject from an assessment point of view (Hand and Clewes, 2000; Webster et al., 2000; Pathirage et al., 2004; Anchor et al., 2009; Attwood, 2009), or from a supervisory point of view (Stefani et al., 1997; Hammick and Acker, 1998; González, 2001; Styles and Radloff, 2001). Cullen (2009: p. 2) argues that: “The individual style of the supervisor has been purported as a major influence to the relationship, but the way in which the style influences the relationship has been largely ignored.” Hammick and Acker (1998: p.336) add to the complexity when they argue that in order to understand dissertations and how they are supervised, one has to: “…comb through readings on the postgraduate experience of academic work generally.” However, they soon lose sight of what they are researching, and start to apply the postgraduate research model, as is, to the undergraduate research. In reality there are similarities, but it needs to be remembered that the processes employed when supervising at doctoral or masters’ levels may not necessarily be ideal processes to apply to undergraduate supervision.

Unfortunately, only limited lessons can be translated from research on postgraduate supervision to the undergraduate processes because as compared with postgraduate supervision, the undergraduate supervision process is much more truncated. (Rowley and Slack, 2004: pp.176-177)

There are many texts on postgraduate supervision (see the works of: Acker et al., 1994; Hockey, 1994; Cryer, 1996; Fallows, 1996; Graves and Varma, 1997; Hockey, 1997; Delamont et al., 1998; Jarvis, 1999; Eley and Jennings, 2005; Sharp et al., 2006; Deuchar, 2008; Wisker, 2008), which offer a comprehensive insight in to this process. Although assessment and supervision/supervisor relationship components have a major influence on the value of the dissertation, these are not the foci of this paper.

Another factor that is apparent from reading around the subject is that authors tend to use the terms dissertation, thesis, and project interchangeably (Hammick and Acker, 1998; l’Anson and Smith, 2004). However, for this paper, we will keep the terms separate because in the Business School at the University of Huddersfield, a dissertation is a ‘40 credit’ module and is more academic in its approach than the project. The project is a ‘20 credit’ module, where students do not have to undertake primary research (although this is strongly encouraged), and is of a more practical nature. The term ‘thesis’ we will reserve, in this instance, for Masters and Doctoral level qualifications, although we do accept that the dissertation may be viewed as a thesis due to its length – 12,000-15,000 words.

It is widely accepted that the undergraduate dissertation is a well respected and highly valuable piece of work (Booth and Harrington, 2003; Todd et al., 2004). Attwood (2009: p.1) reports Professor Dai Hounsell (Vice-Chancellor of the University of Edinburgh), as saying: “...it is now rare to find a degree programme in the UK that does not involve a dissertation or project that students carry out in their final year that is management students were able to take the dissertation. Therefore, the report by Anchor et al. (2009) does not include figures from the then management students (now leadership and management) in its findings.
‘summative’ – counting towards a degree classification.” Todd et al. (2004: p. 335) quoting Hemingway (2001: p. 241) write that the dissertation has:

...a privileged place within many degree programmes. Viewed as the culmination of the degree, the dissertation is seen as the mechanism through which students construct a synthesis of theory, published studies, methodological understanding, the selection, and application of appropriate research methods, analysis, and decision.

Further to this, the dissertation is probably one of the most important and intense pieces of work a student may get involved with (Webster et al., 2000; I’Anson and Smith, 2004; Pathirage et al., 2004). The dissertation allows the student the autonomy to select the subject of their research, and to make decisions, self-regulate and manage their dissertation (Styles and Radloff, 2001). Stefani et al. (1997: p.284) write:

Honours projects [dissertations] provide us with an opportunity to help students develop a variety of valuable skills, assisted with tutoring on a one-to-one basis. They also provide us with the opportunity to assess a number of important facets of students’ abilities, which are not at present readily assessed using other conventional methods, such as traditional written examinations.

We would also add not only written examinations, but also coursework. It is accepted that some coursework is intensive, and does offer some of the skills mentioned above, but they very rarely offer the student the ability to apply particular research methods in these particular pieces of assessment. A further component of the dissertation is that it is often used as a discriminator at exam boards in relation to the honours classification (Webster et al., 2000; Booth and Harrington, 2003). For example, if a student is on the borderline between a classification of 2:2 or 2:1, the exam board and the externals may often look at the grade awarded to the dissertation to help inform their decision as to whether or not to raise the degree classification (Hand and Clewes, 2000; Webster et al., 2000). Having said this, Hand and Clewes (2000) do warn against ‘upward drift’ of grades, and ‘degree inflation’ (this issue did not manifest in the findings). The final grade of the degree classification has become important to students, and with the dissertation being worth 40 credits (at the University of Huddersfield Business School), it is seen by students as a major component of that classification (Pathirage et al., 2004), when other modules are worth 20 credits. Hand and Clewes (2000: p.6) writes: “A 2:2, although seen as a respectable award in earlier times, may now often be regarded as unacceptable by students and employers alike.” As such, students may place the attainment of a good grade in the dissertation high on their list of priorities (Pathirage et al., 2004).

It has been discussed above how authors have drawn upon research on postgraduate supervision texts to apply to the processes of the undergraduate dissertation supervision. González (2001) discusses how the areas between these two distinct activities are becoming greyer. She shows that in both the US and the UK undergraduate research is becoming more valuable, and that journals have been developed to accommodate the publication of good undergraduate research. See for example the US ‘Journal of Undergraduate Research’: http://www.scied.science.doe.gov/scied/JUR.html, or ‘Invention – Journal of Undergraduate research’. A journal open to all disciplinary areas, produced, edited and managed by students and staff at the University of Warwick and Oxford Brookes University: http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/Fac/soc/sociology/rsu/undergrad/cetl/ejournal/.

This practice is more common in research intensive universities (González, 2001), but in principle should also be applicable to universities that are traditionally more teaching-focused (Barnett, 2000; Booth and Harrington, 2003; Barnett, 2005; Barnett and Di Napoli, 2008). However, some commentators believe that undergraduate students do not have the necessary skills to undertake this venture. For example, Booth and Harrington (2003: p.28) write:

We were amply persuaded by our respondents that many level two and three students are presently incapable of, for example, evaluating the contribution of an academic paper, do not know how to use libraries effectively, and cannot demonstrate the use of appropriate academic structures such as referencing. That this is at all acceptable to any higher education institution we find a matter of some concern.
They went on to argue that the sole use of VLEs and/or distance learning would be totally unacceptable in providing the necessary skills needed to undertake research, especially given that the weighting of the dissertation may account for up to a third of the final grade in some institutions (Booth and Harrington, 2003). Booth and Harrington (2003) argue (which reflects the majority of the interviewees’ beliefs in this study), that:

...all [italics in original] students should be required to undertake a dissertation. In our view, an extended piece of individual academic research is what characterises an honours degree. (Booth and Harrington, 2003: p.29)

However, it is also argued that,

Despite the perceived pedagogical value of the dissertation...there is evidence that in some higher educational institutions there is pressure to abandon it as being too ‘expensive’ in the context of mass undergraduate provision. (Todd et al., 2004: p.336).

Given the pressures on resources in many universities, this suggests that the undergraduate dissertation might be under threat, especially if it is perceived that undergraduates are ill-prepared to take advantage of its pedagogic potential. Having raised some of the issues apparent in the extant literature, this paper reports the findings from research into the attitudes of dissertation supervisors at the University of Huddersfield Business School. The next section outlines the research method.

Method
The approach taken for this study was from an exploratory/interpretivist perspective, as we wished to understand how dissertation supervisors (lecturers) make sense of their academic world and in particular their experience and the value of the dissertation. The research was conducted within two departments of the Business School. There are four departments within the Business School, but the Department of Accountancy and the School of Law do not use the dissertation as part of their assessment activity. As such, the study was undertaken in the Department of Leadership and Management, and the Department of Strategy and Marketing.

The sample of lecturers (n=67) comprised of twenty-four full-time lecturers in the Department of Leadership and Management (L&M), twenty-nine full-time lecturers in the Department of Strategy and Marketing (S&M) five lecturers on fractional contracts in (L&M), and nine part-time lecturers based in S&M.

Electronic semi-structured questionnaires were sent to all lecturers in these departments, of which 21 were completed and returned, giving a 31.34% response rate. This was a disappointing response given that the questionnaire was in-house. Follow-up emails were sent, which resulted in a few more questionnaires being completed, and gave us the final 21 completed questionnaires. In addition to the questionnaires, semi-structured interviews were conducted; eight lecturers ‘self-identified’ on the questionnaire that they wished to take further part in the study, by agreeing to be interviewed. Unfortunately, no part-time lecturers identified that they wished to take a further part in the study. Six of the eight lecturers (willing to take further part in this study) were selected via the use of ‘purposive’ sampling (Robson, 2002; Saunders et al., 2007). Here we used our own judgment to select candidates for interview that allowed us to offer validity to the research by ensuring certain categories were represented, for example: age, length of time in teaching, gender, ethnicity, departments, and availability for interview.

On the questionnaire, one respondent refused to complete the first half of the questionnaire, which asked for gender details, length of service, how long they had supervised undergraduate dissertations, and so on. It was decided to use this questionnaire, as the second half was completed, which we felt added to the information gained from this data source. The first half was therefore recorded as ‘missing data’.

44
The research complied with the University of Huddersfield ethical guidelines (Huddersfield University Ethics Committee, 2005), and the British Education Research Association (BERA) guidelines (2004). The Dean of the Business School was approached for, and gave permission to conduct the research with the staff. The anonymity of the members of staff is preserved, and the names of the interviewees have been changed in accordance with the above ethical guidelines. To this end, where quotes are used from the interviewees, their identity simply appears as Int. 1 etc.

The questionnaire was first piloted to ten lecturers, and their views sought on the clarity of the questionnaire, and if it could be improved in any way. In addition, this allowed us to ensure that this vehicle of data collection was collecting the data we needed to answer the research question outlined in this paper (see Appendix A). The interview schedule was piloted on the first three members of staff agreeing to take a further part in the study. Again, debriefing was conducted after the interview to ascertain how the participants felt about the questionnaire, its structure, and if it needed changing in any way. The only amendment made, was to add two further questions at the end, which came out of the first pilot interview (see Appendix B).

The PASW (SPSS) software package was used to analyse the quantitative data from the questionnaire, and for the open-ended questions, content analysis was used, which looked for common threads or themes within the responses. The six interviews were tape-recorded (informed consent was acquired from each interviewee before the tape recorder was switched on – none of the interviewees objected to being recorded), and fully transcribed; the duration of the interview was 50–60 minutes. Each interviewee received a copy of their transcribed interview, and was given time to read the document and sign it off, if they agreed that it was an accurate recording; or they were allowed to make any changes if there was anything they were not happy with. No changes were made, and documents were signed. Content analysis was again employed, looking for common themes within the text. Descriptive statistics (crosstabulation) were then used to analyse the findings from the data.

**Findings**

This paper draws on only part of the primary data (quantitative and qualitative) collected for the study, as the amount of data produced, and the different issues raised, are too numerous to discuss in just one paper. As already highlighted, a central purpose of this study is to ascertain the perceived value of the undergraduate dissertation, and this is where this paper will focus.

The question of ‘value’ was put directly to the lecturers, both in the questionnaire and in the interviews. The results from the quantitative data showed that 18 (85.71%) out of 21 respondents believed that the dissertation had value in today’s environment. On this point, Int. 3 stated:

Anybody who’s been through the dissertation process knows its value and you said ‘out there’, so if we mean out there as being the jobs market, the employers. Lots of those people that are in senior positions in organisations have undertaken dissertations as part of their degree, they know what was involved and they know the challenges, and they know what it took to succeed in their dissertation. They know the value of it in...not only the knowledge, skills and abilities that the student demonstrates by doing it well. But also the mental discipline that it demands, and that must be valuable as an indicator of a student’s worth to an employer.

Int. 1 echoed this viewpoint, believing that the dissertation could show that a student had skills needed by employers:

Yes, I do think it adds value to businesses. I could sit there and I would hope any of our undergraduate people...could sit there [in an interview] and say, do you know what? I organised myself and this is how I organised it. What a fantastic thing to say in your interview, so yes I think it adds value to our students and it brings value in to the business.
It can be seen therefore that the dissertation may still have currency in today's business environment. In respect of academic skills, Int.2 stated that the dissertation offered the students the ability to exhibit the knowledge they have gained over the course of the degree:

> ...the dissertation is an indication of the student’s ability to apply critical analysis, to work independently, to produce a cohesive piece of work...it’s basically the summary of the university experience.

This concurs with the views of Stefani *et al.* (1997) and Todd *et al.* (2004), cited above. However, although Int.4 believed the dissertation had value, she stated that she was “struggling with an internal dilemma”, saying:

> Do I see any value? Well given how many years...and I can’t remember what’s in my dissertation, and I can’t remember ever having referred to it after completing it, and it was a...well I’ve got to do it as part of the degree...I don’t think it’s easy to put a measure on the value. I think as a product then maybe it doesn’t have value unless this person can in an academic setting publish from it and things, and if they’re going on to do a masters, but the value to me is the process of it.

From this, it can be clearly seen that this lecturer perceives that the dissertation only has value if the student is going to remain in academia to study for further qualifications, or considering publishing from their dissertations. However, not all were dismissive of the content of the dissertation. From her own experience as a student, Int. 5 believed that her dissertation, albeit 30 years old, was a welcomed piece of research for the company she was employed with at that time. She commented:

> Yes, my dissertation...was a management plan for a tourist attraction, and the tourist attraction could not afford to pay a consultant to go in and do the work for them, so I did it. So I got something out of it as well...I learnt a fantastic amount from doing that. It was a lot more than going out and getting a questionnaire completed, and it was also you don’t just write up the questionnaire, you’ve then got to discuss your findings...It wasn’t just an academic piece of work, you do get a lot out of it.

The initial conclusion from this then is that the dissertation has value, but there is some question as to what that value is. When reflecting on both Int. 4 and Int. 5’s comments above, it could be argued that, there is value in the processes, if not in the content; additionally, that the skills gained from undertaking the dissertation has value to employers, as outlined earlier by Int. 1.

The next question put to the lecturers was whether they felt that the undergraduate dissertation should be compulsory, optional or abolished. From the quantitative studies, thirteen lecturers indicated that they believed that students should be required to undertake the dissertation. This is in line with the views of Booth and Harrington (2003) above, where they recommended that all students should undertake the undergraduate dissertation. However, six of the twenty-one lecturers believed that students should not be forced to undertake the dissertation, and two believed the undergraduate dissertation should be abolished. One of these two lecturers believe that the dissertation needs to be abolished and replaced with something more practical and related more towards business. The second lecturer felt that the dissertation needed to be abolished due to the “...the lack of student input.” The qualitative data showed that four lecturers (two from L&M and two from S&M) concurred with the viewpoint that the dissertation should be compulsory. Int. 6 commented that:

> ...there’s nothing else that brings everything together like the dissertation does. It brings the knowledge base together, it brings their skills and competencies and time management...all of those elements that a graduate should have by the time they leave us; that’s the only piece of work that brings them together in this way. It also allows them the ability to bring in new skills, new knowledge bases etc, and there’s nothing else that allows them to do that,
and because it is a substantial piece of work, it can carry, and does carry substantial currency post graduation.

So for this respondent the undergraduate dissertation has currency, reflecting the views of Webster et al. (2000) and I’Anson and Smith (2004). Int. 3 believed it should be compulsory, as he felt that it was the culmination of the degree process:

...it’s the nugget that the student takes away, it’s the realisation of everything that they’ve been doing over the last three or four years. It should be the thing that pulls it all together, the final challenge, and the final triumph; it should be that for students.

Int. 5 also believed it should be compulsory, because like Int. 6, she felt it helped with the progression on to the masters programmes. However, she also added that:

...they need research skills, if they go into the work place, they need research skills. They also need to be autonomous learners, that’s what the whole process of the degree programme is about...I think at the end of the day it’s about developing students that are capable of moving on to the next level, and the dissertation lets them do that.

Here this lecturer believes that the dissertation helps the students become more independent and able to think for themselves. However, it is recognised that not all students can achieve this, which is why some of the lecturers believed that the dissertation should be either ‘optional’ or abolished altogether. Int. 4 was still maintaining the role of “devil’s advocate”. Believing that the dissertation should still be compulsory, she adds:

...actually do I [believe it should be compulsory], do we really know enough about what we should be producing in terms of those academic graduate skills, basically, employability skills. Is there something else that actually would gain just as much or greater benefit from doing, that’s why I kind of have this debate, it’s always being there, does that mean that tradition should always uphold, and it should always continue to be there, should we not be looking at the curriculum and how we can develop it?

This is an interesting point, as higher education is all about the development of knowledge, and forever pushing forward those boundaries (Truscot, 1943; Barnett, 2005), and “To produce persons capable of active contributions to society...” (Newman, 1996: p. xvi). In that they [the student] may find gainful employment, and possibly bring into that employer fresh ways of thinking and new skills and knowledge.

Int. 1 believed that the dissertation should be optional for the very reasons outlined above, in that not all students are capable of undertaking such an intensive piece of academic work. She felt that the students needed guidance on whether or not they should undertake a dissertation or project; she felt that:

...I think there are some students that would be better not doing a dissertation, they would possibly be better.....they haven’t got the motivation, they haven’t got the time management skills...I think we need to guide students very carefully maybe about their choices if it became an option thing.

Int. 2 had similar perceptions to Int. 1 in wondering whether all students would benefit, adding that: “...if you [the student] do it badly [the dissertation], it’s a serious dent in your overall mark, so think carefully about whether you want to do this.” Here Int. 2 was seeing the bigger picture, and the outcomes if the student did not get it right or indeed dropped out of the degree course because of it. Webster et al. (2000) highlights similar concerns when discussing the dissertation is probably the most intensive piece of work a student is likely to undertake, especially at undergraduate degree level. However, they go
onto say that “Our project arose from concerns as to whether students...were receiving adequate guidance on precisely what was expected of them from their dissertations.” (Webster et al., 2000: p.73).

Conclusions
From the above discussions, it can be clearly seen that the undergraduate dissertation is seen to be important and valuable by some of the lecturers as an indicator of the student achieving a plethora of skills. The lecturers saw the dissertation as important in allowing students to become autonomous learners. The majority of lecturers therefore thought the dissertation should be compulsory, which is in line with Booth and Harrington’s (2003) viewpoints. However, it was raised that just because the dissertation was embedded in the culture of undergraduate degree assessment, that there is no reason as to why it should not be developed. This issue was investigated as part of this research, but will appear in another paper, as it was too large a discussion to cover at this point. This does not mean that the dissertation’s processes cannot be reviewed to ensure we are still producing both academic, and employability skills, and ensuring that the dissertation is meeting the needs of all stakeholders. This is one recommendation of this paper; however, this would need further discussions with academic faculty who supervise dissertations, and not just the senior management teams and/or quality committees.

There were also concerns raised that if the dissertation is compulsory, it may disadvantage those students that are not of a calibre to undertake this course of study – though this raises the question of whether the students are suited to university-level study. However, as long as they pass, the dissertation could just be seen as one more element of assessment, and it is not unusual for the outcomes of different assessments, and different forms of assessment, to vary significantly for individual students.

