The
Higher
Education
Academy

Networks

Making Marks
Susan Orr looks at assessment practices in art and design

Industry Ready?
Daniel Ashton explores professionalism in media production

Contents

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ADM-HEA also runs an electronic discussion list (hosted by JISCmail), through which we also send the weekly bulletin.

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The views expressed in *Networks* magazine are those of the authors and do not necessarily coincide with those of the Editors or the ADM-HEA team.

Welcome to the tenth issue of *Networks*, the magazine of the Art Design Media Subject Centre (ADM-HEA).

UK Higher Education's increasingly challenging funding context, it is wonderful to see so many colleagues making sterling efforts to learn more about and enhance the experiences of their students. We saw evidence of this in the 52 applications for modest funding for projects researching, developing and sharing insights into art, design and media higher education. We congratulate our 11 successful project holders and look forward to disseminating the outcomes across the rapidly expanding Subject Centre network.

We would like to express our thanks to everyone who took the time to submit proposals and we hope that we will be able to work with many of you in the future.

In this issue of Networks Professor Susan Orr offers an overview of her research into assessment practices in art and design, characterising this as an 'artful practice'. The National Student Survey results highlight assessment and feedback as an important area of focus and addressing the gaps between staff and student perceptions must be a priority for our sector. At the time of writing we are preparing for our symposium A Space for Assessment, organised collaboratively with PALATINE, the Higher Education Academy Subject Centre for Dance, Drama and Music. We look forward to sharing the outcomes of the event with you shortly.

We are delighted to publish Dr Daniel Ashton's 'You just end up feeling more professional': Media production and industry-ready personhood. The paper, which examines student articulations of professionalism and 'industry-readiness', received the 2010 ADM-HEA Media, Communications and Cultural Studies Prize, presented at the MeCCSA annual conference at London School of Economics earlier this year.

In 2010-11 we will be continuing the work started this academic year relating to the Higher Education Academy's priority areas; quality enhancement and student assessment, education for sustainable development and student engagement.

During 2009-10 have seen a surge of activity relating to education for sustainable development. Back in 2005 the Dawe Report found that art, design and media subject areas found it difficult to make connections between sustainability issues and the subject curriculum. In May this year over 100 colleagues met up at our over-subscribed Annual Forum at the RIBA in London to discuss education for sustainable development and the curricular and pedagogical implications for our disciplines. Further evidence of sector enthusiasm for, and commitment to, this agenda can be seen in entries to our student essay competition as well as applications for project funding. We will be exploring these activities further in the September issue of Networks (see p.4) and hope that you will add your perspective to this growing art, design and media community of interest.

We will be continuing this work in a tighter financial context; we are in the process of developing our plans for next year with a reduction of 10-15% in our budget. Our priority will be to maintain activities that we believe, and feedback consistently tells us, provide valuable and often too rare opportunities for colleagues to cross institutional boundaries to communicate, share and learn from each other.

Our funding for future years, of course, depends to large extent on the evidence we have to show that our activities have impacted positively. To this end we welcome both your suggestions for activities that you think can help us to achieve our overarching aim and your examples of ways that the Subject Network has raised your awareness, changed your perceptions, changed your practice and impacted on the art, design and media student learning experience.

Thank you for your continued engagement.

Stuart Laing
ADM-HEA Subject Centre Director

Your thoughts on *Networks*

// **You may be aware that, as part of an on-going strategy to evaluate the impact of our work on art, design and media higher education, ADM-HEA recently undertook a survey of the readership of *Networks* with the aim of obtaining your feedback. The aim is to better help us better understand what your interests are and which items are having an impact on your perception, practice and the student learning experience.**

We received 145 responses to the survey, which represented a (6%) response rate. The subject disciplines with the highest response rates were Media Practice (24%), Design (22%) and Visual Arts (22%).

96% of readers who responded receive a hard copy as opposed to 11% who read *Networks* online. With environmental issues in mind, ADM-HEA would like to increase the number of its online readers in future and we are planning to upgrade our online offering during the coming year to make it as accessible and appealing to read as possible.

In terms of content, the most read sections of the magazine are Features (51%), ADM-HEA News (48%) and Projects (44%). 39% of respondents said that they read all sections of the magazine.