Given that in the US and the UK there are journals now that take high quality research articles to be published from undergraduate dissertations, then this throws further evidence towards the development of the dissertation and its delivery. If students are intellectually capable to gain a place on the degree, then it should naturally follow that at the end of three or four years of study (depending on whether or not they have taken a placement year), our students should be of a level where they can achieve outcomes comparable with students from other universities. One caveat to remember here is that only a small number of undergraduate dissertations are of a calibre that they can publish from. The journals mentioned above, are refereed journals, and go through the same processes as other quality journals. To this end, although the dissertation processes are important, as indicated in this paper, so is the content, and it is here that we may wish to also focus our efforts on in the future. Nevertheless, some of the lecturers felt that the dissertation should be optional, allowing the less academically orientated students a choice, or that the students do not have the necessary skills to undertake a dissertation. Some lecturers, felt that the dissertation should become more practical in its nature, and more orientated towards business than academic theories and practice; two lecturers responding to the questionnaire felt the dissertation should be abolished and replaced with something more practical. Having said this, it has been shown that the dissertation is considered by many lecturers to be practical, in that it allows students to choose their own topic of study, develop and undertake primary research, manage their own time, manage a major project, and write up a piece of individual work that is unique to them — a process that enhances skills useful in the workplace.

This study was exploratory in nature, complementing previous quantitative analysis of dissertation marks. The project team has now amassed a significant amount of data. Now that many of the issues and some preliminary findings have been identified, it is recommended (in line with one of the research objectives for this project) that the research be extended outside the University of Huddersfield Business School, to ascertain the views of lecturers from other business schools in other universities.

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References


Appendix A

The costs and benefits of doing an undergraduate dissertation

The purpose of this survey is to gauge staff perceptions of the value of undergraduate dissertations, and to ascertain whether colleagues believe students are gaining valuable experiences and skills from undertaking the dissertation; also to ascertain if staff feel they have the necessary training, skills and time they believe are needed to supervise students.

We [Professor Chris Cowton, Dr. John Anchor and Dr. Denis Feather] would be grateful if you would please complete this questionnaire in full. This should take approximately 10 minutes.

Please answer all questions, ticking one box only, unless otherwise indicated.

FIRST SOME FACTS ABOUT YOU

Q1. Your gender is:

Q2. Your Department is:

Q3. The subject specialism you teach is (Please state your subject area):

Q4. Which category does your age fall into?

Q5. How would you describe your ethnic origin?

Q6. Do you teach full-time or part-time at the University of Huddersfield?

Q7. How many years have you been teaching at HE Level?

Q8. Do you hold a teaching qualification?
Yes \[1\] (Go to Q9) \hspace{1cm} No \[2\] (Go to Q10)

Q9. Which teaching qualification is it? (Please state)

Q10. What is your highest qualification held to date?
- First Degree \[1\]
- Masters Degree \[2\]
- PhD \[3\]
- EdD \[4\]
- Other \[\] 

Q11. Are you a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy?
- Yes \[1\]
- No \[2\]

VALUE OF THE UNDERGRADUATE DISSERTATION
Please tick one answer only, and read instructions for each question carefully.

Q12. Do you supervise undergraduate dissertations?
- Yes \[1\]
- No \[2\]

Q13. Do you feel equipped to supervise undergraduate dissertations?
- Yes \[1\]
- No \[2\]

Q14. Have you ever received any guidance in the supervision of undergraduate dissertations?
- Yes \[1\]
- No \[2\]

Q15. Indicate your opinion of the following statement: “A supervisor should have expertise in the student’s chosen dissertation topic.”
- Strongly Agree \[1\]
- Agree \[2\]
- Disagree \[3\]
- Strongly Disagree \[4\]

Q16. The current allocation for dissertation support is six hours per student. Do you perceive this to be?
- Too much \[1\]
- Too little \[2\]
- About right \[3\]

Q17. Please indicate your opinion of the following statement “Rather than subject expertise, a supervisor only needs to know the necessary processes to help the student be successful in their dissertation.”
- Strongly Agree \[1\]
- Agree \[2\]
- Disagree \[3\]
- Strongly Disagree \[4\]

Q18. In your opinion, should the dissertation be: [Tick one box only]
- Compulsory? \[1\]
- Optional? \[2\]
- Abolished? \[3\]

Q19. Please give reasons for your answer to Q18.

Q20. Please indicate your opinion of the following statement “The academic undergraduate dissertation has no value in today’s environment, and should be replaced with something more practical.” [Tick one box only]
- Strongly Agree \[1\]
- Agree \[2\]
- Disagree \[3\]
- Strongly Disagree \[4\]

Q21. Please give reasons for your answer to Q20.

Q22. Please rate the following statement: “The undertaking of a dissertation affords the student the opportunity to demonstrate their depth of knowledge in a subject better than two extra taught modules.” [Tick one box only]
- Strongly Agree \[1\]
- Agree \[2\]
- Disagree \[3\]
- Strongly Disagree \[4\]
Q23. Please rate the following statement: “The dissertation is a valuable piece of independent work the student can use to evidence to employers the many skills they have learned in their time at university.” [Tick one box only]


Q24. Please rate the following statement: “The dissertation affords the student the opportunity to develop their own research independence.” [Tick one box only]


Q25. What do you think are the main benefits for undergraduate students of undertaking a dissertation?

Q26. What do you think are the main challenges for undergraduate students of undertaking a dissertation?

Q27. Have you ever written a paper or article with an undergraduate student, based on their dissertation?

Yes [1] (Go to Q28)  No [2] (Go to Q30)

Q28. Was this article published?

Yes [1] (Go to Q29)  No [2] (Go to Q30)

Q29. Where was this article published? [Please state]

Q30. Are there any other comments you would like to make about your experience of supervising undergraduate dissertations?

Q31. (Optional) Would you be willing to take further part in this study by agreeing to be interviewed? [Please see Final Instruction 2 below]

Yes [1]  No [2]

Q32. (Optional) If yes please state your name here:

FINAL INSTRUCTIONS

1. If you wish to add any further comments please write them on an additional sheet of paper and attach to this questionnaire.

2. If you would be willing to be interviewed on this subject (which should take about an hour of your time), please ensure you have ticked the ‘Yes’ box in question 31 above and given your name so we can arrange a convenient time and place to meet.

3. Finally, please check that you have answered all the questions fully.

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO COMPLETE THIS QUESTIONNAIRE.

Please return the questionnaire to Dr. Denis Feather.
Appendix B

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE
FOR STAFF

Introduction: (**The below must be read to the staff member before the interview commences**)

The questions below constitute a provisional framework, and the interview will be semi-structured in nature. As such I expect to pursue any unanticipated issues that arise during the process.

The purpose of this study is to look at the perceptions of colleagues about the value of the undergraduate dissertation, and their experiences of supervising the dissertation.

Permission has been given by the Dean of the Business School to approach colleagues to gain their insights and opinions on this subject matter, and I must stress that your anonymity will be preserved in any written reports growing out of the study, and your responses will be treated in the strictest confidence.

Having said this, may I have your permission to tape-record the interview, as it will aid in terms of speed, efficiency, and ensuring your responses are accurately recorded and transcribed. I will hand the tape-recorder to you, and if at any time you feel uncomfortable with the interview, please feel free to switch the recorder off. Also, please feel free at any time to interrupt the interview, and ask for clarification of a question or to criticize a line of questioning.

This is an ‘aide memoire’ for the interviewer and should not be given to the interviewee. The interviewer is free to explore any relevant issue(s) raised by the interviewee. It is advised that the interviewer familiarises themselves with the questionnaire the staff member completed prior to the interview.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main Questions</th>
<th>Notes and Follow up Questions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Q1.</strong> Start the interview by thanking them for agreeing to meet with you and to be interviewed. Then explore number of years teaching, and how long they have been supervising undergraduate dissertations.</td>
<td>Try and make them feel at ease before moving into the more in-depth questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Q2.</strong> Ascertain if the individual is a full-time or part-time member of staff.</td>
<td>Explore their specialist subject area(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Q3.</strong> Ascertain which department they are in, and what research if any they are undertaking.</td>
<td>Explore any interesting issues that may be raised.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Q5.** Explore the following issues in regard to the dissertation:  
  - Do they think it is too much work?  
  - Do they think they have the necessary skills to supervise the dissertation?  
  - Do they think it is challenging?  
  - Do they think it is something the student can feel proud of?  
  - Establish if the staff member has received any training on supervising dissertations. | Ask to elaborate on single answers or key issues. |
| Q6. How do they feel about the number of hours allocated for dissertation supervision? | Ask them to elaborate on their answer(s) |
| Q7. Do they believe the staff member should have expertise in the area the student has expressed an interest in researching? | Ask them to elaborate on their answer(s) |
| Q8. What do they think of the opinion that a supervisor only needs to know the processes to guide the student successfully through the dissertation? | Again, explore any interesting points raised. |
| Q9. Ask the interviewee if they believe the dissertation should be compulsory, optional, or abolished. | Ask them to elaborate on the point they make and any other interesting issues raised. |
| Q10. In their opinion, do they believe the dissertation affords the student the opportunity to demonstrate their depth of knowledge on a subject better than exams or two extra taught modules? | Again ask them to elaborate on any interesting points raised. |
| Q11. Do they think the dissertation should be replaced with another form of assessment? | Ask them to elaborate on their answer. |
| Q12. Ask them their opinion of whether or not the dissertation has any value in today's environment | Ask them to elaborate on their answer. |
| Q13. Explore what they feel have been the main benefits of undertaking the dissertation for the student. | Ask them to elaborate on any interesting points raised. |
| Q14. In your opinion are there benefits to colleagues in supervising undergraduate dissertations? | Explore any interesting points raised, i.e. what sort of benefits? |
| Q15. If the option was available, would you rather do something else other than supervise undergraduate dissertations? | If yes. What would they give it up for? If No. Why not? |
| Q16. What do you perceive is the optimal number of students to supervise? | Explore the reasons for the answer(s) they give. |
| Q17. What is the largest number of students you have supervised in any one year? | Ascertain how many they supervised this year, if they do not proffer this information. |
| Q18. What is the least number of students you have supervised in any one year? | |
| Q19. Do you believe the dissertation should be revamped? | May have to elaborate on the term re-vamped! |
| Q20. Should there be a pan-school dissertation? | |
| Q21. Is there anything that we have discussed, or that I have not touched upon that is relevant to the discussion that you wish add? | |

**Conclusion**

Thank you very much for helping us with this research, and for your time. Your opinions on the questions I have asked will be very helpful in understanding whether or not the undergraduate dissertation offers value to our students. Also, it will give an insight as to whether or not the undergraduate dissertation should remain as an assessment process.
How pedagogical research can enhance teaching and learning: one academic’s personal account

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Abstract
This paper offers a narrative account of the journey of one academic in the School of Computing and Engineering through the early stages of a professional doctorate in the Department of Educational Research at Lancaster University. Focusing on the first three phases of this programme, the author highlights how the experience facilitated deepening engagement in pedagogical research, leading to the adoption of practices which have generated increased rates of student retention and progression, and to the presentation of research findings in these areas to internationally recognised technology-enhanced learning conferences.

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I should like to thank my colleagues Dr. Rupert Ward, for the support I have received throughout my doctoral studies, and Dr. Crinela Pislaru, for her encouragement in the submission of the University Teaching and Learning Project 2010 Fund bid which led to the UoHTube project.

Keywords: technology-enhanced learning, pedagogical research, professional doctorate, peer assessment, Asperger’s syndrome, blended learning communities.

Introduction
I first began lecturing in web development in the then School of Computing and Mathematics here at the University of Huddersfield in January 1998, and when I took the post it was my intention to pursue a doctorate in the field of internet development; within eighteen months it became clear not only that if I didn’t start a PhD I wouldn’t finish one, but also that if I did start one I probably wouldn’t finish one either. The web was still less than ten years old, and developing so rapidly that the content of the modules I was teaching was already fast becoming out-of-date by the time a second iteration began, with new technologies and new patterns of usage emerging, evolving and disappearing at such a rate that any attempt to pursue even a full-time three-year research programme would have seen the final thesis an internet-generation removed by the time I reached the viva voce examination.

The twists and turns of life, including running a web business in my spare time, and then starting a family, all overshadowed my PhD aspirations for almost a decade, but when the doctoral programme in e-Research and Technology Enhanced Learning at Lancaster University was recommended to me in mid-2008, my dormant interest was sparked back into life. Paradoxically, I realised, I had been teaching in higher education for over ten years, yet ‘inactive’ in the education system for some time; suddenly, here was an opportunity to ‘get back into education’, not by embarking on a three-year full-time research project with an 80,000 word thesis as the output goal, but by engaging part-time in assessed modular content for two years to prepare me for a two-year project and a 50,000 word thesis.

The early days and Self-Peer-Tutor Assessment
The opening phase of the doctoral programme began in February 2009, and with the benefit of hindsight it is clear that the activities we engaged in over the course of the first fortnight formed a textbook exercise in getting an online distance learning community off the ground. During the initial induction we uploaded a photo and provided a personal profile, and met the other members of what was to become our learning community - our cohort numbered sixteen, with learners based across three continents and spread around the world from the Canadian west coast to the eastern US seaboard, through the UK and Palestine and on to Hong Kong and Japan. The first module of the programme introduced us to Research Methods in Education, and after two short weeks of asynchronous discussions and reviews of papers, we
split into three self-selecting learning sets and began our first collaborative exercise creating learning materials on different research methodologies. For the first time, we actually spoke to one another via Skype, and it quickly became apparent that although the discussion forum yielded opportunities for one kind of learning, it was through a synchronous voice-based exchange that we were able to properly get to know one another. When we all arrived at the residential, it was interesting to note how much closer individuals were with the members of their respective learning sets with whom they had spoken, than with members of other learning sets with whom they had previously exchanged only asynchronous text-based messages.

Once the residential was over, it was time to start our first piece of research; with the emphasis placed more on methods than methodology at this stage, we were each required to conduct a small-scale qualitative study examining some relevant aspect of our professional practice. It was now May however, and with most of our students having submitted their final pieces of coursework some three weeks earlier, I was aware that conducting any investigation which required responses from learners carried an inherent risk of generating insufficient data. After some deliberation, I therefore embarked on an investigation into academic perspectives regarding the application of self-peer-tutor-assessment in undergraduate programmes of study within my own department.

My research design involved the use of questionnaires and follow-up semi-structured interviews; a number of colleagues were happy to help but had their own marking to contend with, so my first lessons in doing qualitative research quickly became about timing and persistence. Eventually of course, the marking was over and my colleagues were available to be interviewed. The students which my colleagues and I teach are all pursuing qualifications in the digital media subject area, and in contrast to the findings of studies which have examined peer assessment with groups of mature students taking a postgraduate qualification in education by distance learning (e.g. McConnell, 2006; Chesney & Marcangelo, 2010), the over-riding message was that our undergraduates would not engage constructively in the self-peer-tutor assessment process unless they were first taught how to do so. The near absence of the required frames of reference and appropriate vocabulary were identified as barriers to achieving significant success with undergraduates, however there was considerable agreement that the strategy could work well with final year students who were close to graduating and on the cusp of being eligible to take up postgraduate work.

This first phase of the doctoral programme had seen me taking my first tentative steps as a novice educational researcher, and while the outputs which emerged from these early days were modest, the investigation into how self-peer-tutor assessment might work with our students was later to inform the implementation of a peer assessment strategy in a module I came to lead; I was also able to apply the lessons from my experience of engaging in the formation of our online learning community to the development of a blended learning community at Huddersfield.

The development of professional practice
In this next section I move on to talk about the second phase of my studies, leading to the examination of the relationship between contemporary educational theory and colleagues teaching in the numerate disciplines, and culminating in the acceptance of my first conference paper.

With the focus shifting to the development of professional practice, the next module followed immediately on from the peer assessment mini-project, and we were quickly thrown into asynchronous activity discussing concepts from seminal work in contemporary educational theory, focusing on communities of practice (Wenger, 2007), situated learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991), and the role of the tutor as coach or mentor (Schön, 2000). It was as we were working through these readings that I began to get the feeling that I’d come across ideas such as these somewhere before, but I couldn’t quite put my finger on where right away. A number of breakout debates sprang up, including one in which the philosophical validity of knowledge being collaboratively constructed and all meaning being socially negotiated was being explored. One of the cohort insisted that there could be no truth other than subjective truth, claiming that the statement “2 + 2 = 4” was only true if we agreed it to be so. As an academic in Computing and Engineering, this misunderstanding of the concept of number naturally caught my attention, but it occurred to me that this was connected with another debate which had been looking at why academics in some disciplines were more resistant to adopting contemporary educational
practices than others. While reflexivity and learning through discourse seemed to come relatively naturally to those studying within the social sciences, it was understandable from an insider perspective that the discipline of many of the mathematicians, computer scientists and engineers meant that they did not care for "fluidity of meaning" (Prawat, 1999, p. 264), and when faced with requests to adopt a pedagogy based on a social constructivist position and a subjectivist epistemology, it was perhaps not surprising to find the baby thrown out with the bathwater.

A lesson from history

By now it was late July; almost all academic staff had gone on leave, and there were even fewer students around campus. Knowing that access to participants would be even more difficult to achieve than in May I struggled to formulate an appropriate research project, so opted to take the literature review route for this assignment. That was when it suddenly clicked into place where I had encountered some of these ideas previously; as an undergraduate I had read Philosophy, and during my final year had taken a module on political philosophy in which we had looked at, amongst other things, anarchism. Suddenly, I was taken back to smoke-filled seminar rooms of the late 1980s where we had discussed the notions of property as theft, integral education, the collapse of the student-teacher hierarchy and the concept of mutual aid. As I dug deeper, I found that not only had the nineteenth century anarchists Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (1851), Mikhail Bakunin (1916), and Peter Kropotkin (1887) produced work which had promoted a similar approach to that of the contemporary educational theorists, but that this theme had continued through the twentieth century work of Paul Goodman (1962) and Ivan Illich (1971), and was also the focus of twenty-first century work emerging from the Institute of Education (Suissa, 2001, 2006). The relationship between the quantitative sciences and anarchism has long been established (e.g. Kropotkin, 1913), and an anarchist pedagogy (McDowell, 2010a) based on this position requires not only collaborative learning and a collapsed hierarchy in teacher-student relationships, but also allows for the necessary degree of objectivity to allow “2 + 2 = 4” to be non-negotiable, thereby making contemporary practices more palatable to colleagues in the numerate disciplines.

Conferences and my first paper

After going through the peer review process, I completed the literature review by the start of September and submitted this as my paper for the module, firmly believing that I should continue to collapse the traditional hierarchy wherever possible, but imagining that this would be the end of the matter. I hadn’t been to an academic conference since my days as a Research Assistant working in environmental education some fifteen years previously, but the next morning I was off to Manchester for the Association for Learning Technologies Conference (ALT-C 2009), where I was hoping to get myself into the swing for our own Teaching and Learning Conference the following Monday. I’d read beforehand that INSPIRE would take a different approach to previous events, but hadn’t anticipated that there would be an opportunity to run an impromptu session of my own, so as soon as this became apparent I was adding “Anarchy in the University: Collapsing the Student-Teacher Hierarchy” to the list of session titles running in the first slot. I didn’t really know what to expect, but was delighted to find well over twenty colleagues from Schools across the university joining together on the fifth floor of Canalside West to talk about the likely effects on student creativity and learning that could be achieved through the adoption of an anarchist pedagogy, and pleased to find that we had enough to talk about to take up the full 90 minutes before the next session started and we had to vacate the room. Inspired by the INSPIRE process, I began to wonder about presenting on the anarchist philosophy of education at other teaching and learning related conferences, and following a reworking of the literature review I’d submitted to Lancaster, I was very pleased to have a paper on the student-teacher hierarchy theme accepted for presentation at the Learning Futures Festival 2010, hosted by Professor Gilly Salmon at Leicester University (McDowell, 2010a).

This second phase then, in addition to uncovering a new perspective on how key messages from contemporary educational theory could be presented within numerate disciplines, had enabled me to get acquainted with the literature review process upon which a final thesis would be based, and had also yielded the opportunity to secure my first conference paper presentation, something which I had expected would take much longer to achieve. Aware that the conference paper was in many ways simply another modest step forwards, it nonetheless represented a significant development in my process of transformation, and there was no doubt in my mind that this was an important psychological hurdle to
have overcome, providing me with renewed impetus as I approached the next phase of my doctoral studies.

**Applying pedagogical research to a real-world situation**

Although the second phase of the PhD had allowed me to make new connections in the field of theory, it was primarily the application of educational research which had originally drawn me to the doctoral programme. Coinciding with the start of the third phase at Lancaster was the beginning of a new academic year at Huddersfield, and one of the first things to address before teaching commenced was an issue likely to cause problems for one of our students diagnosed with Asperger’s Syndrome. Back then, I didn’t know that much about autistic spectrum conditions, other than what I’d gleaned from the media coverage of the US government’s attempts to extradite Gary McKinnon on charges of hacking into military computers, and from a brief meeting with a friend’s son whom I’d noticed seemed to have an almost innate grasp of how to mend computers and configure networking hardware.

In a meeting with the student (whose name I have changed here to protect his confidentiality and will refer to as ‘Alex’) and a Disability Support Worker from Student Services, it quickly became apparent that participation in group work was likely to be deeply problematic for a student with Asperger’s Syndrome, and that the social cues which neurotypical peers would pick up from face-to-face communication would be missed. As the new Module Leader for a module which required students to work together collaboratively to produce a computer game, I was acutely aware of the need to provide students with the opportunity to work together in the way they would be expected to when entering the games industry, however here was a student for whom the provisions of the Disabilities Discrimination Act (1998) and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (2001) applied, and for whom a positional tension clearly existed. The work I had been doing on peer assessment and the collapse of the student-teacher hierarchy now took on a new relevance, and in considering Alex’s situation I began to see connections between the two; for a student with Asperger’s Syndrome, not only would participation with peers in group work be troublesome due to missed social cues, but so too could the traditional student-teacher hierarchy that went with the old-school ‘chalk-and-talk’ approach to teaching and learning, and this led me to wonder whether a technology-enhanced learning intervention might be appropriate here.

As I was about to take on leadership of this module for the first time, I had already looked at how the module had previously run, and had identified that the traditional approach to documenting the game development process was causing a large number of students to lose out on a significant proportion of the overall marks for the module, placing them in a referral position, or even failing the module outright. Clearly this had been having a knock-on effect in terms of rates of both retention and progression, and on the strength of some of the research I had been engaged in at Lancaster, I had identified an eportfolio system which I was about to roll out to support students with this element of their work. By replacing the traditional end-of-process documentation with a weekly blogging exercise, I was encouraging students to reflect on their learning while fulfilling the documentation requirements as the game was developing; by making a system available which combined social networking features, I was intending that students would also be more inclined to use the eportfolio to work collaboratively; and by encouraging learners to provide feedback on peer’s work over the course of the year, I was hoping that they would become accustomed to using the essential vocabulary required to engage constructively in the summative peer assessment process. I mentioned all this to Alex and his support worker, stressing that I would be monitoring his situation with respect to the group working requirement, and he agreed to give it a go.

**Towards a blended learning community**

My desk-based research at Lancaster had indicated that tutor involvement in the online component of a learning environment was essential in order to foster the sense of community which would lead students to engage with the system (e.g. Salmon, 2000; Palloff & Pratt, 2005; McConnell, 2006; Smith, 2008). As a web programmer, I was quickly able to recognise how the system worked, and at the first teaching session of the year I unveiled the Mahara interface, showed the students my own profile, demonstrated the blogging facility, and highlighted the opportunities for uploading and sharing content with peers. Following the pattern set by the tutors at Lancaster, I then requested all students to complete their own profile and upload a photo in the first two weeks of the semester. Within two hours it was clear that my expectations of the first fortnight had already been massively exceeded; not only had every student
‘moved in’ and made themselves at home, ‘friending’ me in the process, but evidence was emerging that the group had taken ownership of the system, with a number of special interest group debates already raging in forums newly created by the students themselves – not all of which I had been invited to join!

Following my meeting with Alex, I spent time acquainting myself with the literature regarding Asperger’s Syndrome, and the expert analysis confirmed that the most likely outcome of asking Alex to engage in group work was failure. My background reading had uncovered one particular case study of a student at a Birmingham university who had become ill as a result of attempting to play a part in an assessed group work exercise, and had ultimately withdrawn from the institution altogether (MacLeod & Green, 2009); I was determined that this was a pattern which would not be repeated here. What happened next however, was quite unexpected and proved highly significant; when I looked at the area in Mahara which Alex’s group were using, I found that the very first discussion forum had been created by Alex himself, that he had opened up the discussion, and was actively seeking feedback from his peers on ideas for the game development upon which they were about to embark. This appeared to run contrary to all of the established literature I had encountered relating to collaborative working and Asperger’s Syndrome (e.g. Twachtman-Cullen, 1998; Lewis, Trushell & Woods, 2005; Benford, 2008), and recalling an INSPIRE session at the Teaching and Learning Conference 2009 about working with students with Asperger’s Syndrome, I contacted the academic who had led the session and referred this to them, asking for their viewpoint. Quickly it became clear that this was most unusual, and it was suggested that I should research this further.

Asperger’s Syndrome and technology-enhanced learning

At Lancaster University meanwhile, the focus had moved on to educational affordances of technology-enhanced learning interventions, with the emphasis in the research project exercise switching from methods to methodology, and the opportunity naturally presented itself for me to formalise a research design incorporating a case-study methodology, employing qualitative methods to investigate further. Around the same time, in the middle of November, a colleague reminded me of the upcoming opportunity to submit a bid to the University’s Teaching and Learning Project 2010 Fund, and following confirmations of interest from academics in the Schools of Computing and Engineering and of Human and Health Sciences, a bid was duly submitted. By now I had become increasingly aware of the higher than average incidence of learners diagnosed with an autistic spectrum condition within the computer games subject area, and building on the early observations of Alex, the aim of the project was to foster a community of learners which would be fully inclusive of our learners with autistic spectrum conditions such as Asperger’s Syndrome, using the eportfolio system as a communications tool to stimulate reflexivity and collaborative learning, while providing high quality subject content in the form of a repository of video tutorials to assist in the development of game development skills.

The bid was successful, and the UoHTube project began in January 2010. Learner generated content was a concept I had recently encountered, and as the video tutorials were to be developed primarily for computer games students it seemed sensible to engage learners in the process of identifying which areas they had struggled with and might have found supplementary materials useful. This exercise in itself encouraged further reflection upon the learning process, and the act of self-identification of areas of weakness acted as a spur for improvement in those areas; a group of students agreed to act as a focus group to evaluate the prototype tutorials, and as a bonus, some have since volunteered to develop their own materials for inclusion in the repository, keeping it alive, up-to-date, and very much learner-centred. It was especially important to consider the special requirements of students with an autistic spectrum condition, and background research indicated that hyper-sensitivity to audio inputs was a major factor which led some learners with Asperger’s Syndrome to disengage in classroom situations (Attwood, 2000; Baron-Cohen, 2008). In conjunction with another key consideration, the issue of non-verbal indicators and social cues being missed by Asperger’s Syndrome learners in face-to-face communication, the use of video tutorials appeared to offer an ideal alternative to the ‘slides and talk’ approach, with the proviso that learners should be encouraged to continue participating in the collaborative learning process, and maintain the sense of community which the project was aiming to engender.
The case-study and the conferences
Buoyed by the acceptance of the paper at Leicester a few months previously, and encouraged both by fellow PhD cohort members and colleagues at Huddersfield to submit abstracts on what I was doing to two conferences later in the year, I was once again pleased to have my submissions accepted for presentation.

As the module and the case-study progressed, so the appropriate time to conduct individual interviews with students drew nearer; it had become clear that Alex's written word was significantly more eloquent than his spoken expression, and I therefore employed an e-interview strategy with all members of his game development group to help explore their experience of the group work exercise. An analysis of the transcripts, including pattern-matching for collective-inclusive phraseology, indicated that Alex found the eportfolio system invaluable as a tool to facilitate his participation in the group. In follow-up observations conducted after the end of the case-study period it was notable that not only had Alex successfully participated in a group work exercise, but that he had also begun to show signs of increased self-confidence and self-esteem, and by the end of the module Alex was observed holding conversations and offering constructive feedback to members of other development groups three rows of desks away, something which he had never previously been able to do. The evidence suggested that this technology-enhanced learning intervention had helped provide a level playing field for this student, and with additional social and educational affordances also uncovered, the year was rounded off for Alex by achieving 'A' grades in more than half of his final year modules.

More generally, it was both encouraging to see that rates of retention and progression to award had improved dramatically from previous years, and gratifying to have contributed to departmental research outputs through the presentation of research findings at the Addressing Autism and Asperger's Syndrome conference (McDowell & Austin, 2010), and the Solstice 2010 technology-enhanced learning event (McDowell, 2010b).

Conclusions
In this paper I have attempted to summarise the first fifteen months of my life as a novice researcher working towards a professional doctorate in educational research and technology-enhanced learning, and I hope that the snapshots I have presented from my journey go some way to illustrate both how engagement in pedagogical research can benefit teaching and learning, and how this can snowball into larger research ventures.

As the title of this paper indicates, what I have presented here is "one academic's personal account", and I fully acknowledge that my own perspective has been very much flavoured by the technology-enhanced learning emphasis of the particular doctoral programme in which I have engaged. I would suggest however, that it is through my connection to pedagogical research facilitated by such a programme of study that I have developed the motivation and focus required to make a difference to the student experience of not only Alex, but learners throughout the subject area, and indeed, through the process of dissemination at conferences, to the wider academic community.

Through the presentation of the phases described here, I have also attempted to illustrate that the relationship between pedagogical research and enhancing teaching and learning is very much symbiotic, with the synergy between professional practice and research focus feeding a spiralling process of problem identification, investigation, implementation and evaluation. In so doing, I hope that this account goes some way to highlight that, as many colleagues are already aware, pedagogical research need not be regarded as the preserve of specialists in schools of education. Moreover, I would suggest that all of us for whom student engagement in our particular subject specialism is an issue have the opportunity to help to sculpt an inclusive environment, technology-based or otherwise, in which learners from all backgrounds and disciplines can benefit.
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Learning by doing and Learning from doing: The Development of a new degree in Enterprise Development

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Abstract
New undergraduates appear in all shapes and sizes. Some crave academic rigour while others prefer experiential experiences. The BA Enterprise Development pioneered by the University of Huddersfield’s Enterprise Research Network provides a robust and challenging experience for the would-be student entrepreneur who is serious about obtaining a degree and at the same time learning about the realities of entrepreneurship. This paper outlines the development process as well as the challenges involved in creating a new degree that is purely focused on learning by doing.

Keywords: Enterprise development, Entrepreneurial learning, Learning by doing

Introduction
Few people are unaware of J K Rowling’s seven-book saga of Harry Potter. New students at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry must be selected for one of four houses, chosen by The Sorting Hat and based on their perceived natural characteristics:

By Griffindor the bravest were prized far beyond the rest;
For Ravenclaw, the cleverest would always be the best
For Hufflepuff, hard workers were most worthy of admission;
And power-hungry Slytherin loved those of great ambition.

New undergraduates also appear in all shapes and sizes. Some crave academic rigour and learning more than others who prefer a more experiential experience. Some want to specialise in something very technical; others prefer something that is more general in nature. Some look like natural leaders; others appear more like natural entrepreneurs. And yet in a survey of 1.2 million managers recently, Gallup concluded that 80% of managers do not daily employ their talents and capabilities at work.

So what is an appropriate course for someone who believes he or she is destined for the entrepreneur’s journey? We don’t pretend to have definitive answers to this perennial question but we have reached a number of conclusions over several years and from these developed a new degree, BA Enterprise Development, where students must start and run a business as part of their course.

Entrepreneurship is a way of behaving. It is natural and instinctive for some people and it can be manifest from a very early age. With other people their home and school environments can sometimes constrain this behaviour; but then a natural characteristic is laying dormant waiting for an opportunity to be released and to prosper. With some young people there is even a tendency to shun formal (higher) education so they can ‘get on and do something’. In addition, whilst the entrepreneurial behaviour will often be used to start a new business it is quite possible for it to be channelled down other routes.

Research also continues to record that many new businesses fail to survive for many years. Although the figures are less conclusive, research into business incubation concludes that survival rates are much higher where new businesses receive appropriate support and mentoring.

This new degree seeks to recognise all these issues and provide a different learning experience for Business School students. In some ways it will seem radical and different, but it does in some ways follow routes that other parts of the University have shown can work effectively and successfully.
We believe the time for this approach is also appropriate. Television programmes are promoting entrepreneurs in a positive light and young people increasingly see it as ‘cool’ to want to become an entrepreneur.

This paper, then, traces the story of the development of this innovative new degree in Enterprise Development, whereby students must achieve the necessary credits from an academic programme and start and run a small business with growth potential in order to graduate.

The paper features a reflective debate on how a number of key issues and challenges were handled and met. One might speculate that the development itself reflects entrepreneurship in education and it needed to be led by an academic who is also something of an entrepreneur. Thus the purpose of the paper is to share a story and critically reflect upon a number of decisions that were taken.

Background
The new degree was pioneered by the University’s Enterprise Research Network which was set up with a remit to practice, research, teach and promote entrepreneurship and enterprise. Despite the name, the focus of the Network has been on entrepreneurship rather than the more generic enterprise.

The degree reflects how the staff who championed it formed a clear view on a number of critical issues:

- There is something of the entrepreneur in all of us, but in some it is stronger and more influential. Many students will always look to work for others, both in large corporations and small businesses rather than start out on their own. In their careers they will be faced with some opportunities to demonstrate they are innovative and can be intrapreneurial. Others, though, will become self employed professionals, in part because this is typical in their profession. A minority will be keen to start businesses with real growth potential at the earliest opportunity. This last group is a small minority, but it is a niche with specific needs and requirements if it is to gain the maximum benefit from higher education.

- There is a belief that would-be entrepreneurs need more than to be ‘taught about’ entrepreneurship. They need to prepare for the challenges of starting up (or becoming self employed) and they need to develop themselves through practice. This practice can be simulated or real.

- Students need to realise that entrepreneurship is a way of behaving and it is not confined to any single sector. Businesses can be successful in a variety of environments, some of these very technical or scientific, some of them very creative, some of them services rather manufacturing. Students who expect to become self employed must realise that they are actually starting and running a business, even if they might be inclined to not think of themselves as business people. Entrepreneurship can be relevant for students who are, or who might see themselves as, belonging to any department or school in a University.

- There is always an opportunity to focus on the many or the few. Whilst certain programmes and modules might be made available to all-comers, some courses are designed for very specific niches – and this new degree is a niche product. Linked to this is the issue of whether we, as educators, are interested in enterprise (and probably enterprise skills) or entrepreneurship. At a workshop for entrepreneurship educators and part-run by the author at the 2005 ISBE (Institute for Small Business and Entrepreneurship) Conference, for example, there was a clear feeling that generic enterprise skills should have the highest priority.

- Enterprise and entrepreneurship can be experiential and adjunct to the credit-bearing curriculum or it can be fundamental within the curriculum.

In developing the degree the staff took note of what happens at present across the University and at approaches taken elsewhere. Outside the more obvious examples of practice, distinctive approaches include one University which provides a Certificate in Enterprise as an additional qualification to any
degree being studied. The Certificate contains an APEL element and individual, customised opportunities to complete a portfolio. Another University has funded and co-ordinated enterprise champions who operate as individuals in their own schools. A third approach is a University which has established an enterprise community where students can operate virtual companies and trade with each other, using metaphorical Monopoly money. There are, of course, many others worthy of mention.

Huddersfield, however, was seeking to build on certain past programmes and experiences. There are, for example, taught entrepreneurship modules offered by the Business School, and each school in the University has developed its own ways of developing enterprise skills - some of them very imaginative. These include applied, practice-based modules; cases, simulations and role plays; exposure to real problems; organising and running events; and bringing in role models who can inspire the students.

But the Enterprise Network (which preceded the Enterprise Research Network) always focused on business generation and business incubation – for existing students and recent graduates and with projects both on campus and off campus. The focus has been on creative industries as these best reflect University spin-out opportunities. Well over 200 businesses have been supported. Whilst there has always been a very small venture fund available, most financial needs have been met by helping people find the external support that is most relevant for their specific requirements. Helping people understand the value of their intellectual property and how to protect it has been important. The survival and success rates have been high, in part because of extensive enabling support.

The students and graduates have come from all areas of the University – the Business School has certainly not provided the majority!

Entrepreneurial Learning

It is beyond the remit of this paper to discuss the extensive research on entrepreneurial learning other than to reinforce that entrepreneurs do not appear to be most comfortable when they are being ‘taught’. They become restless and keen to be doing other things. Informal learning is more meaningful for them than formal learning.

We recognise this and a key feature of the new degree is that students in part learn by doing and learn from doing. After three years students will have accumulated the necessary credits for an undergraduate honours award; they will also have started their business and have it up and running. There is a clear target market and admission requires applicants to demonstrate previous entrepreneurial endeavour and serious intent. This may well embrace entrepreneurship programmes in schools. The basic approach is that in the first year students explore a number of possible ideas and opportunities before settling on one. In the second year they develop this in detail and possibly launch the business, which they are required to do by the end of the year. In the third year they are running the business. Some of their credits thus come from work-based learning and experiential reflection.

They will:

- Learn by listening – somewhat passively, but not entirely so – to academics, certainly, but also to ‘experts’ and practising entrepreneurs
- Learn by and from doing, with a real focus on reflective experience
- Be confronted with problems and the need to make decisions, both individually and in groups
- Be exposed to ambiguity, uncertainty and some risk throughout
- Be encouraged to learn from their mistakes and manifest poor judgment.

In this context though, and as Frankish and Storey (2008) point out, we must be careful how much we assume entrepreneurs always learn from their misjudgements. Their research tracking Barclays Bank small business customers concludes that small business owners seem to persist with decisions which are
not in the best interests of their business. They do not learn; and in a dynamic and uncertain competitive environment, many simply do not improve and grow stronger. They over-trade and they run up overdrafts. The fact that some small business owners have previous experience, either working for others or running another business of their own, will not necessarily improve their judgment. But some very obviously do improve, and their businesses grow more robust, more productive and more competitive. Perhaps what is happening is that the typically available support mechanisms are more likely to help the good businesses improve – because their business owners are more likely to seek out the help that is available and to use it. They know when they need expert help and they seek it out.