We were interested to know what impact *Networks* has had on readers' perceptions and practice and were pleased to discover that the majority of respondents said that *Networks* had raised their awareness of learning and teaching issues, with the Features (50%) and Projects (55%) sections clearly influencing perceptions and thinking. 29% also said that the Features section had changed their practice and directly impacted on student learning, whilst 27% indicated that the content of the Projects section had a similar impact.

Responses to the survey included a section for those who had contributed content to *Networks* in the past and it was good to hear that, following publication, many had received offers to submit conference papers or heard from useful contacts on their project work.

77% thought that the tri-annual publication date was appropriate to the magazine's audience and it was also interesting to note that 65% of respondents retain their copies of *Networks* for future reference.

75% thought the design of *Networks* was appropriate to its audience; design of course being a contentious topic given that our audience is made of a large proportion of graphic designers all

of whom have their own strong opinions in such matters!

Several respondents commented that the dot grid on the inside of the magazine detracted from some of the images. This was helpful feedback and we have now adjusted this for future issues. The light typeface was also identified as problematic and we hope that in this issue we have finally addressed the problem.

We were pleased that 93% felt that the content of *Networks* was interesting and informative which indicates that we are getting something right most of the time!

Networks is YOUR magazine and we want YOU to use it to channel your news and research. If you would like to contribute to future issues visit http//www.adm.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/publications/networks-magazine for more information.

If you have not already responded to the survey, it will remain open until Monday, 14 June so please take this opportunity to help us shape the future content of this magazine. We look forward to hearing from you.

Alison Crowe, ADM-HEA

Assessment Resources

// The ADM-HEA website has a number of resources relating to quality enhancement and student assessment. What follows is a taste of the information available to view and download from our website at: http://www.adm.heacademy/resources.

We are always keen to receive new case studies that address topics related to learning and teaching in art, design and media subjects. For further information visit: http://www.adm.heacademy/resources/case-studies.

Title: Assessment Practices in the Creative Arts
Author: Dr Julian Malins
Institution: Gray's School of Art, Robert Gordon University
Date: August 2007

Abstract: The concept of Personal Development Planning (PDP) originated from the idea of progress files, based on a recommendation from the Dearing Report, 'Higher Education in the Learning Society', which was reporting on the National Committee of Enquiry in Higher Education (HMSO, 1997). The term PDP is used to describe the monitoring of students' progress, encouraging reflection into their own learning development. The aim is to encourage transferability of skills, self-knowledge, and the ability to adapt and to find ways in which the student can evidence this ability. The experiential nature of learning in art and design provides a number of opportunities for producing a range of activities designed to support PDP. This project aimed to develop a national picture of current learning activities, which can be described as providing personal development planning.

Title: Team working and Peer Assessment: the assessment process as an aid to effective learning in creative group project work.
Author: Richard G. Sober
Institution: University of Teesside
Date: January 2010

Abstract: 'Team-working' is a level two module undertaken by 45 Interior Architecture and Interior Design students at the University of Teesside. The aim is for students to work together in small groups to simulate design practice. Such collaboration encourages the sharing of learning approaches and provides students with opportunities to develop team leadership skills. Self and peer assessment in group work can ensure a greater sense of fairness in the marking and enhances student understanding of assessment criteria and learning outcomes, helping them become more effective learners throughout their courses of study.

Title: The use of peer assessment to improve student journalists' court reporting skills
Author: Rachel Matthews
Institution: Coventry University
Date: January 2009

Abstract: Student journalists need to practice their reporting skills if a professional standard of writing is to be achieved and providing feedback on student journalists' copy is a vital factor in enabling them to perfect their reporting skills. However, doing this via traditional written methods is time-consuming for staff, so limiting opportunities for formative assessment, and may have questionable results in terms of the extent to which students take on board that feedback. This exercise trials peer assessment as a way of increasing opportunities for formative assessment in a way which actively engages students in the process and which is also practicable in terms of staff time.

Title: 'Could do Better?': students' critique of written feedback »

Author: Kate Brooks
Institution: University of the West of
England
Date: September 2008

Abstract: This feature starts with the
observation that current research into
university assessment feedback has
a tendency to conclude that students
want 'more feedback' but in general,
don't know what to do with it. Likewise,
related research notes the mismatch
of expectations between tutors' and
students' perceptions of the purposes of
feedback.