Content
In terms of certain tensions this degree is:

1. About entrepreneurship rather than small business management:
2. Focused on start-up and not just generic enterprise skills
3. Using learning by doing as well as learning by listening
4. Designed so that students can do more as well as know more
5. Based on skills and practice just as much as knowledge
6. Aiming to develop effective practitioners rather than ‘experts’.

We are keen that the degree deals effectively with the three key transformational themes of new business development:

1. The idea into a product and a real opportunity
2. The would-be entrepreneur into a competent practitioner
3. The informal beginning into a proper organisation.

It is a designed three year developmental experience that embraces knowledge, skills and behaviours – both doing and thinking - and attitudes along the following line

Year One - the foundation part – developing the person
We believe it is important to start the programme by making sure every student is ‘on message’ and understands how the programme will develop. The need to test ideas robustly, and not assume every idea for a new product or service is a real opportunity, is critical and this will be instilled by exposing the students to a ‘dreaming room’ experience where their ideas and thinking are put to the test, probed and scrutinised. This environment needs to be both firm and fair if it is help build student confidence.

Relevant foundation modules are based around Personal and Study Skills (relevant for this degree and including the abilities to screen opportunities and to pitch an idea effectively), Creativity, Innovation & Entrepreneurship, Problem Solving and Decision Making. Seminars require students to work both individually and in groups to develop their ideas creatively. The intention is that at the end of Year One students will have explored a number of options and ideas and chosen to focus on one that they will develop as a business in their second year.

Students will also be required to think about, assess and address their own personal characteristics – to both understand their entrepreneurial potential and put in place mechanisms to deal with the implications.

Year Two - the establishment element – crafting the business opportunity
Students develop their business plans, which will stretch beyond the start-up stage and factor in growth issues from the beginning.
Support modules include and cover relevant Legal Aspects, Project Management (as part of Business Planning), Marketing and Selling and Finance. The relevant ‘technical’ aspects are supported by allowing students a floating option module from across the campus.

Assessment will be a mixture of academic work and business-related artefacts. At the end of the year the students will have a business that is either in its embryo stage or ready to launch.

**Year Three - the final stage – preparing for growth**

In their final year students will be running their business. Key modules on strategy, growth and leadership support the year. The students will complete a dissertation with an important reflective component. In addition their work experience will be accredited.

This framework is summarised in Figure 1:

![BA(Hons) Enterprise Development](image)

In developing the content we used the criteria for entrepreneurship programmes suggested by the UK National Council for Entrepreneurship (NCGE), which in turn has been advised by the US Kauffman Foundation, as a benchmark. These criteria are:

- Key entrepreneurial behaviours, skills and attitudes have been developed
- Students clearly empathise with, understand and ‘feel’ the life world of the entrepreneur
- Key entrepreneurial values have been inculcated
- Motivation towards a career in entrepreneurship has been built and students clearly understand the comparative benefits
- Students understand the process (stages) of setting up an organisation, the associated tasks and learning needs
- Students have the key generic competencies associated with entrepreneurship, specifically the generic ‘how to’s’
Students have a grasp of key business how to’s associated with the start-up process

Students understand the nature of the relationships they need to develop with key stakeholders and are familiarised with them.

**Exit Routes**

Although careful entry selection will attempt to recruit students who are most suitable for this degree it is recognised some will not succeed in starting a growth business.

Those students who are instead able to demonstrate success from self-employment or starting a small social enterprise or running a successful one-off project will be able to complete all the modules and graduate, because they will have relevant experiences to reflect upon.

Those students who are not able to do one of these options successfully will be able to complete most of the specified modules but in their final year they will be asked to submit a more conventional dissertation and exchange the work-based experience credits for two relevant taught modules from the Business School. The name of their degree award will be amended to reflect this.

**The Students**

The students we seek will have the ability and the desire to complete this degree; they will have a mix of relevant academic and personal strengths.

As well as a set of relatively strong grades from school, recognising here that on the one hand this is an undergraduate degree but that on the other hand we are not looking for the most academic people, we will interview applicants and look out for those who:

- Have a passion to start and run a business, to create their own job rather than be looking for a job three years down the line
- Have shown they have entrepreneurial intent and entrepreneur characteristics – demonstrated by what they have done in their lives so far – and, significantly, are open to new ideas and opportunities
- Enjoy finding things out through experience and ‘doing’ as well as being taught, but who also appreciate the underlying academic disciplines can play a material role in determining the ultimate success of a new business.

Interviewers will be looking for evidence of self-assurance and self-confidence, people with a willingness to take measured risks and to accept responsibility for their decisions and actions, and people who have a real motivation to achieve by building something that is distinctive. We may well use one of the relevant diagnostic tools which help identify entrepreneurial potential.

**Alliance Partners**

Figure 2 describes the Entrepreneur’s Learning Community and argues that student entrepreneurs on this programme will find learning opportunities from their interactions with fellow students undergoing the same development opportunity, from ‘ourselves’ as both teachers and mentors, from practising role model entrepreneurs and relevant professionals that we invite to the University and from external mentors that we find and that they find for themselves. We have set out to build this community as effectively as we can.
To this end we always realised we would need alliance partners if this was to work. Most significantly we were introduced to Theo Paphitis, a successful retail entrepreneur best known for his involvement in the BBC’s Dragons’ Den, and he agreed to commit to the degree. He provides an annual master class for the students on the degree and also helps us promote the course to prospective students by speaking at specific events we organise and also through his own networks.

An experienced serial entrepreneur who is committed to enterprise in schools and is a professional marketer is also instrumental in promoting the programme. His organisation is the Royal Armouries Museum in Leeds which supports the degree as a major part of its corporate development strategy. In turn this entrepreneur has provided direct access to schools where some students are demonstrating they are entrepreneurs in waiting and for whom this degree offers a different opportunity. He has also provided links with American author (and guru) Michael Gerber who speaks at the Royal Armouries from time to time - and Gerber has committed to an input to the programme.

This presents another interesting challenge. Gerber’s input is hugely valuable, but the degree is not, and cannot be, based purely on Gerber’s work. Instead it takes and builds upon certain fundamental ideas that Gerber has identified as being critical for business success. These themes have been around for a long time, and other authors have written about them – but not always as succinctly and persuasively as Gerber, it has to be said. Obviously the students on the course will be exposed to a wide range of authors and views on entrepreneurship.

There are two broad themes to Gerber’s work that are relevant for the degree. These themes are not unique to Gerber; both relate to key elements of what strategists would define as the business model and both can be found in other published work.

The first theme is the idea, the opportunity and the target market. The development team for BA Enterprise Development are very committed to the idea of difference and the need for a clear vision of why something is different and will succeed in its target market. In this context, and as an example of how this can be developed, Gerber has begun running what he calls ‘Dreaming Rooms’ where groups of people meet for an intensive sharing and discussion of each other’s ideas. The intended and desirable outcome is a much clearer picture of the competitive edge and where the business is going in every case. All students on the degree will be exposed to a dreaming room experience, which is something we already have first-hand experience with. Some members of the Huddersfield Business Generator have
been exposed to this type of questioning environment – albeit this was happening after they had started rather than before they took the first serious steps.

Gerber developed his personal ‘dreaming’ approach from earlier work around the E-Myth (see Gerber, 1995). The thinking here is that many so-called entrepreneurs are really technicians who know how to produce a product or service but have not worked out where the business is. They have not developed a proper growth strategy with a vision for both the organisation/business and their own role in it. Nor have they developed a business which can thrive without them. In other words they have not truly developed as either an entrepreneur or a leader. Gerber personally favours conceptualising every business as franchisable. To achieve this it is critically important to capture all the intelligence and record it so others can repeat it in a different environment. The value therefore lies in the intellectual property. Not every business will grow through franchise, of course, but this way the entrepreneur can free himself/herself of certain tasks and move on to be more strategic.

Enabling and Support
Enabling is an area where previous research has been carried out and published by the University. See, for example, Thompson (2006). This work is based on identified key enabling roles: talent spotting, business counselling, business advice, training, mentoring, performance coaching and personal coaching. Each has a significant role to play, with the most appropriate approach and style being dependent upon certain circumstances and the perceived needs of the individual client.

Our research concluded that it is particularly important to identify whether it is more appropriate:

- to work on the business rather than to work in it
- to focus on the business needs or on the needs of the emerging entrepreneur
- to take a directive or a non-directive approach.

On its student business support programmes the University has provided some of this enabling through its own staff, but some has been provided by external volunteers.

The Challenges Ahead
This paper concludes with a brief consideration of certain challenges facing the staff delivering the programme.

Recruiting the ‘right’ people for the programme every year will not be easy – but our second intake is larger than the first. Subjective judgment about an individual’s potential is required as well as the assessment of the appropriate evidence they provide with their application.

These students will be provided with an experience that is different from that of most students. Multiple mentors and the real possibility of external funding for their businesses will set them apart and provide us with some interesting co-ordination challenges. Additionally they will be required to provide more than a ‘typical’ set of assignments – they must start and run a real business.

Once their business is running we accept that the students will be drawn more and more into it, and writing assignments may not be the top priority. For this reason their written tasks will need to be relevant for the development of the business and for their personal development. Additionally their ability to reflect upon their experiences will gain credits.

With regard to the businesses themselves, issues of intellectual property ownership, the role of the University which may have a small equity stake in the business, and the relationship between the student, the University and the external funders will all need careful handling.
The overall quality of the students’ achievements will again be different and we must determine how this quality can be created and maintained and how success might be most effectively measured.

In all of this we also recognise that the staff are, to a real extent, working outside existing comfort zones!

It is for these reasons that we are keen to foster our own learning network of Universities carrying out a programme that some have started to describe as a ‘pracademic degree’.

**Concluding Comments – Some Reflections**

Timmons (1989) succinctly points out that entrepreneurs create something (of value) out of nothing. Effectively they spot opportunities in a dynamic and uncertain world and seek to exploit them. In doing this they are not necessarily searching for the best or optimum answer to a problem. They are, in part, pursuing their instinct. They accept and take the risks implicit in their venture as they understand them; they may prepare business plans but do not plan to the point where they never ‘get on with the task in hand’. Successful entrepreneurs stay focused on key issues (Bolton and Thompson, 2000). In this respect one might argue that too much knowledge (to analyse) could be a restraining force. These arguments would reinforce that entrepreneurs are more naturally ‘right brain’ than they are ‘left brain’. Degrees and other programmes that emphasise left brain learning may well teach students more about entrepreneurs and how they behave but they will be less appealing to those would-be entrepreneurs who seek support for developing that ‘something out of nothing’. It can thus be an issue if these people are over-exposed to teachers and researchers who are by nature more left-brain. The designers of this programme believe that if we are serious about developing entrepreneurial potential and intent then we have to engage the right-brain and also that in this context a real business offers a different and arguably more valuable experience than, say, a practical exercise, case or simulation.

The degree profiled in this paper clearly takes a right-brain approach – in its context, an extreme right-brain approach. Practical engagement does not always have to involve starting a real business, which this one does. The focus is on entrepreneurship, on starting and running a real business, which might be a social enterprise; the students embrace generic enterprise skills as part of the process. The degree take a step further to the right than most other programmes we have found and it is not designed to establish a new ‘common ground’ but rather to provide a more robust and challenging experience for the would-be student entrepreneur who is serious about obtaining a degree and at the same time learning (and embedding their learning) about the realities of entrepreneurship. The degrees, then, is designed for a niche market and identifying those students who are ideally suited for the programme and can benefit from them is clearly a challenge. Arguably delivering on the promise implied in these programmes is a greater challenge for academics than teaching tools and transferring knowledge in a more conventional sense; and that is the risk they are taking. The promise we refer to is grounded in the belief that both business survival and business growth can be enhanced if the would-be entrepreneurs who start and run them are more knowledgeable, more thoughtful and more reflective – and that this comes by experiential learning. Specific tools and concepts will always be relevant and important; the challenge for Huddersfield staff is delivering these in an appropriate and flexible manner that responds to student needs as their businesses develop. Assessments will also need to reflect a flexible approach. The theories of business and entrepreneurship serve to help students make sense of what they experiencing as they develop and run their businesses. In this context, the actual businesses are really vehicles for developing entrepreneurial awareness and competency. They are a good means for helping students deal with opportunity, opportunism and risk. It is not necessarily a given that they must be successful businesses (if the student is to graduate) because there can be valuable learning from setbacks as well as from failure. It is also not a requirement that the students continue with the businesses after the degree credits are obtained, although it is anticipated many will.
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Embedding Enterprise Education into the Curriculum

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Abstract
Learning about and experiencing enterprise whilst at university can lead to enhanced employability and entrepreneurship skills, and can suggest an alternative career option in business start-up or self-employment. However, educators are often resistant to helping their students learn about enterprise and entrepreneurship, or may struggle to fit additional learning opportunities in an already full subject-specific curriculum. This paper offers two case studies showing how students can learn about their subject through enterprise-related assessment tasks such as a tendering exercise or an ideas pitch. In both case studies, the emphasis is on the subject-specific learning, but enterprise and entrepreneurial skills are also acquired. Formal and informal evaluation shows that students are enthused by the tasks, and that staff benefit from increased knowledge of enterprise issues and links with the business community.

Keywords: enterprise education, entrepreneurship, innovative assessment

Introduction
Learning about and experiencing enterprise whilst still at university can have several benefits. It gives you an alternative career option and the confidence that you can set up your own business or social enterprise. Graduates, academic staff, and research students often have ideas that can be taken forward into high-technology enterprises and engagement with enterprise education can help make this happen. Enterprise skills will also be useful to those in employment, or who will become self-employed and work on a freelance or consultancy basis. Hegarty (2006) argues that enterprise and entrepreneurship are learned phenomena, and that universities play a vital role in encouraging and providing opportunities for enterprise to flourish (see also BIS 2010, NCGE 2008, Gibb 2005).

Regardless of career intention, enterprise education can encourage those who take part to reflect on their particular strengths, weaknesses, and key values. It can help address practical skills such as oral and written communication, and personal effectiveness skills such as being creative, being able to influence and negotiate, and being flexible and open-minded. Balls and Healey (2004) add to the above to suggest that an enterprise culture is important to develop a ‘can do’ confidence, a creative questioning, and a willingness to take risks. They consider this to be important to provide readiness for a rapidly changing economy, and to enable individuals to manage workplace uncertainty and flexible working patterns and careers (see also Hannon 2006, Hegarty 2006, Matley 2005).

There is a widely held assumption in some areas that there is a positive relationship between education and entrepreneurial activity. This assumption was explored by Weaver et al. (2006) in a systematic literature review who found that there is indeed a significant positive correlation between participation in both general and entrepreneurship-specific educational programmes and venture creation; they report two meta-analyses in particular, carried out by van der Sluis, van Praag, & Vijverberg in 2004 and 2005, which showed that the higher the level of general education of the entrepreneur, the higher the level of performance of the venture. Although there is some ambiguity in the literature, possibly as a result of the large time gaps that can often be found between educational study and venture creation, it would appear that whilst individuals ‘with at least some college education’ are most likely to select to become entrepreneurs, those with high levels of education are not (Weaver et al., 2006). A recent study of young people in Yorkshire and the Humber by Dubit (2009; commissioned by Business Link) echoed Weaver’s pattern in the US, showing again, that there is a drop-off in business aspiration for HE students. Dubit recommended from these results that there should be a reduced focus on Universities as centres for entrepreneurship and that efforts should be abandoned in preference to other areas.
Enterprise education: not just a matter for Business Schools

Although many enterprise and entrepreneurship-specific courses are offered, particularly out of Business Schools, and often aimed at postgraduate students (NCGE 2008; McKeown et al., 2006; Matlay, 2005; see also Brush et al., 2003 for provision of entrepreneurship programmes in the US), the vast majority of students in HE may not currently be given the opportunity to engage in enterprise education as part of their subject-level programme studies (Frank, 2006). A national mapping survey of enterprise and entrepreneurship education by NCGE in 2007 suggested that 61% of all delivery is undertaken by Business Schools with limited provision in other departments and facilities (NCGE, 2008). And yet, it has been suggested that enterprise and entrepreneurship are learned phenomena and that universities play a vital role in encouraging and providing opportunities for all students so that enterprise can flourish (Hegarty, 2006; see also Smith, 2008 and 2007; Weaver et al., 2006, and Gibb 2005). Further to this, the ISBA Consortium (2004) have stated that the role of the educator, university policy, culture, and perceptions of entrepreneurship are important to the success of an enterprise agenda and will become increasingly so as student numbers and the demand for enterprise education increases. Enterprise for all is a recurring theme.

Greene & Saridakis (2007) compared the employment and entrepreneurial outcomes of a representative group of graduates from 1999 using data collected in 2003 by Purcell and colleagues (Purcell et al., 2005, as cited by Greene & Saridakis, 2007). Part of the study was concerned with the acquisition of skills whilst at university, and the need for such skills in participants’ employment or entrepreneurial activity. The results showed that there was a mismatch between skills acquired at university and those needed by graduates, and that entrepreneurial skills were poorly developed within university study (second only to language skills). Although the skills acquired by the group of entrepreneurs did not influence their choice to engage in entrepreneurship, acquisition of entrepreneurial skills whilst at university was positively related to the intentions of the participants to become entrepreneurs in the future. An interesting question emerges from these results: if engagement with entrepreneurial skills is currently low at university for the vast majority of students outside Business Schools, could increasing the development opportunities for such skills increase entrepreneurial propensity? Could increasing entrepreneurial propensity have benefits within employment as well as self-employment?

Resistance to enterprise; contested models and values

Binks (2004) called for universities to ensure large-scale access to entrepreneurship education and discussed how such a call would encounter resistance. One of the potential reasons for resistance is that staff and students may not recognise entrepreneurship education as being appropriate curriculum content, particular given an already overcrowded curriculum. Other reasons include the time needed to engage with students and potentially new pedagogical techniques. This latter issue in particular is not unique to enterprise education. Any new learning and teaching initiative is immensely time consuming for staff - as Gibbs (1996) states, designing “courses and materials, recasting assessment and support systems and adopting new teaching methods... all require new techniques and skills” (p. 20; see also Davies and Smith, 2006, for a discussion about similar issues raised in relation to uptake of learning technologies).

Although the wider promotion of enterprise education has difficulties in common with other learning and teaching initiatives, concepts of enterprise and entrepreneurship appear to promote strong reactions that are unique to the subject matter. For example, Neary and Parker (2004) write that the promotion of enterprise as an academic exercise is contentious and may be seen by some as threatening the integrity and principles of those being asked to teach the concept and practice of, particularly capitalist, models of enterprise. For example, the National Council for Graduate Entrepreneurship (NCGE) emphasise the business start-up aspects of enterprise and include a list of entrepreneurial learning outcomes such as B. Creating Empathy with the Entrepreneurial Life-World (e.g. no sell, no income; working flexibly and long hours) and C. Key Entrepreneurial Values (e.g. strong sense of independence; distrust of bureaucracy; belief in the individual and community not the state) (NCGE 2008). These learning outcomes may be associated with the attributes of the classic entrepreneur, but would appear to exclude more collaborative business models and social enterprise, would not necessarily describe the leaders of all successful businesses, and would not appear to be appropriate for enterprise within employment.
Increasingly, enterprise skills are being seen as having wider relevance than simply business start-up. The Higher Education Academy - through the BMAF subject centre - and the Quality Assurance Agency are currently working to produce a set of guidelines for enterprise education, which it is hoped will include a wider definition of enterprise.

**Contextualising enterprise education**

The emphasis on the ‘business start-up’ model of enterprise education may explain why the vast majority of delivery is provided by Business Schools. Where enterprise modules are offered to other subject areas, they are often provided as stand-alone enterprise-specific modules with an emphasis on business planning (NCGE 2008). However there is an alternative model of provision where enterprise skills are embedding into the subject-specific context (Smith 2008) and two examples involving novel forms of assessment are reported here. It should be noted that Business Schools are ideally placed to provide enterprise and entrepreneurship education for Business School students, and to support and advise educators in other subject areas. Enterprise education may work best, however, when it is contextualised and adapted to the needs of individual subjects, rather than offered as a generic 'one size fits all' module.

So what are enterprise skills and why should we want to promote them to our students? I report a personal anecdote below to illustrate why they are important to me.

As a new lecturer in Psychology at the University of Birmingham, I attended a Teaching Forum day on campus where fellow new lecturers gave presentations on teaching and learning topics. Over lunchtime, two Professors from another University (who I now know were high-profile proponents of entrepreneurship), came to give a presentation on why learning about enterprise and entrepreneurship would be of benefit to our students. I hate to say this now, but I was bored during their presentation and didn’t consider it to have any relevance to me at all. I didn’t feel it was my place to ‘try to churn out more Richard Bransons’ when my students had come to learn about Psychology, and I didn’t want to. Over time I forgot about the Forum and thought no more about enterprise education for several years. Over this interim time period, I became more involved in postgraduate research skills training, generic and transferable skills, and the use of learning technologies in HE. I believed, and still do believe, that such skills have huge relevance to, and can help with the learning of, subject-specific skills and knowledge. When I later applied for a post promoting the use of learning technologies in a subject that was new to me – enterprise education – I realised that many of the transferable skills I had promoted as psychology research skills had overlap with the enterprise skills I was reading about. And then I was hooked...

My personal list of enterprise skills include:

- Being creative and innovative
- Identifying and researching opportunities
- Persuading and communicating
- Assessing needs and skills required for particular tasks
- Identifying and bidding for resources: people, equipment, funds
- Promoting yourself and your ideas
- Making things happen

The above can relate to business, social enterprise, research, or within employment

A recent survey of enterprise education activity at the University of Huddersfield (contributing to the national NCGE mapping survey for 2010) suggested that the number of modules offering embedded enterprise skills across campus is relatively low, with the exception of Art Design and Architecture.

Whilst Huddersfield-based examples are being collected, This paper will introduce two case studies from the Embedding Enterprise Education initiative (E³) which started at the University of Birmingham in
2006, funded by the third round of the Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF3). \(^3\) was created to help academic Schools embed enterprise and entrepreneurship skills into the subject-specific curriculum (see Smith, 2008 for more detail on \(^3\)). For both examples, the emphasis was on the subject-specific learning that took place through an enterprise-related assessment.

**Embedding Enterprise Education Case Studies**

*Case Study 1: School of Geography, Earth, and Environmental Sciences*

This project, led by Dr Jason Hilton, developed a new enterprise-related assessment for undergraduate geology students. Students demonstrated their geological knowledge and ability in order to solve a specified task by ‘tendering’ to a potential client in order to win a hypothetical work contract. Here, students were required to tender to conserve, maintain, and protect a fossilised forest - recently discovered on land being developed for a housing site - and to provide an educational experience for the local community. Students were provided with photographs and maps of the fossilised forest site, details of the rock structure underlying the site, and a list of costs for a recent conservation of similar size in the same area.

In producing the tender document, students needed to understand and communicate how to protect the forest using subject-specific geology knowledge and understanding. They were encouraged to be creative through suggesting an educational experience that also needed to draw on their subject knowledge. They were also required to reflect on and provide explicit evidence of their prior experience and skills in order to promote themselves as the best placed person to undertake the work they outlined, linking into personal development planning and employability skills. Although the assessment was mainly focused on students’ geology knowledge, the exercise required an appreciation of the costs involved in undertaking consultancy work and the students were required to work to a professional format in order to ‘win’ the tender.

The first year of the student experience was evaluated through a questionnaire. 71% of students responded that they enjoyed the task more than standard teaching and 94% that they had acquired transferable skills. Qualitative feedback suggested that although students broadly saw the benefits of the task for subject-specific learning and transferable skills, some preferred more traditional forms of learning.

“*Gets us used to working to deadlines, to writing professional reports rather than essays, practicing solving real world problems with a range of skills. Very useful for the future.*”

“*Really enjoyed the sessions, opens ones eyes to the professional standards required. I am much better at checking work because of the course*”

“*Practical and intensive. Gives you the feeling of walking away having achieved something.*”

“*If I had to do this for a job I would quit!*”

“*I like theory more – sorry*”

In addition to the benefits for student learning, staff reported that they benefited from exploring a new form of assessment that can be used in a variety of contexts. They also reported learning more about enterprise and entrepreneurship issues. Geology consultancy companies were approached to help staff design the tender requirements which has the potential to strengthen links between the university and relevant businesses, to help academics further understand potential employers’ and clients’ skills needs, and to increase companies’ confidence in the employability of the University’s graduates. Students looking to set up their own consultancy business on or after graduation will also have acquired skills to help them in this endeavour.
**Case Study 2: School of Medicine**

Led by Dr Michael Innes, this project aimed to demonstrate the role of commercial enterprise in national or international healthcare to undergraduate medical science students. It addressed issues of commercialisation in healthcare, from the development of ‘private’ services that might be contracted by governments, through to design and development of cheap alternative technology to extend the delivery of healthcare into poor communities.

The project developed both face-to-face and on-line teaching materials, including video clips on idea generation and business planning, and interviews with people engaged in health-related enterprise. Students were required to generate and develop an idea for commercialisation relevant to international health. The module was assessed through students ‘pitching’ their idea to a panel of judges.

The judging panel were provided with subject-specific assessment criteria on the potential of the idea to improve actual health or health promotion, and the research undertaken and information provided to the panel to support the idea. Other assessment criteria looked at enterprise skills such as communication skills and business and financial planning, however, these received less weight in calculating the final grade.

The ideas generated by the students in the first year of the module exceeded the course leader’s and panel’s expectations. The ideas presented ranged from designs for equipment intended for use by medical students in hospitals; to educational health-related games for schools; to ideas for social enterprises related to water purification and water safety in Africa; to health protection and promotion toys for small children; to ideas for specialist health or fitness clinics. Several of the students accompanied their pitch with designs or hand-made prototypes. All the members of the pitching panel commented on the enthusiasm and effort put into the task by the students. Students themselves generally reported that they had enjoyed the task and felt that they had learned both about international health and enterprise.

The project team reported that they had also benefited through learning about enterprise as they developed and delivered the course and learning materials with the help of School-based business development experts.

**Conclusions**

This paper provides two case studies in which enterprise and entrepreneurship can be embedded within the subject-specific curriculum. Embedding in this way introduces enterprising concepts to a large and new number of students who may not have traditionally engaged with entrepreneurship activities, may have been unlikely to seek out enterprise-related learning opportunities, and may not have considered themselves as potentially enterprising or entrepreneurial individuals.

The case studies hopefully show how an enterprise-related task can be tailored to needs of the students and their chosen subject. The tasks are primarily designed to enhance and assess subject-specific learning, but have the potential for added-value outcomes relating to graduate employability, and business or community engagement. What came out strongly in both formal evaluation and anecdotal observations was the enthusiasm with which the majority of the students approached the task, and the added-value benefits for the academics.

Part of the Enterprise Team’s remit within Research and Enterprise here at the University of Huddersfield is to advise academics interested in embedding enterprise into their teaching and learning activity. We currently host regular Enterprise Educators Forum through the Staff Development Unit and offer group or one-to-one advice on request. Activity such as the NCGE mapping survey is helping collect information on good practice that can be shared across campus so that we can start to publish examples from the University of Huddersfield.

Please contact the author of this paper if you have an enterprise education story to tell, or if you would more information on the potential for enterprise education for your students.
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A Risky Business: preparing students for professional practice

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Abstract
The Disability Discrimination act of 2005 has mandated universities not to discriminate against students on the basis of disability. Thus people who might previously have been excluded, or excluded themselves from a desired profession because of real or perceived difficulties related to impairment are now more likely to apply and to be accepted onto courses. This challenges Higher Education policy on admissions, curriculum design and delivery.

Three funded research projects at Huddersfield and Bradford over the past four years have explored the experience of disabled students entering universities and the specific difficulties of translating inclusive practice and reasonable adjustment into placement settings outside the university.

Two tensions have been highlighted by these projects between:

- performance in the relatively safe environment of the university and the world of work
- the rights of disabled students to inclusion and the responsibility of the university and placement providers for risk management of public and student safety.

The work has highlighted the need for a structured pre-placement review that helps students to identify their preparedness for placement and the action planning needed to minimise risk, enabling a safe and successful outcome.

Keyword: Risk assessment, Disability, Placement, Professional practice

Introduction
The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA 2005) states that all public bodies within the United Kingdom (UK) now have a legal responsibility to ensure that the needs of disabled people are anticipated and met so that they are not discriminated against. Thus universities when recruiting, teaching and assessing disabled people and partners offering practice placements and subsequent employment need to eliminate discrimination and harassment, ensuring that their policies meet the needs of disabled people.

Prior to the 2005 DDA, the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act, (SENDA 2001) had explicitly included education into disability legislation, which led to significant changes in the Higher Education (HE) sector. Student entitlement at each stage of the process is now built into policy and practice but the focus is necessarily on adjustments within the educational setting and does not fully address the issues of fitness or competence to practice in a placement setting. Work undertaken by Sapey, Turner and Orton (2004) and French (2004) suggests that disabled people continue to face barriers to qualifying as health professionals. Reviewing standards for teaching, nursing and social work the Disability Rights Commission (DRC 2007) supports this claim by concluding that health standards can be discriminatory and can deter disabled students from applying for these courses. Research is needed to understand the issues with regard to disability and professional practice in order to develop shared practice that is inclusive.

Funded projects
Three funded projects, undertaken in West Yorkshire over the past four years, have informed this project:

Mobile Enabled Disabled Students (MEDS) was undertaken at the University of Bradford to identify the barriers and benefits of mobile devices to support disabled students in their learning. This project was funded by the Assessment and Learning in Practice Settings Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (http://www.alps-cetl.ac.uk) and supported the development of the ALPS mobile assessment...
tools. Students, particularly those with impairments related to dyslexia, identified how the use of mobile devices aided their practice by providing additional means of time management, information retention and memory (Dearnley and Walker 2009). Further details can be found at http://www.alps-cetl.ac.uk/capacityfund.html

Disability in Transition was a three year Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund project at the University of Huddersfield. It evaluated disabled students’ experience of the transition into Higher Education, explored the knowledge skills and attitudes of Higher Education Staff to disability and created staff development opportunities with an aim of developing inclusive practice. The web site can be found at: http://www.hud.ac.uk/tqef/1d.html.

Three findings of particular relevance to this current work fall into two separate themes: Firstly disabled students expressed heightened anxieties when they contemplated their placement experience. This led some of them to feel that disclosing their disability to placement staff would jeopardise their chances of a fair assessment of their competence whilst on the course and of employment after qualification. Secondly methodologically we struggled to identify what we felt was the complete population of disabled students within the School from which to select a sample. Students appeared to fall into four distinct categories:

1. Disabled students listed as disabled and receiving support from Disability Support. This is the most visible and ‘reachable’ group
2. Disabled students not listed as disabled on the Schools records but receiving support from Disability Support. This group may include students who benefit from support, but who wish to avoid being treated differently by other students and/or staff. These students may not be identifiable as disabled by teaching and administrative staff in the School and thus forfeit the right to any reasonable adjustments.
3. Disabled students listed as disabled but not receiving additional support from Disability Support; and
4. Disabled students not identified on any system, who may or may not be aware that they are disabled.

This clearly identified that trying to focus support and services on disabled students ran the risk of missing many who might benefit, running counter to the cultural shift to inclusivity required by the 2005 DDA.

These two projects culminated in join, Strategic Health Authority funded work, Managing Impairment in Professional Practice (http://cms-app.cen.brad.ac.uk/mipp/)

This project went a significant stage further, attempting to identify the perceptions of disabled health professional students and disabled and non-disabled qualified health professionals. It was hoped that in doing this we might find a balance between the demands of professional health care practice and the rights of disabled students and staff. Data analysis for this project is in the process of completion. Emergent findings support the two earlier projects in two important ways:

Firstly there is an ambivalence, felt by both students and qualified practitioners about what it might mean to be ‘disabled’ in a professional context. This is an interesting phenomena, which does not neatly fit with current social and medical models of disability; it is not necessarily prejudicial, but does seem to suggest that disabled practitioners place (or feel they are expected to place) their own needs and impairments at a point of lesser importance than the needs of people they are responsible for and the smooth running of the service they work in.

Secondly disabled people in the workplace do not always declare their disability to colleagues, preferring to make their own risk assessments with regard to their personal safety and the safety of people they have responsibility for. This does not appear to be a reckless desire to ‘hide’ disability; rather, as above, it reflects self awareness and their judgements about the relative importance of their own needs and rights.
Risk assessment and disclosure
As we analysed data and discussed our findings with students and colleagues it became clear that disclosure of disabilities prior to placements was an issue that we were not addressing as well as we needed to. A number of related problems were identified:

- Whilst students who declare their disability are entitled to assessment and support we now know that not all students who may have an impairment of relevance to their placement safety are fully identified within our systems.

- The adjustments suggested within Personal Learning Support Plans may not be feasible in placements settings

- Disability that has little impact or can be compensated for in the HEI environment may be more significant in a placement setting.

- The DDA (2005) does not require disclosure – indeed – student are entitled to confidentiality. However placement providers, where students will have contact with the public and professional bodies, who govern professional education, require transparency as evidence of professional responsibility and public protection.

Through this analysis we identified that the development of a risk assessment tool, completed by all students prior to placement experience, would empower them to develop the self awareness and confidence to analyse their own strengths and weaknesses. In doing so, they will identify the level of disclosure necessary to demonstrate professional decision making. We also hope that this will help students to develop mechanisms for maintaining a healthy balance between their own needs and those of their employer and profession in the future.

Developing and piloting a risk assessment tool
Although there are a number of pre-placement preparation and action plan guides, there does not appear to be a risk assessment that could be embedded into Personal Development Planning to help students prepare for placements and make decisions about appropriate and responsible disclosure. The next phase of development will be to develop and pilot such a tool. This will include:

- Reviewing tools already in use.
- Developing a risk assessment/ placement preparation tool for Huddersfield.
- Piloting this with placement providers and students.

This phase of the work will be reported on in 2011.
References


Abstract

‘Picturing Diversity’ is a multimedia-based learning resource which aims to help learners to develop a better understanding of diversity and community issues through the use of video-based interviews, with local community members. The aim of this resource is to encourage students’ to engage with some of the richness and complexity around such concepts as ‘identity’, ‘community’, ‘diversity’ and ‘equality’.

Keyword: Diversity, Identity, Community, Diversity, Equality

Background

The idea for this resource came directly from some of the issues and challenges that arose during the authors’ experiences of teaching police studies students about equality and diversity as part of the ‘Equality, Diversity and Rights’ (HFD1001) module. Students often commented on the fact that they would value the input of people who identified with some of the strands of diversity addressed within the module, as they felt this would give them a more authentic picture of some of the concerns and issues that might arise. Although outside speakers are occasionally invited in to input on the Foundation Degree in Police Studies, putting together a regular programme of community member speakers, would be challenging both in terms of logistics and cost implications, as the module runs seven times in each academic year.

Methodology

The use of video interviews was felt to provide a useful opportunity to engage community members and effectively ‘bring’ their input into the university learning environment. It also enables a more inclusive, collaborative approach to teaching students about equality and diversity issues, in which the tutor is able to facilitate debate and discussion around the issues raised in community members’ interviews, rather than attempting to ‘speak on behalf’ of communities themselves.

A pilot interview was carried out in October 2009 to test out the semi-structured interview format that the project team had developed as a template for the entire interview schedule. This also enabled the project team to develop a method of working with the technical support team who took care of the video-recording process and video capturing.

Following this pilot interview the project team reviewed the footage to assess the utility and transferability of the interview format and monitor the quality of the audio and video image. A decision was made to adopt a fairly ‘low-tech’ approach to the video recording in that a portable, consumer-level digital video camera was used within a quiet (but not sound-proofed) room. This ‘low-tech’ approach was felt to be more adaptable and flexible than booking specialist equipment and/or attempting to access custom built recording studios (of which some are available on campus). This was mainly driven by a realisation that community members who volunteered to be interviewed required a certain amount of flexibility, and on occasion were only available in the early evenings when technical staff were not on hand.

Having reflected on the approach and results from the pilot interview the project team was able to progress to the next stage of identifying and interviewing community members.

Initial plans for recruiting community members to take part in the project were based around a desire to provide a fairly even coverage of issues that relate to the six strands of diversity as recognised in most police-based diversity training.
These strands are:

1. Race and ethnicity
2. Gender, including transgender
3. Age
4. Disability
5. Religion and belief
6. Sexual orientation

A combination of approaches were used in order to recruit potential interviewees including:

- Contacts provided by the Community Liaison Officer at West Yorkshire Police
- The team’s network of occasional external speakers and p/t lecturers
- Contacts through the project team members’ external networks

The identification and recruitment of community members who were willing to participate in the project took longer than the project team originally anticipated, and this in turn delayed the start of the filming schedule.

Potential participants were fully briefed in relation to the project aims and outcomes and consent was sought to use their interviews within the context of a learning resource that would be used by student police officers, and potentially on other university courses. The question schedule was made available to potential interviewees prior to them attending for interview, in order to outline the areas of discussion and allow them to consider their responses. Participants were also asked to sign the university’s standard model release form in relation to the use of still and moving images. The interviewees were issued with community vouchers in recognition of their contribution to the project. Unfortunately we did not manage to recruit a member of the lesbian, gay or bisexual community and so instead utilised another resource which was publicly available.

The interviews were conducted during the period from October 2009 to January 2010. Some interviews had to be rescheduled due to participant’s commitments and/or illness, and it was necessary to offer some flexibility in this regard. The majority of interviews took place in the Ramsden Building (University of Huddersfield) but in some instances arrangements were made to film in a location that was more convenient for the participant (in one case this was the interviewee’s home and in another it was a community centre).

The arranging and sequencing of interviews was reliant on the availability of the interviewee, the project staff involved in conducting the interviews and the technical support staff. Consequently the filming process extended over a slightly longer period than was projected in the original project timeline.