Drawing on findings from a project
at the University of the West of
England, this article discusses students'
expectations and experiences of
feedback: what do students expect
feedback is going to be like? How do
they prepare for it, and does it match
those expectations? And what do they
do with it, once tutors have handed it
back?

In considering these findings, the
feature will argue that 'more feedback'
is both problematic and too simplistic
as a solution. Instead, we need to
reconsider conventional systems of
assessment in Arts and Humanities.
Tutors need to become facilitators
of the learning process rather than
gatekeepers of knowledge, and students
need more encouragement to reflect
on their own learning journeys.

Call for ESD Contributions

// **We would like to invite you
to contribute to the next issue of
Networks, which will be on the theme
of Education for Sustainability (ESD)
for publication in the September 2010
issue.**

· What are the pedagogical implica-
tions of ESD in HE and how might
these be addressed?

· What are the sustainability issues
associated with and impacting on
your own subject discipline and
practice?

· How is the ESD debate being
played out at a departmental and
institutional level?

· Are you involved in an ESD related
project or network?

· Have you written a research paper
that would be of interest to oth-
ers working in the art, design and
media sector?

We are interested in receiving Feature
Articles (see: http://www.adm.
heacademy.ac.uk/resources/features/
how-to-submit-a-feature-article for
details) of between 2,000-2,500 words
for which a fee of £300 is payable to
those accepted for publication. Project
reports of up to 2,000 words are also
welcomed as are evaluative reports of
events of around 300 words relating
to any aspect of ESD in art, design
and media HE. Further information on
submission guidelines may be found at:

http://www.adm.heacademy.ac.uk/
resources/publications/networks-
magazine

We look forward to hearing from you!

MeCCSA Climate Change, Environment and Sustainability (CCES) Network

// **The MeCCSA Climate Change, Environment and Sustainability (CCES) Network is an organisation for academics, researchers, postgraduates and others to strengthen the ability of MeCCSA and its members in finding ways for media, communications and cultural studies professionals to help tackle unsustainable practices in these fields. Supported by the ADM-HEA Subject Centre of the Higher Education Academy, the Network has six key aims:**

- Aligned and complementary activity to the existing MeCCSA *Networks*.
- Engagement with policy-makers, civil society and practitioners
- Filtering and prioritising the urgency of the requirement to respond to changes in environmental, sustainable development and scientific knowledge
- Maintaining and growing a strand at the main MeCCSA conference and events beyond
- Producing world leading research under the MeCCSA umbrella
- Developing a directory of researchers to facilitate collaboration and learning across disciplines

The inaugural meeting of the network was held during the final session of the recent MeCCSA Annual Conference, held in London (LSE, 6-8 Jan 2010). Chaired by MeCCSA executive committee member Einar Thorsen (Bournemouth) and network co-founder Alex Lockwood (Sunderland), the group shared interests and personal commitments to the subject area, and discussed priorities for activity.

Two critical characteristics to the network's formation and its mode of operation were discussed: first, the urgency of the debate, particularly in the wake of failures to reach a meaningful global deal at Copenhagen, and its swift exit from the media's interest; and second, the need to reappraise current media developments, both national and international, to press for environmental and sustainable development issues as central to the discussion. The digital switchover in 2015 was highlighted as one example where environmental impact was not part of the agenda, and needs to be so. Plans include:

- an initial seminar meeting to bring together academics with scientists, activists and practitioners in using social and digital media to promote action against and awareness of climate change mitigation efforts
- a seminar event to be held in Oct/ Nov at the University of the West of England (UWE) organised by Peter Broks around the themes of sustainability and NGO engagement.

The network also set out to gather together media, communications and cultural studies resources relating to climate change, and a list of members' recent work on the subject. At least two attendees (including co-editor Professor Justin Lewis, from Cardiff) had made contributions to the recently published text 'Climate Change and the Media' (published by Peter Lang). The international nature of the response of interested parties to be part of the network was also highlighted.

A calendar of possible intervention points will also be developed, so the network can forward-plan and play an active role in ensuring issues of environment and sustainability are centrally placed in debates relevant to the future media landscape.

So far, there are 64 members of the MECCSA-CCES email list.

For any further information, please see the network website http://www. meccsa.org.uk/climate-change-network/, join the email list at http:// www.jiscmail.ac.uk/lists/meccsa-cces.html, or email Einar Thorsen (ethorsen@bournemouth.ac.uk).

2 Sector News

Creative Graduates Creative Futures – findings published

'These are genuinely individualistic knowledge workers who progress from one creative project to the next, and nearly half of them are portfolio workers – a source of creativity in its own right. What the report captures is the vigorous, if risky, world of creativity and those dedicated to work in it.' Will Hutton, Executive Vice-Chair, The Work Foundation

'Creative Graduates Creative Futures *is at the core of our current and future strategic plans. The results will provide much needed intelligence about the contribution our graduates make to the UK economy and wider society – the skills and abilities they bring to all situations.'* Emma Hunt, Chair, Council for Higher Education in Art and Design (CHEAD)

// Creative Graduates Creative Futures is a major longitudinal study undertaken between 2008 and 2010 of the early career patterns of more than 3,500 graduates in art, design, crafts and media practice-based subjects, qualifying in 2002, 2003 and 2004 from 26 UK higher education institutions:

- 3 out of 4 graduates had worked in the creative industries and in their field of expertise since graduating. At the time of the survey, 4 out of 5 graduates were in paid work, the majority in creative jobs and achieving their career goals
- portfolio careers were well established, with 48 per cent of graduates in multiple jobs at the time of the survey, typically combining employment with self-employment, study or developing their creative practice
- 45 per cent of graduates had worked freelance since graduating, and at the time of the survey 23 per cent were self-employed and 18 per cent were running a business
- 77 per cent of working graduates were positive about their current work, enjoying the ability to be creative, having autonomy and potential for future opportunities, with 79 per cent in work they felt related significantly to art, craft, design or media
- 33 per cent of graduates had experience of teaching in their early careers and 18 per cent were teaching at the time of the survey
- unpaid work is a common strategy for job-seeking or learning new skills, with 42 per cent undertaking voluntary experience since graduating
- creative graduates placed a high value on their educational experiences, although they would have liked a stronger connection with the professional world
- graduates had developed skills required for their careers on their undergraduate courses, rating most highly creativity and innovation, visual skills and presentation, but they had less well-developed IT, networking and client-facing skills.
- after graduation, 72 per cent had undertaken further study or informal learning of some kind, with more than one quarter of graduates returning to HE to study at a higher level
- graduates aspired to creative careers and achieving a good life/work balance, their career goals aligning with their subject disciplines and their career plans most influenced by a strong desire for new learning and the pursuit of creative practice above high earnings.

3 Events

Examining NSS results in ADM Subjects

// Art & Design academics met on 14 January 2010 to review research on the performance of their subject in the National Student Survey (NSS). ADM-HEA and the Head Trust funded the research entitled *I can't believe it's not better: the paradox of NSS scores for Art & Design*, which was commissioned by the Group for Learning in Art and Design and undertaken in September 2009 by Professor David Vaughan and Professor Mantz Yorke. ADM-HEA also funded the seminar, which was supported by GuildHE.

The seminar sought to build on the research which examined, from a discipline perspective, students' responses to the NSS. Discussion developed around three themes taken from the research:

- Organisation and management: noting the wide diversity of specialist disciplines and activities in Art and Design, are there legitimate differences in the organisational expectations in this field, and how can NSS mediate these differences?
- Addressing overall expectations of what the student experience in A&D is, and responsively addressing how the student experience is offered to applicants.
- How assessment feedback is given, how students understand it, and how it is understood externally.

Two examples illustrate how these areas of expectation can influence students. Firstly, NSS criticism of organisation and management has exposed the complexity of A&D learning. NSS concentrates the minds of respondents, and academics, on the structure of programmes, including physical resources, spaces, and sense of belonging, and the seminar recognised that helping students acquire the skills of self-negotiation and resource-management, seen in equipment-booking, studio-scheduling and portfolio-development, is a direct part of A&D's learning and career-development process and must be taught explicitly to students.