Challenges and Opportunities
The project presented a number of challenges and opportunities. In relation to the former, these included:

- Video recording was sometimes problematic in ‘off-campus’ venues as it was difficult to anticipate or control background noise and/or lighting conditions.
- The recruitment of interviewees required more effort than was originally anticipated.
- There was a tension between developing a resource that would be sufficiently policing-focused to engage police studies students, whilst also being mindful of the generic application of interviews to other professional learning situations.
- In practice the interview format and range of questions was appropriate to most of the interviews, although in future more thought should be given to the precise wording of questions in relation to avoiding specialist terms or academic vocabulary.
Opportunities included:

- There was an under-spend in relation to monies spent on audio-visual support, which meant that the project team was able to undertake additional interviews. One example was the inclusion of multiple interviews in relation to a community project in Bradford, which included young people, community leaders and a retired community police officer.
- Interview material was found to contain material which is relevant not only to the ‘Equality, Diversity and Rights’ module, but also other areas of the police studies programme including ‘Social and Community Issues’ and ‘Assessment, Advice and Support’.

A decision was made to contract the multimedia development process to the School’s Learning and Teaching Support Unit. The reasons for this were to ensure that there was a close liaison between the multimedia developers and the project team, and also with a view to making the redevelopment of the resource more viable. The School Learning and Teaching Support Unit will be able to work with other academics across the school or university to re-edit sections of the resource, if necessary, in order to make it available for use on other programmes of study.

After the project team reviewed all of the video footage taken during the interviews, and had begun to write generic, contextual learning materials addressing the key strands of diversity, a decision was made to clearly separate the final outputs, as follows:

1. The **Picturing Diversity interview bank** will contain the video interviews which will be embedded in web pages which contain brief notes and prompt questions to help students consider the issues that each interviewee has raised.

2. The **contextual learning materials** contain extensive notes around key ideas, theories and principles involved in learning about diversity issues. This will be realised in the form of a web site divided into a number of key units.

This decision was reached after extensive discussion about the need for us to avoid ‘shoe-horning’ interviewees identities and community affiliations into ‘neat’, prescribed categories. To do this would have risked denying the richness and complexity of some of the responses we received to the interview questions. It would have also defeated the purpose of trying to bring the perspective of real community members into the classroom. From this perspective we soon realised that pedagogically, and ethically, we needed to ensure that the interviews remained ‘open-texts’, and that we resisted applying our own pedagogically-driven meta-narratives.

Planning and development meetings took place between the project team and the multimedia developers, to plan:

1. The development of a visual identity for the project outputs.
2. The development of the contextual learning resource into a set of coherent, navigable and visually appealing web pages.
3. The editing of the video materials and the production of brief title sequences and credits.
4. The format of the final outputs and the way in which the resources will link together.

The module teaching team for ‘Equality, Diversity and Rights’ piloted the use of the ‘Picturing Diversity’ resource with Cohort 38 (n=20) of the Foundation Degree in Police Studies. This began in the week commencing 19th April 2010 and was used across a number of sessions within the module.

Students in Cohort 38 were asked to complete a questionnaire and data was collected on how usable, useful and engaging they found the resource. Comments on future improvements and developments were also solicited in order that the project team can best plan how to incorporate the resource into the broader delivery.
It is recognised that such a comparison only has the scope to offer broad insights into whether the resource is seen as an effective way of learning and equality and diversity issues, given the range of potential variables involved.

**Results**

The evaluation showed that the paper-based study pack was important in terms of students’ preferences for learning with 80% of those undertaking the evaluation stating that they preferred the paper-based study pack, 15% stating that they preferred the web-based resource and 5% of students indicating no preference. In terms of the version that they actually used 100% of students stated that they used the paper-based version but 25% stated that they used a combination of the paper-based version and the web-version and no students stated that they used the web-version alone.

Of the students surveyed 70% agreed they had extensive prior knowledge of diverse communities which is a reflection of the fact that there were a number of ex-Police Community Support Officers in this cohort. When considering the impact of the learning from the resource 70% agreed that learning from resource would impact on their work with communities and 15% disagreed. Similarly, 65% indicated that learning from the resource was relevant to their role as police officer. The learning units themselves received positive feedback in that 60% rated them as being useful, 90% indicated that they were easy to read and 55% stated that unit activities were useful in developing their learning and understanding of equality and diversity issues. A number of areas for further development were identified and are summarised below:

- Faith, religion and belief unit
- Video interviews need further editing
- Tie-clip microphones should be used in any future interviews as background noise is distracting, and more noticeable on classroom-based speakers
- Students felt some interviews questions encouraged repetition...indicated they would like more input into deciding questions asked.
- Time allocation for working through units and activities: majority felt they were given too much time
- Review mix of classroom based and independent learning activities – give more flexibility
- Incorporation of activity responses into formative or summative assessment

**Discussion**

The multimedia resource has been developed with a view to enabling colleagues from other discipline areas to customise it for their own discipline needs as far as possible. This would require edits to be carried out by a web developer and this guided our decision to have the resource developed by multimedia technicians within the school. Retaining the source files, and the rights to edit these as required, was key to ensuring that the resource remained ‘open’ and amenable to adaptation.

The project has utilised a fairly ‘low-tech’ approach to recording video interviews. This would make it relatively easy to conduct further interviews in the future assuming that time, school-based technical support and community vouchers for interviewees could be made available. The resource itself would benefit from the additional of further interviews as it would help to emphasise the range of difference within diverse communities themselves, and/or help students to grasp some of the complexities around individual’s sense of community identity.

The project team are continuing to publicise the existence of the project with a view to establishing a list of potential future interviewees. Also, the dissemination events described above were intended to encourage colleagues within the university, and at Bishopgarth Police Training Centre, to think about how they might adapt and/or add to the resource.

This project has not only allowed the project team to develop an interactive learning resource which promises to enable students to have a closer engagement with some of the views and experiences of
community members in relation to equality and diversity issues, but also provides an interesting model of how the wider community can contribute to the development of university learning resources.

A natural extension to this project would be to continue to conduct audio or video interviews with community members with a view to making it richer and more diverse. Whilst this would involve further staff hours (both academic and technical) we feel that the straightforward, low-tech working methods that we have employed would make this achievable and realistic. Audio-only interviews should also be investigated as a quick and convenient method of capturing community members' experiences.

You can access the diversity videos via http://webdev.hud.ac.uk/schools/hhs/james/picturing_diversity/index.html
A Student-Centered Personalised Learning Space for Employability

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Abstract
In 2009 a pilot project was undertaken to develop and enhance Personal Development Planning (PDP) and employability skills amongst final year undergraduates on the BA Business Management degree. Developed in conjunction with students, the Careers and Employability service and the Academic Skills unit, a Personal Development and Employability Workbook was generated. Student learning from this tool was embedded, through the creation of an e-portfolio, in the campus-wide Blackboard VLE system. Based on initial findings, the project team has researched a number of pedagogical issues to support student engagement with the process, developing a reflective practice model identifying key stages in the cycle. The model's aim is to encourage and challenge students to critically evaluate their personal skills and abilities, support their independent learning and academic progression on the course, as well as assisting with the first steps in their career.

Keywords: employability, skills; e-portfolio, pdp, career planning

Introduction
Personal Development Planning (PDP) in Higher Education, first recommended by the Dearing Report (1997), continues to remain a developmental priority amongst undergraduate students. The Quality Assurance Agency (2009) updated guidelines, recognises the benefits for students, academic staff and institutions from a systematic and considered approach to PDP. Universities need to ensure at a course level, the currency of their PDP provision and its suitability to prepare undergraduates for academic achievement and future employment.

The subject benchmarks for general business and management (QAA 2007) identify ten essential skills, additionally commenting that as a practical subject, skill development should be related to employability. The CBI (2009) state graduate employability skills require improvement, with self management and business/customer awareness currently being the weakest ones. However, many students continue to feel universities focus on knowledge rather than skills. Course teams therefore need to consider the integration of all these elements within a programme.

Background to the Learning Spaces Project
This paper discusses a pilot scheme, entitled Learning Spaces, undertaken during 2009/10 at the University of Huddersfield with final year Business Management students, to enhance awareness of graduate employability skills through the use of PDP. Prior to commencing the research, the literature on PDP and employability was reviewed, with the work of Cottrell (2003), Ward and Watts (2009) and Knight and Yorke (2004) being particularly relevant for informing the early stages of the project. As the project progressed the literature was broadened, particularly regarding the use of e-portfolios in relation to PDP and is discussed later in the paper.

Within the university, a wide range of support mechanisms are available to students, including professional guidance from the careers service and subject specific academic skills support from units within the individual schools. In addition, pastoral and academic support is provided by the teaching team. The Learning Spaces project has taken the approach of combining these different aspects of cross university support into the final year PDP programme rather than each service working independently of each other. Quinot and Smallbone (2008) advocate internal staff champions for successful implementation of programmes and the promotion of a PDP culture. To achieve cohesion and promote the use of PDP amongst students, the final year tutor coordinated the different aspects of the programme.

The overarching aim of the Learning Spaces project was to improve employability skills amongst undergraduate students through a range of learning materials and an e-portfolio framework. To achieve this aim the following objectives were established:
• A review of final year PDP practice across internal and external programmes.
• An integrated PDP resource to use with students to include personal analysis, careers analysis, psychometric/aptitude testing, job application and interview techniques, guest speakers from employers and past graduates and progress files.
• An initial qualitative evaluation of participation rates and effectiveness.
• Quantitative assessment via degree classification and destinations statistics.

The review of PDP, both internally and externally, identified a diverse range of practices depending upon the requirements of the academic discipline, staff commitment and resources within a department. Models varied from a minimalist tick box approach to complex, detailed systems where PDP was fully integrated into the curriculum and mapped. The review informed the Learning Spaces project by taking elements of best practice from different programmes, to develop the most appropriate model for Business Management.

Project Outcomes
The next stage was the development of an integrated PDP resource, to help students perform to the best of their ability in their final year and prepare for an increasingly competitive job market. Tobin (2010) found graduates were teaching themselves additional skills to become more employable and gain a competitive advantage; emphasising the need to be aware of all skills and abilities, not just those learnt within the university environment. Tomlinson (2008) reinforced the point that students need to add value through employability skills rather than solely relying on academic qualifications. A key factor behind the development of the Learning Spaces project was for students to recognise the full range of their skills and abilities not solely those acquired on their academic programme, particularly relevant to the increasing numbers of students taking a placement year.

The QAA (2009:5) define PDP as:

“\textit{A structured and supported process undertaken by an individual to reflect upon their own learning, performance and/or achievement and to plan for their personal, educational and career development.}”

PDP has the potential to enhance the student experience and maximise personal achievement within the boundaries of an individual’s ability. Using the above definition to underpin the project, a Personal Development and Employability Workbook was written, providing a framework for the process. Containing seven sections, the workbook allows students to progress through a range of exercises and reflective thought processes for their early career management. An action based approach was adopted as recommended by Revans (1993), as learning cannot take place without activity. The workbook used colour, images, diagrams and space to facilitate ease of use and appeal to students as a worthwhile activity to complete, rather than being seen as a complex and difficult task and therefore disregarded. Croot and Gedye (2006) believe that paper based PDP’s are advantageous, providing a tangible set of materials that can easily be annotated. It was felt that the workbook, through physical representation, highlighted to students the importance of PDP and employability where purely electronic formats could potentially be easily overlooked.

Students will only participate in processes perceived to provide a valued return on their investment (QAA 2008). Encouraging students to engage with the workbook and e-portfolio focused on the potential achievements that could be gained both in terms of degree classification and graduate employment. JISC, in its role of promoting the innovative use of technology in education and research, has supported a number of projects and believes that to have a significant impact learners need to understand the role of PDP and e-portfolios in relation to their studies, a factor emphasised at the launch of the process.

The material in the workbook incorporated three strands: academic development; personal development and career development, all of which contribute towards graduate employment. Gibbs’ (1988) six stage Reflective Learning Cycle formed the design basis of the workbook, with Kolb’s (1984) Experiential Learning Cycle additionally being drawn upon to model the PDP process. Reflection still poses challenges
in its teaching from both a student and staff perspective; experience from the project identified that reflection is best taught through a combination of examples and staff engagement.

The concept of enhancing employability amongst students is reinforced by Hillage and Pollard’s (1998) findings that the benefits of PDP are assets in knowledge, skills and attributes which need to be effectively deployed and presented to potential employers. PDP has assumed greater significance in recent years as job markets have become increasingly competitive. Undergraduates frequently lack experience of promoting their attributes within job applications, interviews and selection processes; therefore guidance was provided through an interactive careers Blackboard site as well as being available through traditional face to face guidance. The careers Blackboard site was integrated at various intervals in the workbook providing embedded materials and activities that are on-demand and self-paced.

The role of technology in PDP

Good practice recommends the use of both paper based and electronic evidence within a portfolio (Strivens 2007). The next stage was the design of an e-portfolio for students to store personal documents and resources. The paper-based resources allowed activity and experiential learning, complementing an e-portfolio’s concept of portable, lifelong learning. A number of packages such as Pebblepad and Mahara were considered, but as the Blackboard VLE is already used extensively within the university and students are familiar with the system, the e-portfolio was integrated into a dedicated Blackboard site using a combination of HTML, Microsoft Office and hyperlinks. The hope is that by combining a workbook and VLE, it will improve a learner’s capacity to analyse their personal goals and values to build upon their strengths and skills. During the pilot a relatively simple Blackboard site was constructed, allowing students to upload documents into a number of pre-named folders that they felt were relevant to their personal development. The activities behind these documents were based in the workbook. The folders included: my reflections, CV, my achievements, my core competencies and my work experience, bringing together the range of attributes for successful personal development.

It is important to balance the use of technology with the fundamental elements of PDP, so that the challenges of using the technology do not over ride the importance of self development. An advantage of an e-portfolio is portability; the entire portfolio can be downloaded from Blackboard upon completion of studies for future use and ongoing Continuous Professional Development. Overfield et al (2009) found students preferred to use a combination of paper based and electronic materials rather than solely relying on one method; the Learning Spaces project by providing a workbook and e-portfolio achieved these two elements of recommended practice.

The integral use of a paper based workbook and an e-portfolio raises issues regarding pedagogy, challenging traditional approaches. Providing on-line resources can lead to increasing learner autonomy but can deny students personal contact with tutors and peers, to support the learning process. Pedagogical issues are to be further explored in the next academic year, to ensure the most appropriate model for delivery is in place.

Other aspects of the integrated PDP resource included bespoke psychometric testing for management students, support workshops to advise and guide on the PDP process, careers talks and the promotion of fairs and graduate employment opportunities. The academic skills tutors and librarians ran sessions highlighting study skills appropriate for final year students, helping them to work at a high level of independent study required in the latter stages of a degree. As a consequence of the in-class sessions, academic skills tutors reported an increased use of their services by academically able students, who were pushing themselves towards the upper grade boundaries after realising study skills could support them as well as weaker students experiencing difficulties. Finally, within the programme it had been hoped to hold guest lectures by employers and past graduates but this had not been achieved during the year. Plans to overcome the difficulty of coordinating the lectures involve the use of online interviews and multi-media presentations. A flip camera will be used for technologically simple, short clips of people’s personal experience of employment.
Student Experiences

The third and fourth objectives were designed to evaluate the integrated PDP resource, ensuring it met student needs. The qualitative evaluation was achieved through a student focus group, where overall feedback on the resource was positive. Students had liked the style and content of the workbook, though acknowledged that at busy times in a final year priority was given to academic study. From the focus group, it was realised that students engaged with PDP and employability in their own personal time frame. Some students were keen to secure early graduate employment, therefore engaging in PDP at the start of the academic year, whereas others preferred to concentrate on their studies and search for employment upon completion of the degree. This highlighted the need for flexible and portable resources that could be used at a later date, while simultaneously providing appropriately timed sessions for those following a more traditional time scale of graduate recruitment.

An unexpected outcome of the focus group was the number of students not searching for graduate employment upon completion of the degree. Approximately 15% of students were planning to take a gap year or study at Masters Level, before applying for the 2011/2 graduate intake. This again demonstrates the need for long term reflective and personal development skills for use in an individual time frame.

The final outcome of the focus group was that despite being extensively used in academic literature and official publications, students do not always clearly understand the term ‘employability’. The university careers service previously used the term employability in their title but have recently been renamed Career Planning, simplifying the title and encapsulating the main focus of their provision. Based on this feedback, the current title of the paper based Personal Development and Employability Workbook has been reconsidered and will be referred to as Personal Development and Career Planning.

The quantitative evaluation will be completed in October 2010 with the leaver destinations survey. Initial indications from results identify that 65% of those who engaged with the process did achieve higher classifications, with the remaining participants achieving a 2:2. Students amongst the group who received thirds or had resits showed no evidence of using the Learning Spaces materials. The project team recognise that the achievements are not wholly attributable to PDP, but feel it demonstrates that students who utilise the different support mechanisms available are engaged with their studies and personal achievement, being prepared to put in additional time and effort to gain high grades and graduate employment. Approximately a third of students engaged with the project working independently on the materials; a third engaged but required tutor support and a third did not effectively utilise the programme. An aim for the next academic year is to increase participation rates through earlier introduction and an increased number of in class PDP activities.

PDP for Self Employment

There is a limited literature of PDP for self employment though the principles of self reflection and analysis can be equally applied to graduate enterprise as employment. Universities principally engage students in enterprise activity either through the curriculum or start up units such as the Business Mine at the University of Huddersfield. Projects, such as the one run at the University of Worcester by Bowen-Jones and Bill (2009), have successfully embedded enterprise and pdp into the curriculum but initiatives such as this are few in number and still in their infancy.

As the Higher Education community is required to provide employment opportunities in the widest sense, there is a growing demand for graduate enterprise. Activities in the Learning Spaces project could be used for enterprise as well as employment, a feature which will be considered for the next academic year. Processes such as a personal SWOT analysis, a personal timeline or a Johari window allow self reflection and analysis that could lead to a conclusion of self employment being the most suitable pathway. Enterprise is also encouraged in the curriculum with a core module on Small Business Enterprise and Planning as well as further options in the final year.
Future Developments

Having completed the pilot year and achieved the key objective of developing a viable integrated learning resource, the project team have identified a number of new features to be introduced for the next academic year. Firstly, Web 2.0 technologies will be used to enhance the e-portfolio, improving functionality for the students. A social bookmarking tool, del.icious, will be incorporated into the site, allowing storage of favourite website URL’s and links, facilitating fast and easy navigation between resources. The concept of a SkillCloud, available within del.icious, where tagging and bookmarking images are used to help student’s visualise all the information in an e-portfolio, is currently being investigated for possible integration into the system.

Secondly, a range of multi-media materials will be embedded as a balance to the text based material. Podcasts, screencasts and videos will be used to deliver the PDP materials and provide comments on learning and employment experiences from past students. Local employers will also be approached to provide short commentaries on their perspective of graduate recruitment. By providing a range of materials and formats, it should address individual learning styles, so that each student can engage with aspects of the PDP process.