Secondly, a key concern is with developing a common recognition among participants of what constitutes assessment feedback in Art and Design, and how to recognise the distinct forms and places in which it may be provided. Feedback in Art and Design is not merely a response to a written piece of work, but also part of a range of teaching and learning processes. As such, tutors must be aware that formative feedback is provided in both formal and informal learning contexts and that studio and workshop teaching staff are all involved in this element of the teaching & learning process.

The seminar set out an action plan and recommendation that this is taken forward by the ADM-HEA Subject Centre

- **Students and student unions** will be brought in at the next level of ≫

discussion, and invited to share their understanding of the NSS questions and their answers. Students will be asked: what the questions meant to them, and what their answer meant to them. This will help test the assumptions that can be made about NSS responses.

- The **role of the course or pro-gramme leader** should be re-viewed. The ADM-HEA Subject Centre will consult on what can be done to make course leaders more empowered and to aid them in un-derstanding how students perceive the NSS.
- **Language use in courses and documents:** ADM-HEA will review the language subject materials use to ensure it is clearly understood by students especially as it relates to assessment and feedback. A&D academics are also determined to engage with students and share their understanding of the NSS questions. Feedback, which throughout HE receives poor

scores in the NSS, is for A&D not merely a written response to an essay but is woven into discussions between staff and students in the studio.

The Group for Learning in Art and Design (GLAD) was established in 1990. It is a non-affiliated group of academics representing art, design and media from across higher education institutions plus colleagues from the specialist further education sector.

GLAD's remit is to engender discussion about best practice in developing the student experience in art, design and media and, in particular, to promote and stimulate debate and consideration of developments in the teaching and learning of the subject.

The **Foundation for Higher Education in Art and Design (The HEAD Trust)** is a registered Charity dedicated to the advancement and support of British art, craft and design education.

GuildHE is a recognized representative body within the higher education sector. Many GuildHE member institutions are important, fast-growing providers of Art and Design subjects in higher education.

To download the project report go to: http://www.adm.heacademy.ac.uk/ news/subject-centre-news/nss-project

This item is based on a press release about the seminar, authored by Nick Johnstone, Policy Officer at GuildHE

4 Features

Making marks: assessment in art and design

Author: Professor Susan Orr
Institution: York St John University
Keywords: Assessment, art and design, practice, connoisseurship

Abstract

This article offers a brief overview of key points emerging from my research into art and design lecturers' assessment practices. I have worked in this area for some years and have carried out a range of interview-based and observation-based studies across more than eight universities. In this article I discuss the ways lecturers assess identities, artistic practices and artwork holistically. My key point is that art and design assessment is best understood as an artful practice - indeed it might be likened to a form of connoisseurship.

Introduction

I have researched assessment practices in art and design for some years. Most of my work has focused on lecturers' experience of assessing student artwork in the studio (rather than exploring students' experience of being assessed). Generally I have researched this area using interview-based methodologies but I have also employed studio-based observational approaches (Orr, 2005, Orr, 2007). I have observed or interviewed art and design lecturers in eight universities. In this short article I am going to draw on the breath of this research in an attempt to draw out the main characteristics of art and design assessment practice.

Group marking is central to assessment in art and design

We flood our assessment process with staff.

Art and design lecturers often work together to mark student artwork in the studio. The fact that group approaches to marking have remained a central tenet of art and design assessment in the face of massification and the intensification of lecturers' workloads underlines its importance. In some of the universities where I have researched assessment, artwork had been assessed by up to seven lecturers. This is a distinctive element of art and design assessment that contrasts sharply with assessment practices in text-based subjects where often only a small sample of texts will be double-marked or moderated (Price, 2005). It is my view that in text-based subjects double-marking and moderation are viewed as serving primarily quality assurance and regulatory purposes rather than being an approach that, in part, defines pedagogy. In contrast, for art and design lecturers, moderation conversations are a key site for judgement making. In the words of one lecturer I interviewed 'assessment happens in that dialogue'. »

Lecturers assess the students' artistic practices and their artwork

But I think you can't....distinguishing the work from the person...is....is quite difficult within our area of practice.