The Learning Spaces project has been developed and delivered by a small team of people committed to the process, a factor believed to be essential for success (Quinton and Smallbone 2008). The team secured internal funding for the project and due to the success of the pilot, ongoing resources are being supported by the department in terms of staffing, materials and planned future developments. PDP requires adequate resourcing if it is to be undertaken effectively (Brennan and Shah 2003) and the ongoing support is welcomed by the project team. For Learning Spaces to continue being successful, it is essential that the process and supporting materials meet the needs of students; therefore it will be a dynamic and constantly evolving programme.

As a small team of staff have delivered the PDP, it is hoped to widen the teaching team slightly to deliver to an additional group of students. A series of two hour workshops covering topics such as CV writing, applications, interview techniques and how to maximise the benefits of work experience are being written, to allow other staff to be involved in the process. The workshop sessions will provide presentations, student handouts and tutor notes to ensure consistency of delivery, incorporate features of good practice and support tutor commitment.

Academic reflections based on Learning Spaces are that for PDP to be successful students have to be personally motivated to engage with the process; a conclusion also drawn by Kneale (2007). The process has to be explicit, relevant and develop students progressively to maintain ongoing interest in PDP. Strong links to employability are essential, as first stage career planning is a key driver for student engagement. PDP also needs to be integrated within the learning and assessment process (Adenekan 2010), rather than being an extra activity.

The Learning Spaces project has been a first step in developing a robust and viable integrated PDP resource. The concept of PDP in higher education is well established. Course teams however, must review their provision on a regular basis to ensure it meets the current needs of students and makes effective use of continually developing technology without losing the key focus of personal development for academic success and graduate employment.
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SORT:Ed - An Interactive Educational Game for HealthCare Students

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Abstract
This short paper outlines an academic’s entrepreneurial journey from idea conception to the market place. Sort Ed is an interactive board game designed for paediatric student nurses and it set in a child’s ward. There is a huge market demand for this type of educational games in the UK especially by institutions that run healthcare management courses. This learning tool is a major contribution to the limited number of interactive educational games currently available to healthcare tutors and students. Simulated learning benefits of the game enables students to develop required transferable skills needed to succeed in the work place.

Keywords: Simulation, Educational games, Entrepreneurship

The journey
In 2007, I came up with the idea for this game on the floor of my office. I developed a prototype and tried it with over 300 students over the next 18 months. I made adjustments and additions as I went along. In 2009 I pitched my idea to Yorkshire Forward and was successful in obtaining a fellowship with them. Over the last year with the help of YEF I have been able to develop my idea into a commercially viable product and am at the stage of launching onto the market. YEF have provided me with 11 expert study days, a mentor with appropriate business knowledge and £10,000 to develop my idea.

I have now placed an order for 100 units of the finished game and expect delivery by July 2010. I already have 5 working prototypes which I use for demonstration purposes. I have developed a website at www.sorteducation.co.uk which although not interactive at present does provide a good marketing outlet.

During June 2010 I attended the METI European conference and launched my game. At this conference I received 15 provisional orders at £200 per unit. I will confirm these orders once I have received my first delivery of stock.

I have developed various promotional materials which are used to market the game at conferences. Please see attached PDF for details of leaflet.

The game
In its first application SORT:Ed is an interactive, student-centered board game set in the environment of a children’s ward. Students play the game in groups of between 6 – 10 people. The first game is Paediatric and is set in a child’s ward. There are currently 5 levels to the game. Each level can be played in isolation or sequentially one level at a time. Each level lasts exact details of each level will not be disclosed within this business plan for confidentiality reasons. Learning outcomes for this game are considerable

For example students learn the following transferable skills:

- Team working
- Roles within a team
- Leadership
- Management
- Ward management
- Priority setting
• Critical thinking
• Risk Assessment
• Risk Management

In addition students also learn about the many idiosyncrasies entailed in the role of the children’s nurse and specific concepts such as:

• Family centre care
• Safeguarding and protecting Children
• Professional issues

The game can then be developed to allow students to compare and contrast other branches of nursing such as Mental Health, Midwifery and other specialist clinical areas such as Accident an emergency and community nursing.

An element of the game includes a pack of images which I have developed for students to use in the levels of the game examples of which are below:

(Images are copyright and trademark protected)

The market
The specific target market for my game is universities of which there are 109 in the UK, colleges of higher education, the NHS, Institutions which run healthcare management courses estimated to be 353 in the UK. The interactive educational games market is estimated to be worth £50 million annually in the UK. The market is still immature with total sales still growing at 7% per annum. The US market is worth around $381 million. The cost of training a nurse in the UK is well over £44,000 per nurse. Exact figures on total number of nurses trained in the UK are difficult to obtain however commissioned numbers for nurse training for the year 2009/2010 for England was 23,467. The use of interactive learning tools in nurse education is still relatively limited though it is a growing market. Examples of some blended learning strategies include E–portfolio’s; Educational nursing skills DVD’S.

In the UK nurse education is carried out by Universities with student nurses typically undertaking a 3 or 4 year Diploma or degree course. Courses are 50 per cent practice and 50 percent theory.

Route to Market
• Direct marketing to universities and via conferences
• Market to NHS via medipex
• Advertise in HEALTHEDCO – UK and European market
• ICEP international education, research and innovation conference in Madrid in November 2010 – could open opportunities for international market for game.
• Simbionix and Laerdal - USA based simulation large market leaders in simulation - want to approach re licensing /franchise opportunities.
Branding

I believe I have succeeded in developing and designing a distinctive, easily recognizable, easily remembered brand. Recent Market research I carried out at a conference where I marketed my game highlighted that potential customers were drawn to my stand by its strong brand identity. The name SORT:Ed is I believe catchy and is derived from an idea around sorting out education. I ran a focus group with a group of graphic design graduates and after several sessions and playing my game with the group, the name SORT: Ed was conceived. The focus groups felt the name was “contemporary” and “Cool”

I then worked with a branding expert and website designer to develop a recognizable brand and logo for my game. The Logo shown below of a wise owl and is I feel in keeping with the learning and education link and I use a small limited range of bright fresh colours which will appeal to my predominantly young target audience for the game.

The wing denotes the concept of nurturing the students playing my games and the idea of having an arm or in this case a ‘wing’ around the student and facilitating their learning.

I have also purchased a domain name and developed a website with holding page see: www.sorteducation.co.uk for details. I then worked with a design company to develop the packaging for my board game and used the colours and Owl logo to ensure a coherent branding image.

I have been successful in producing 100 copies of my game, promotional leaflets and marketing materials and initially launched the game at a simulation conference in June 2010. In the space of 2 hours I took 15 provisional orders from universities, NHS trusts and 3 from universities in Denmark, USA and Sweden. (The conference delegates are not the budget holders of their courses and therefore need to seek advice from managers before confirming orders) However, since the conference 10 days ago I have received a significant number of email enquire about the game.
### Swot Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Me - excellent experience, have the right qualifications and the desire to succeed.</td>
<td>• Public sector spending squeeze</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• My Husband - Director of Finance in public sector</td>
<td>• Lack of commercial expertise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• First game produced – 100 games in stock</td>
<td>• Lack of time resources to devote to developing game</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lots of interest in first game, 15 games provisionally sold after only 2 hours.</td>
<td>• Lack of resources to properly market the game.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Potential for 1200% profit on each game</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Limited risk - little capital investment required</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Fun</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Innovative</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Novel – conflict search found no other similar game</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Competitive</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opportunities</th>
<th>Threats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Significant potential for European USA and worldwide market</td>
<td>• Copycat games (although SORT:Ed is copyrighted and trademark protection is underway)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Possibility of franchise/licensing</td>
<td>• Demand is not guaranteed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Potential for significant development of website services including consulting.</td>
<td>• Educational games are a niche market</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Potential for web based development to become incorporated into blended learning strategies.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• I have other ideas which could be developed within the SORT:Ed brand.</td>
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Exploring the marketing - entrepreneurship interface: bringing an understanding of small business marketing into the curriculum

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Abstract
The success of small firms worldwide is determined by entrepreneurship and marketing (Hills, 1995). 95% of firms worldwide are small (less than 250 employees) – and often smaller than that. Marketing and entrepreneurship are not the same but they are interconnected. Consider Apple, the fabled 1970’s ‘garage’ start-up by Wozniak and Jobs. Often great innovators but not always great entrepreneurs. That is until they revolutionised the music industry with iTunes, and in the future, may well revolutionise personal computing with the iPad.

This paper considers the authors’ experience over the last decade in teaching what can be called entrepreneurial marketing. Given our belief, which is surprisingly common, that entrepreneurship is to some extent learnable and thus teachable – it is both ‘nature and nurture’ … we share our experience of our module – Marketing of Small Business. Our research interests both feed into, and draw from, our teaching on this final year module.

Keywords: SME, marketing, entrepreneurship

Introduction
This paper is underpinned by the notion of the marketing-entrepreneurship interface, or, what is termed by some colleagues as entrepreneurial marketing. In the USA, the best reference source is the collection of annual workshop proceedings, initiated and edited by Professor Gerald Hills (1987-). In order to progress we need to move through several gates- firstly: to define marketing, then to define entrepreneurship, then to believe that they are not the same construct – otherwise there would be no interface!! We are going to conceptualise the interface as a simple three circle Venn diagram. The addition of the third circle allows in this case for an organisational dimension, which will be the small to medium sized business (SME).
Marketing

Defining marketing should be the simplest of the tasks but as society and economies have become more complex, so has the definition of marketing. Going back four centuries to Adam Smith’s Wealth of Nations, then marketing is something that producers do to, or better, do with consumers. Although the notion of relationship marketing was not in common usage until the early nineteen eighties, one can argue that the seeds of the transactional marketing versus relationship marketing debate are there in the eighteenth century. Transactional marketing being characterised as a one way exchange from the producer to the consumer, probably short term and probably a single exchange, compared to relationship marketing characterised as a mutual two way exchange of understanding between the consumer and the producer, probably over the long term, and on multiple occasions. (see Lancaster and Reynolds, 2004; Morris et al., 2002).

The American Marketing Association attempts to reflect contemporary thinking by offering a definition of marketing and then up-dating this every five years albeit with the objective of “craft(ing) a new definition that better serves the constituents of the American Marketing Association” (AMA, 2008).

In 1935, the predecessor of the AMA defined marketing as “the performance of business activities that direct the flow of goods and services from producers to consumers”, a definition that Adam Smith would have recognised. Following the latest five year rethink, the definition is now:

“Marketing is the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large” (AMA, 2008).

A convenient example to illustrate the logic and necessity of widening of the scope of marketing is to reflect that in 1995, The Journal of Ministry Marketing and Management was launched with the aim to provide practical information on marketing and management issues in all types of church and ministry settings. Although it was short lived for only seven volumes. As well as moving away from a transactional approach and extending into services, marketing perspectives have fragmented, and hence, Morris et al. (2008) were able to identify thirteen alternative marketing approaches in the ten years preceding their article. More commonly recognised variants being: relationship marketing; guerrilla marketing; viral marketing; permission marketing; and, buzz marketing.

However, a useful skeleton on which to accommodate marketing is that of Webster (1992), who sees marketing as having three distinct dimensions, namely, culture, strategy and tactics. At the cultural level is a concern for customers and at the strategic level we consider how to secure competitive market position. Tactics are most commonly visualised as the 7Ps (product, price, promotion, place (distribution), physical evidence, people and process) of the marketing mix. Whilst the mix metaphor is probably accepted universally, the mnemonic convenience of the 7Ps is disputed. Alternative, and equally viable, schemas exist (Gronroos, 1993).

Within the confines of this paper, the most appropriate way to measure the extent to which small business carry out marketing would be to use the measure of marketing orientation. Two competing frameworks exist although there is no reason why the individual scale elements cannot be combined. Narver and Slater (1990) advocated taking a cultural focus and measuring three items: customer orientation, competitor orientation, and, interfunctional co-ordination (essentially communication) within the organisation. Kohli and Jaworski (1990) argued for measuring Intelligence Generation, Intelligence Dissemination and Responsiveness. Laferty and Hunt (2001) suggest a synthesis with the emphasis on the customer, importance of information, interfunctional communication, and taking action. Despite that suggestion, most studies employ either Narver and Slater (the so called MKTOR scale) or Kohli and Jaworski (the MARKOR scale). Earlier we illustrated the marketing discipline moving into services marketing by citing religion and the article abstract below continues that theme whilst illustrating a classical marketing orientation approach.

“... The purpose of this research is to develop and test a model that explains the role of market orientation in a church participation context. Data were collected from a particular church denomination in Australia” ... “The findings suggest that market orientation is significantly related to church participation. Further, competitor orientation was found to
be negatively associated with church participation. These findings suggest that it is important for church leaders to: (1) understand the needs of church members (customer orientation), (2) ensure that the various ministries in the church are perceived as delivering significant value by its members (interfunctional coordination), and (3) ensure that the range of ministries offered by the church is not perceived as the strategic tools to compete with other churches (competitor orientation), but rather as the means to serve its members effectively” (Mulyanegara, Tsarenko and Mavondo, 2010)

Entrepreneurship
Since this paper does not seek to deliver a history of the study of entrepreneurship, we are going to adopt the following definition: “Entrepreneurship is the process by which individuals pursue opportunity without regard to the resources that they currently control.” (Stevenson and Jarillo, 1990). This definition is grounded in behaviour and action – not in traits and characteristics and it is indifferent to organisation type and ownership. It states that opportunity seeking is a key activity, and that the entrepreneur considers opportunity and then tries to assemble resources – not the other way around. Finally the notion of a ‘process’ rather than serendipity is enticing as it suggests that we might be able to unscramble and understand such a process.

This comes though with two caveats. Firstly, we still have little overall consistency in the defining of the term ‘entrepreneur’, perhaps given the nature of the entrepreneurial act that is not in itself surprising. The whimsical use of Winnie the Pooh by Kilby (1971), still serves as a good general warning to us all!

“The search for the source of dynamic entrepreneurial performance has much in common with hunting the Heffalump. The Heffalump is a large and rather important animal. He has been hunted by many individuals using various ingenious trapping devices, but no one so far has succeeded in capturing him. All who claim to have caught sight of him report that he is enormous, but they disagree on his particularities. Not having explored his current habitat with sufficient care, some hunters have used as bait their own favourite dishes and have then tried to persuade people that what they have caught was a Heffalump. However very few are convinced, and the search goes on”.

Secondly, that search has been long and is still continuing. Cantillon in 1755, was probably the first western economist to have recognised the unique attributes of the entrepreneur. He argued that the entrepreneur, in essence, bought at certain prices and sold at uncertain prices and therefore assumed the role of risk taker. This search has involved, and is likely to continue to do so, several academic disciplines. One can easily recognise economic, psychological, managerial, strategic elements in even a cursory literature review on entrepreneurship.

More recently, the work by Sarasvathy (2008) on effectuation would give some hope that entrepreneurship is to some degree learnable, and the work by Nicolaou (2008) along with his main co-author for several papers, Scot Shane on nature vs. nurture ascribes a role to both. But for some (such as Casson, 1992) it is a unique and very lightly bestowed behaviour that cannot be copied or mimicked. Finally, we need to remember that not all entrepreneurship is a ‘perennial gale of creative destruction’ (Schumpeter, 1934) and which is perhaps the most overused metaphor in entrepreneurship. Chell (1993) classifies the business owner along a spectrum from entrepreneur through to caretaker with quasi administrator and administrator as intervening hybrid positions. Entrepreneurs are seen as being alert to opportunities and proactive in taking the initiative and trying to control events, whereas, caretakers would be much more concerned with effective management whilst being well within their perceived comfort zone. Thompson (1999) compares and contrasts incompetent and competent entrepreneurs.

As with marketing, we need to measure the extent to which entrepreneurship is practiced and this paper offers the concept of the entrepreneurial orientation. Miller and Friesen (1983) stated that an entrepreneurial firm is one that “engages in product market innovation, undertakes somewhat risky ventures and is first to come up with ‘proactive’ innovations, beating competitors to the punch” and “numerous scholars have developed this and used the term “entrepreneurial orientation” to describe a fairly consistent set of related activities or processes” (Lumpkin and Dess, 2001). Covin and Slevin (1991)
are probably cited the most frequently and they consider an entrepreneurial orientation as having three dimensions – risk taking, innovation and proactiveness with the attendant entrepreneurial behaviour being reflected in management style and process. For example, a conservative management style would be reactive to market changes, as opposed to the proactive stance taken by an entrepreneurial management style. Knight (1997) provides a useful commentary on measuring entrepreneurial orientation in practice.

The Interface
If we now simply replace marketing with the scale to measure it (marketing orientation) and similarly for entrepreneurship, then we can see that at first sight the two scales share little in common. What research at the interface attempts to do is to consider what synergistic relation exists between these two business philosophies.

Three broad approaches can be taken, firstly, ‘to put marketing into entrepreneurship’, secondly, to put entrepreneurship into marketing’, and thirdly to look for commonalities in action and competencies. In the first approach, we might start with entrepreneurial businesses and see how they market, whilst for the second approach we might try to understand how marketing creates and sustains entrepreneurial action, for example, the creation of a new product perhaps within a new market segment. The third approach has always been well described by Carson et al (1995) in their book but particularly succinctly by Hills (1995) in the Foreword to that book.

“Good marketing is inherently entrepreneurial. It is coping with uncertainty, assuming calculated risks, being proactive and offering attractive innovations relative to competitors. And good entrepreneurship is inherently marketing oriented. A customer focus by everyone in the enterprise is a way of life. And the implementation of marketing strategies that generate customer satisfaction is essential to survival.”

How does that impact our teaching and research?
One of the author works in entrepreneurship and the other in marketing and their research interests come together in looking at how small businesses in the UK, Russia and Poland carry out selected marketing functions. Some of our work involves using both marketing orientation and entrepreneurial orientation scales with SMEs. Another piece of research by one of the authors is to consider the extent to which standard marketing techniques are applicable to the small business (Reynolds, 2002).

The Hills (1987) perspective is that SMEs might use different marketing practices and techniques, particularly new and resource constrained SMEs. Carson et al, (1995) argued that personal contact networks and word of mouth marketing would be more likely to be witnessed rather than complex and expensive activity based around a comprehensive marketing plan. Whilst not denying the ability of the SME to plan – such planning might well be informal and ‘in the head’ of the entrepreneur. Opportunity recognition and exploitation might come from seeing a problem and then seeing a solution, rather than deliberate formal market research.

So we do the obvious, which we all do, that is bringing relevant research into the curriculum. Given our individual and joint research interests, and in the spirit of the interface, we focus on entrepreneurial marketing rather than just marketing per se, we do not teach scaled down big business marketing.