Lecturers in my studies shared the view that student identities, their artistic practices and their artworks are enmeshed. Art and design assessment practices are premised on this assumption. In the words of one lecturer 'the work should carry the maker'. Art and design lecturers value their engagement with students' artistic development over time. The following extract illustrates the ways that narratives about student identity coalesce into the narratives about the student artwork:

You see the students evolve the work and you really get into the, em, the concepts and the thinking behind it and the theories that they develop and the fact that you are also guiding and talking with them and, you know, other staff are doing the same, I think you can build up a closer understanding of that student's work so you also see the faults a lot [...] you know, there's a quality comes through the talking and the thinking and the.., the actual quality of the way they've produced the work, em, but yeh I mean you can.., it's not difficult to tell good pieces of work.

Lecturers' dual interest in the student and their practice leads to the next key element in art and design assessment.

Knowing the student is central to assessment

[When assessing art work with other lecturers] we would certainly want to take account of the views of the person who might know the student best...em...you know, who might be able to in one way or another, direct us to something we may have been missing.

When artwork is being assessed in the studio the lecturers in my studies privileged the assessment views of lecturers who had worked most closely with the students whose artwork was being marked. What this means is that if there was any kind of disagreement about the mark to be

awarded the marking team would defer to the lecturer who knew the student best and had worked most closely with them. I noted that it was only occasionally that outsiders (who had not taught the students) were brought into the assessment process to offer a particular response to the artwork, divorced from its maker, but this was *not* an integral part of assessment. Arguably, this approach could be viewed as a resistance to anonymous marking and the commodification of assessment. This is significant given that anonymous marking is becoming a commonplace requirement in other disciplines in higher education. Anonymous marking represents an attempt to disentangle the student from the work. In contrast, for art and design lecturers, the work and the student are entangled. The assessment approaches adopted reflect their interest in the individual students and their particular learning trajectories (Orr, 2010).

Marking time: Assessing process and product

It's hard because you're looking at this final project but you're going 'Wow look where they came from!'

In art and design education there is continuing discussion concerning the emphasis that should be placed on the 'process of development of the idea (making a work of art, design, etc) or in the end product (the work of art or design itself)' (Cowdray and de Graaf, 2005, p.507). A focus on process is a '"truth" of the discipline' in art and design that reflects the lecturers' interest in the students' developmental learning journeys (Barrow, 2006, p.365). The lecturers are interested in assessing the students' artistic engagement. The concept of engagement 'does not lend itself to oral explanation' (Percy, 2004, p.146) but dictionary definitions stress engagement as being related to issues of commitment and a pledge to participate. Lecturers speak highly of students who engage fully in their emergent arts practice and for many lecturers engagement is viewed as a prerequisite for achievement. As one lecturer pointed out, students are expected to engage with 'their own practice, with their peers and with their tutors and the wider art context'. Lecturers seek to reward the students who are 'totally immersed [in their arts practice]'. Engagement

is connected to issues of commitment and having a presence in the studio and it can only be demonstrated over time. Assessment approaches in art and design are designed to capture this engagement via reflective journals, documentation and the Crit.

Student and lecturer identities are fully implicated in art and design assessment practices

So it's actually knowing the student over the course of the year [...]. So it's kind of the notion that at the back of your mind you would have a sense of how the student had progressed, how they increasingly challenge themselves and address the challenge and through tutorial engagement. You'd log that, either literally or in your head.

Barrow argues that in design the 'assessment regime is a technology of the self', thus issues of identity are critical to understanding art and design assessment. Rowntree (1987) comments that lecturers never come to the act of assessment without preconceived ideas about how it is done, and one powerful source of knowledge is the lecturer's own experience of being assessed. In my studies I noted that lecturers' experiences of being art students informed their approaches to marking. Lecturers reproduce elements of the assessment practices they experienced as students. In addition their identities as creative practitioners relate to how they assess student work. Lecturers' identities offer complex lenses through which student artwork is apprehended. In the quotation below the lecturer observes that issues of identity affects 'how we see'.

I think there can be subtle differences in the way in which we approach things depending on our backgrounds, depending on how we see the ways in which the students have realised their ideas and presented them (my emphasis).

Lecturers' identities offer complex lenses through which student artwork is apprehended.

When lecturers position around a piece of student artwork in the studio, they relate to the work, the student and the team, drawing on a range of identity positions. In the list below I offer just a few examples that directly link to the ways that lecturers approached their assessment role:

· Lecturer as artist
· Lecturer as programme team member/leader
· Lecturer as part-timer
· Lecturer as sculptor/3D designer/painter
· Lecturer as positioned at end of career
· Lecturer as part of a particular university
· Lecturer as part of, or at odds with, university or departmental context

What the list illustrates is the 'nexus of multi-memberships' that span the local and the cultural (Wenger, 2004, p.159). To illustrate the ways that identity positions relate to assessment I offer the example of two lecturers who explore the ways that their identities as artists within very particular areas of artistic practice impact on their marking:

It's quite rare to see somebody specialising in that area [his own area of practice] but when I see it, it's quite nice, but actually it's not necessarily an advantage to the students. I think from experience I've probably been quite tough [laughter].

One of the really interesting things that we've been discussing quite a lot recently is when.., when a student is working in an area that's related to your own practice you can sometimes be harder....on that work because you recognise the weaknesses more clearly when.., when a student is working on an area that's kind of alien to your own practice it's easier to be...... impressed, exactly 'cause you have that kind of lack of depth of understanding.

Both of these lecturers appear to be 'harder' markers with students who pursue their area of practice. Lecturers position student artwork in relation to their own practice and in relation to other artistic practices. In the extended extract below, one lecturer reveals the ways in which her sense of aesthetics informs how she classifies students' work and »
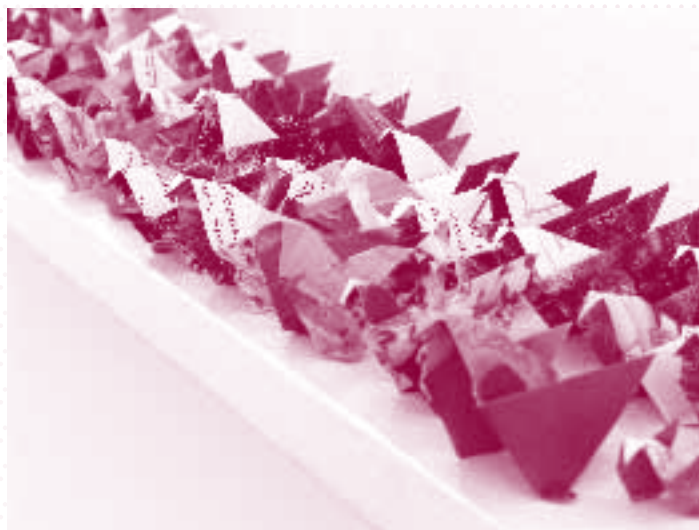
how, in doing so, she classifies herself. This extract illustrates how her 'values [...] influence every step of the assessment process' (Cresswell, 1996, p.57). As Bourdieu (1986, p.6) points out, 'taste classifies, and it classifies the classifier':

I definitely think that certain people have pet hates as well, certain types of practices [...] that they struggle with. [...] Em in terms of my, my own sort of pet hates I, em, struggle with stuff that looks like modernist painting. I [..] I struggle with, em, that, em, oh I don't know, I think when I was at university I used to call it blobby splatty painting, I'm not talking about abstract art broadly. I'm talking about a certain type of, em, abstract painting, em, and, em, but I also have colleagues who I know, em, struggle with, em, issues around performance-based work, em, and, em, and find that sort of difficult in terms of what fine art is, what the parameters are, what the boundaries are. So I think my issues come from within what I think fine art practice is and what I think good and bad practice is, em, and what I think a contemporary context is and what I think is relevant now.

Art and design lecturers seek to assess student artwork in relation to student intention

It is essential that <u>you know something about who that person is and what they are trying to do</u>, what they...what they think they're doing in order to....to measure the quality of what they've done (my emphasis).

A specific manifestation of lecturers' interest in process relates to the ways that lecturers talk about student intention in relation to assessment. Cannatella (2001) sees an interest in student intention as a 'common factor in any art assessment process' (p.320). In the extract above the lecturer explains that the student should clearly set out what they intend to achieve and then they should be marked in relation to that intention. Later in the same interview this lecturer acknowledges assessing in relation to intention is not a sanctioned view within his university context. This is contested territory that is explored more fully in Orr (2007) and Orr (2010).

Pre-determined learning outcomes and assessment criteria are sometimes viewed as problematic in art and design

Learning outcomes are useful, but the assessment process is looking holistically.