Well sometimes! In the early days of the interface, the predominant view was that a new paradigm could, indeed, should be forged but the more recent consensus led by Carson is that we should take what works whether that be formal and traditional marketing techniques or whatever it is that SMEs practice. What is key is that we continue to research and observe exactly how SMEs market. Readers of this paper might well assume, and rightly so, that our taught module would require students to understand the real life of the SMEs. Such a view would then feed into how we assess the module. Reinforcing this is the fact that Carson whose textbook (1995) is still the seminal work in Europe was hugely influenced by his mentor, Professor Tony Cunningham who always argued for an andragogic rather than a pedagogic teaching philosophy. In respect of textbooks on the interface, Carson et al. (1995) has been joined recently by Bjerke and Hultman (2002).
On this module students undertake three pieces of assessment:

1. A short tutorial presentation on a relevant topic of our choosing – this may embrace a marketing concept or a specific technique such as cheap and effective public relations for an SME;

2. A one thousand word academic critique that helps to signal that this is a final year undergraduate module that whilst practical is one that is informed, and underpinned, by a wide and sometimes controversial literature base. Typical topics are marketing orientation; entrepreneurial orientation; a combination of the two; or specific techniques such as importance performance analysis and locating uncontested market segments;

3. However, the major assessment is to write a case study that demonstrates that they understand how an SME of their choosing markets their product or service. Unlike many such assignments across the School and University – this is not a quasi consultancy project or concentrating upon a particular problem. Aside from human interest and perhaps ‘space’ for the small business owner to reflect, it is a deliberately one-sided brief. There is no expectation that students will go beyond observing, reporting and reflecting. Of course, some may well want to go deeper than observation and that is fine by us.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>COMMENTARY</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>1</strong> Write a descriptive business history outlining the critical developments in their trading to date.</td>
<td>Depth depends upon where the SME is in their lifecycle; we are trying to get the student to identify <em>critical</em> points and to draw us into the story.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2</strong> Clearly show the reader their relative position in their marketplace.</td>
<td>An invitation to use a traditional positioning map/diagram; for many SMEs this will cover competitors in a very tight geographical location.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3</strong> Produce a short brief containing secondary data on their market.</td>
<td>(1) and (2) are practical depending very much upon information derived from the SME, this task puts them back into the Library.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4</strong> Write up a profile of the SME in a similar style to that which until recently could have been found in the Saturday supplement of the Financial Times - illustrations to be used as appropriate</td>
<td>This is an excellent test of their creative writing styles and the articles have three components: the headline which is always a pun; the text which is serious but designed to be read on a weekend when the paper is more leisure orientated; and, a well chosen photograph.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5</strong> Find out how they ‘do business’ and then.....</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>a</strong> Consider the nature of how they plan</td>
<td>Planning might be very formal or very informal this in itself is interesting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>b</strong> Select two areas of particular concern to them and critically discuss these</td>
<td>Not of concern to the students but of concern to the SME</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>c</strong> Consider the particular way in which they market their good or service - how is this constrained or facilitated by their being an SME?</td>
<td>To avoid the stereotype that small business are always at a disadvantage to their larger competitors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>d</strong> Having done the above then compare the outcome to three marketing or strategy models with which you are familiar</td>
<td>This is a crucial section, we are not asking students to report or discuss the models that they have learnt on the course – that is our language and how we see the world. We are asking them to use tools familiar to them and to make sense of their encounter. Of course, depending upon the background and knowledge of the owner this could be a shared language, and the SME may use such techniques.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>e</strong> Having stated what you believe entrepreneurial marketing is about- to what extent are these themes and issues realistic for your SME? This section must demonstrate that you are familiar with both the key textbook(s) for this module and appropriate journal articles. You must cite your sources clearly and accurately. That goes without saying – but you will find sources that Paul and I have come across and we will enjoy following these up!</td>
<td>Again we are asking students to be reflective at a more academic level given that the modules seeks a balance between practice and theory. There are only two key textbooks, the original Carson et al (1995) and the later Bjerke and Hultman (2002)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6</strong> Having paired up with one other student or group, draw out the similarities and differences between your SMEs. Attach no more than one A4 sheet of bullet points to your report to demonstrate that you have done this.</td>
<td>It would be a real shame if students did not share some of their findings with each other and this section encourages them to do just that.</td>
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(*) Weightings are indicative but you must attempt all the tasks set out above.
Given the discussion above about the nature of entrepreneurship, you might imagine that we require them to select an entrepreneurial SME— but we do not. Who is, and who is not, entrepreneurial is of less concern to us than our students’ understanding of the world of the SME and their owners and workers. At least 95% of business in the UK are small (less than 250 employers) and the population is skewed to the lower end of that range. (65% have between 1–4 employees; 83% less than 10, see BERR, 2007). If we assume that it is the entrepreneurial SMEs that grow, then in 2006, just under 6% of all businesses in the UK achieved a 60% growth in turnover over three years. This figure is below the USA (8.14 %) but almost three times higher than France, Germany, Italy and Japan. As tutors and researchers our taste are catholic, we are as interested, perhaps more interested, in the 94% that do not grow— they are equally brave and interesting people. Because we are concerned with students developing a dialogue, we are not that concerned with accurate financials and we do not believe that they would be freely offered.

Some student findings
Exhibit Three reports brief details from fourteen of our case studies from this year. We have chosen to highlight the problems faced by the SMEs as this is a good example of how their knowledge informs our teaching and research. In the following section, we contrast these to an earlier data set. Also included are the techniques through which the students chose to frame some of their work. Whilst we give them a free choice, we have our preferences and we can use this information to influence and direct them in the next round of case studies. By looking at the effectiveness and richness of the data from these frameworks, we can reflect on how useful these may be as research instruments and to what extent they might be incorporated into our research. Exhibit Four is an example of Task Six.

Same old?
We last wrote a formal paper on this programme just over ten years ago and this reported in a similar way both findings on SME behaviour and our reflection on the module aims and objectives. Exhibit Five reports the same categories and it is interesting to reflect on how SME problems have, or have not, changed over the last decade. In respect of our teaching reflection, we still support the notions in that paper (Day and Reynolds, 1999), that:

“Better students employ marketing and strategic tools as the framework for the case discussion as well as in the later comparison section. This is a good indicator for separating out the better reports and we continue to be of the view that we do not intend to give any guidance in this area.

Requiring students to write up one part in the style of the newspaper article is a good discriminator of the better reports, and as such is a relatively simple to set creativity exercise. The (appropriate) style template being the Financial Times – ‘Minding Your Own Business’ article

At present we do not require the students to select an entrepreneurial SME. So our sample is more representative of the USA direction in interface research. (which at the time was to consider how any SME irrespective of the level of entrepreneurial orientation did marketing) Casual inspection of the full text of the cases would suggest that some of their choices included genuinely entrepreneurial SMEs (as measured by their innovative behaviour and/or product and service lines) but many also reviewed ‘me-too’ operations.”

This paper has tried to strike a balance between reporting on the teaching of a particular module, and discussing the depth of academic work in the field of entrepreneurial marketing that informs and underpins the module. We remain unworried by allowing our students to select any SME, and interestingly, Carson (2010) in a reflective commentary argues that we have lost sight of our original aim, which was to understand marketing in small businesses. It was not to get embroiled in a debate concerning just what we mean by the entrepreneurial part of entrepreneurial marketing. It seems like we may have let somebody else’s Heffalump into our room!!
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SME Type</th>
<th>Size (including owner(s))</th>
<th>Start Date</th>
<th>Concern One</th>
<th>Concern Two</th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th>Model 2</th>
<th>Model 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bedding and General Household Textiles</td>
<td>n/s</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>New and existing competitors</td>
<td>Finding reliable suppliers who preferably are not supplying their competitors</td>
<td>SWOT</td>
<td>STRATEGY CLOCK</td>
<td>PORTER FIVE FORCES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Consultancy</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Recession affecting client base</td>
<td>Lost of a member of staff</td>
<td>SWOT</td>
<td>PESTLE</td>
<td>CONVERGENT / DIVERGENT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing Wholesale</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Chinese mainland competition</td>
<td>Exchange rate movements</td>
<td>SWOT</td>
<td>RESOURCE BASED VIEW</td>
<td>PORTER FIVE FORCES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comic and Manga Bookstore, France</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Create a community of customers</td>
<td>Compete against national chains offering discounted product</td>
<td>IMPORTANCE PERFORMANCE MATRIX</td>
<td>STRATEGY CANVAS</td>
<td>PORTER FIVE FORCES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Wholesaling</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Perishable and seasonal products</td>
<td>Exchange rate movements</td>
<td>GE MATRIX</td>
<td>PESTLE</td>
<td>PORTER FIVE FORCES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hardware Retailer with a niche specialisation in professional kitchen knives and scissors</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1865 / 2009</td>
<td>Competing distribution channels (internet)</td>
<td>Supermarkets moving into stocking DIY ranges and knives as well as competition from large national DIY stores</td>
<td>SWOT</td>
<td>PESTLE</td>
<td>PORTER FIVE FORCES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Theatre</td>
<td>n/s</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Lack of capital and smaller than preferred marketing budget</td>
<td>Building up repeat and regular audiences</td>
<td>BOSTON MATRIX</td>
<td>MARKETING MIX</td>
<td>PORTER FIVE FORCES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nail and Beauty Salon</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Pricing</td>
<td>Should they expand</td>
<td>OMURA ET AL GRID</td>
<td>PESTLE</td>
<td>PRODUCT LIFE CYCLE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EXHIBIT THREE: BRIEF DETAILS OF FOURTEEN CASE STUDIES (A-Z BY TYPE) CONTINUED/-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SME Type</th>
<th>Size (including owner(s))</th>
<th>Start date</th>
<th>Concern One</th>
<th>Concern Two</th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th>Model 2</th>
<th>Model 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pharmaceutical Specialist Manufacturer</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>1922</td>
<td>High level of compliance to industry and product regulation is welcomed but adds to cost &amp; speed of doing business.</td>
<td>Retailer buying power dictating price points and margins</td>
<td>SWOT/PESTLE</td>
<td>BOSTON MATRIX</td>
<td>PORTER FIVE FORCES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plumbing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Developing an effective internet presence</td>
<td>Growing the customer base</td>
<td>SWOT</td>
<td>MARKETING MIX</td>
<td>PORTER FIVE FORCES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shoe Retailer</td>
<td>n/s</td>
<td>1864</td>
<td>Competition</td>
<td>Recession</td>
<td>SWOT</td>
<td>PESTLE</td>
<td>PORTER FIVE FORCES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take Away Food franchise in early stage of parent franchisor plus one other franchise plus one planned</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td></td>
<td>Employing and maximising business gain from Public Relations</td>
<td>Developing brand awareness in a crowded market</td>
<td>SWOT</td>
<td>MARKETING MIX</td>
<td>PORTER FIVE FORCES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade Company</td>
<td>Publishing</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Recession affecting client base</td>
<td>Competitors</td>
<td>SWOT</td>
<td>PESTLE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watch Shop (High Street Independent)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Decline of the high street as shopping focus</td>
<td>Changing trends away from wearing watches</td>
<td>MARKETING ORIENTATION</td>
<td>AIDA</td>
<td>RELATIONSHIP MARKETING</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: Businesses may be local to student's home town and therefore are not necessarily Huddersfield based. No order of importance for models and some attempt to align models.
Source: 2010 sample sent to External Examiner

For colleagues unfamiliar with the models listed above there follows a brief description of each model:

SWOT: considers on a quadrant diagram the internal strengths and weaknesses, and, the external opportunities and threats for a company; Strategy clock: offers eight strategic positions relative to competitors – for example, premium pricing – these positions are drawn to look like a clock face with eight options; Porter Five Forces: named after Michael Porter this is away of assessing the competitive dynamics of an industry and drawing out an appropriate strategy, the five ‘forces’ are: bargaining power of suppliers, bargaining power of customers, threat of new entrants, threat of substitute products, competitive rivalry overall in the industry; PESTLE: a rational listing of the external factors affecting a business – political / economic / social / technical / legal and environmental, often used as the precursor to a SWOT; Convergent /Divergent: considers the thinking style of SME owners and tries to argue that true entrepreneurs are divergent thinkers; Resource Based View: of strategy has several interpretations but basically firms should do what they are good at, based particularly on the quality of their human resources. Importance Performance Matrix: compares the importance placed on an element of delivery by the customer to how well the business matches that desired importance level – business thus match, over or under deliver relative to customer importance; Strategy Canvas: encourages business to denote what they believe are the competitive strengths of their business and then use a simple line graph to compare and contrast to their competitors and see where they are unique; GE Matrix: so called after the use of this model with General Electric Company in the 1970’s by McKinsey Consultants, using a matrix it strikes off industry attractiveness (want to be in that segment) versus capability to do that; Boston Matrix: named after the Boston Consulting Group, looks at the relationship between market growth overall and your share of that market, represented as 2x2 matrix, ‘star’ products, to name one of four categories, experience high market growth and you have a high market share; Marketing Mix: has been discussed in the paper; Omura et al. in a 2x2 matrix compares Schumpeterian scenarios of fundamental change versus Kirzian market adjustments. Opposite positions on the matrix are stability Vs total creative destruction, bears more than a passing resemblance to an Ansoff matrix; Product Life Cycle: plots sales against time and argues that products and industries go through stages from development to maturity, drawn as a S shaped curve; Marketing Orientation: discussed in text; AIDA: simple marketing communications model that argues that one should move consumers through four stages – awareness, interest, desire and action; Relationship Marketing: discussed in the text.
EXHIBIT FOUR: COMPARISON OF SMEs (TASK SIX) BY ONE PAIRING OF GROUPS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business type</th>
<th>Leisure Facilities Provider</th>
<th>Beauty Salon</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Legal Status</td>
<td>Charitable Trust / Social enterprise</td>
<td>Privately owned business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employees</td>
<td>250 employees – part time, casual and full time</td>
<td>3 employees including owner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real Estate</td>
<td>Head Office and multiple sites</td>
<td>One small shop but plans for expansion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date of formation</td>
<td>Formed about same time</td>
<td>Formed about same time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of customers</td>
<td>7000+ members</td>
<td>Not disclosed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key start-up event</td>
<td>Struggled to establish themselves with higher start up and operational costs</td>
<td>Tight opening budget and struggle to launch on that budget</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financials</td>
<td>Improving financial performance</td>
<td>Not disclosed but client base has grown rapidly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market Trend</td>
<td>Health and fitness market has grown</td>
<td>Spending on health and beauty is expected to increase by 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competitors</td>
<td>Competitors – threat from private sector providers</td>
<td>Main competition from other local salons that have started since this one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macro economic impact</td>
<td>Economic downturn may benefit them with shift from more expensive private to cheaper public facilities</td>
<td>Economic downturn may be of benefit as it may slow down the growth of competitors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greatest Concern</td>
<td>Biggest concern is rising energy costs and consequential need to be even more efficient</td>
<td>Biggest concern is the increased cost of supplies due to exchange rate movements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market Positioning</td>
<td>Positioning – middle range of services and just above median price range in the industry</td>
<td>Positioning: high on quality and high price.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning Style</td>
<td>Planning conducted on a hierarchical framework – systematic short / medium and long term planning</td>
<td>Planning unsystematic and very short term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Objective</td>
<td>Main objective – put people first</td>
<td>Ensure customer loyalty and retention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing Communications Used</td>
<td>Marketing Communications – have a budget and use leaflets. Posters, radio commercials, billboards, staff uniforms and website</td>
<td>Relationship Marketing, Public Relations, sales promotion, internal and external advertising.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurial Marketing?</td>
<td>Use commercial marketing and main themes of entrepreneurial marketing – risk taking, innovative, customer focussed and opportunity driven</td>
<td>Informal, day-to-day, risk taking, opportunistic, relationship marketing, excellent communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future Plans</td>
<td>Future plans – become self-sustainable, focus on 2012 Olympics, engage in Government Health plans and start a Facebook page.</td>
<td>Diversification and growth</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: Results from two groups pairing; sub-headings are their choice; some details suppressed to maintain confidentiality; the responses do not signify effective or ineffective, appropriate or inappropriate handling of decision or business processes.
## Exhibit Nine: Internal Concerns Reported

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Concerns</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employee</td>
<td>lack of experienced workers 1, employee training and skills 1, finding new staff 1, retaining staff 2, staffing =6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth</td>
<td>need to generate and achieve new growth 3, expansion and diversification 2, managing and controlling growth, controlling all aspects of the business as it grows =7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing</td>
<td>better use of marketing mix, branding their company rather than their trade customer 1, fully exploit marketing mix 1, product range, variety &amp; diversification 3, establishing brand for new product 1, promotion 2, pricing 1 =9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>marketing mix</td>
<td>marketing communications 1, internet strategy 1 =2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>communications mix</td>
<td>need for more market research and more focused segmentation 1, need for better competitor knowledge 2 =2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>market research</td>
<td>longer term customer care 1, maintaining quality auditing and continuous improvement 1, quality 1 =3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>customer care</td>
<td>more formal marketing 1, less reliance on a major trade customer, developing a consistent corporate image, trade and consumer shows 1, acquisition of customers to offset aging customer base 1, strategic as opposed to operational marketing 1 =4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>strategic</td>
<td>fear of failure - corporate &amp; personal 1, internal communications 1 =2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal</td>
<td>lack of formal planning 1, planning difficult as no past record 1, re-writing of new 5 year plan 1 =3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>location and premises e.g. current offices too small 2, expansion constrained by resources 1, management skills 1, succession planning 1, efficiency 1, stock control 1, increasing overheads 1, level of profit too small 1, maintaining trading levels 1, supplier relationship 1, lack of retail IT 1 =12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some respondents gave more than one concern, hence responses = 50.
EXHIBIT FIVE: CONCERNS, CONSTRAINTS, HOW MARKET FROM 1999 SURVEY CONTINUED/

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exhibit Ten: External Concerns Reported</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>◊ competition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◊ government policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◊ reliant on one major customer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◊ fluctuations in demand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◊ seasonality - weather, trade or religion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◊ market as a whole in slow irreversible decline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◊ recession</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◊ textile production moving out of Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◊ exchange rates and exporting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◊ supplier reliability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◊ technological advance, speed of</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All responses shown, total responses = 31

Exhibit Eleven: HOW CONSTRAINED - Some Indicative Quotes

- advertising considered too expensive, market research expensive and difficult but as an SME have some advantages - know customers, flexible in outlook and practice, can be opportunity focused and react quickly.
- better IT technology to help market
- calls on owners time
- lack of formal planning, limited financial resources, lack of formal business training, pricing. However the opportunity and flexibility to differentiate as a small business
- more production than service orientated
- resources for overall marketing and larger national companies offering more competitive financial packages
- Stage of the business life cycle (old) and existing clients (old) but younger demands different.

Exhibit Twelve: How market - indicative examples

- good balance 7Ps, emphasis on relationship marketing & promotion
- 7P analysis shows good appropriate balance
- canvassing, telesales, word of mouth (WOM)
- catalogue, CD Rom, WOM, Trade advertising, database
- direct mail, advertising, relationship marketing
- emphasis on promotion - ads, window display, boards and personal selling
- minimal amount of formal marketing, direct marketing with key customers - personal visits and letters
- networking, exhibitions, trade journals
- niche and relationship marketing to avoid competing with multiples with far larger budgets
- telesales, data base, trade advertising, pricing policy and relationship marketing
- trade journals, directories trade shows, sport sponsorship
- WOM, loyal returning customers, level of supplier promotions
- WOM, some promotion but not a great deal
- WOM, value pricing, service, upgrades
Conclusion
In this paper, we hope to have shown a practical student exercise through which students and ourselves learn about the real world of the SME and which both feeds into, and feeds from, our research interests. This approach is not unique and certainly can be replicated. However, we are pleased to have had the opportunity to share our experience. It has given us the some space in which to consider our module, and it may be of interest to other colleagues.

References