Yorke, Bridges and Woolf (2000, p.26) observe that the role of 'professional judgement is particularly important in art and design' because it is less 'amenable to precise specification in advance'. Gordon (2004) builds on this view by reflecting upon the paradox of having to specify attainment in learning outcomes in advance whilst simultaneously allowing creative students to offer unanticipated creative solutions. She refers to this as the 'wow' factor (p.61) and argues that this is a necessary, but elusive, assessment criterion. Gordon suggests that the 'wow' factor includes 'creativity, originality, inventiveness, inspiration, ingenuity, freshness and vision' (p.61). In art and design, learning outcomes, to a certain extent, anchor lecturers' assessment practice but their potential to make assessment overly prescriptive means that their role is contested.

Art and design assessment is a form of connoisseurship

The subjective thing is being made by highly trained, educated kind of specialists in that subject, so there is a subjective decision being made, but by specialists.

My key point is that art and design assessment practices collapse the binaries of process and product; artwork and student identity. As a consequence assessment in art and design might be best understood as an artful social practice. Building on the work of Bourdieu (1977, 1986) and Shay (2003, 2005), my research conceptualises art and design assessment as a form of connoisseurship. Within my particular conception of connoisseurship, lecturers' assessment expertise is co-constituted and practiced within communities of practice through participation and engagement (Orr, forthcoming).

Photos: University of Brighton

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Biography

Professor Susan Orr is deputy dean at York St John University; prior to this she was the Teaching and Learning Coordinator at the London College of Fashion, University of the Arts London. In 2009 she was awarded a Chair in Pedagogy in Creative Practice. Susan's research explores a range of creative practice pedagogies. In 2008 she worked with Dr Margo Blythman and Dr Bernadette Blair on an ADM-HEA funded project that explored the role of the Crit in Art and Design. Susan is on the editorial boards of the Journal of Writing in Creative Practice and Art, Design and Communication in Higher Education.

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'You just end up feeling more professional':

Media production and industry-ready personhood

Author: Dr Daniel Ashton
Institution: Bath Spa University
Keywords: Media production; personhood; professionalism; employability

// The third ADM-HEA Media, Communications and Cultural Studies Prize was presented at the MeCCSA annual conference at London School of Economics in January this year. The prize, for the best paper analyzing key issues impacting on media, communications and cultural studies higher education, was awarded to Dr Daniel Ashton, Senior Lecturer in Media and Cultural Studies, at Bath Spa University.

Introduction

Taking the current UK creative economy policy emphasis on employability, creativity and talent (DCMS, 2008) as the contextual backdrop, this paper explores professionalism and becoming 'industry-ready' as articulated by higher education students within a media production context.

Specifically, research conducted with higher education students based within a university-operated and commercially orientated media production studio is introduced. The studio context was crucial in terms of how students could come to understand professionalism and creativity, and relate it to themselves. As one student put it, it was about 'feeling more professional'.

Paul du Gay's concept of personhood (2007) is used to explore 'the relations, techniques and forms of training and practice' that shape how students articulate their sense of becoming 'industry-ready'. The focus on identity is crucial for engaging with the creative economy discourse of 'creative talent' and students' identity practices within a 'creative milieu'.

The creative employability context

The centrality of employability to the core operations of UK universities is apparent across a range of reports and documents. In April 2008, the former UK government Department for Universities, Innovation and Skills (DIUS) published the 'Higher Education at Work – High Skills: High Value' consultation document stating:

We want to see all universities treating student employability as a core part of their mission. So we believe it is reasonable to expect universities to take responsibility

Artswork Media

Photo: Daniel Ashton

for how their students are prepared for the world of work (DIUS, 2008, p.6).

Similarly, the October 2008 Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) 'Stepping Higher: Workforce development through employer-higher education partnership' report addresses the skills agenda and the case for increased collaboration between higher education and industry/business/employers. Most recently, the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills published report 'Higher Ambitions' (2009, p.13) states, 'we will expect all universities to describe how they enhance students' employability'.

As an increasingly key part of higher education, this agenda and its application have not gone uncontested. As Philip Brown et al. (2003, p.109) argue, employability 'policy discourse is dominated by employer and government concerns about the supply of graduates [and] has received little conceptual or empirical analysis'. With regard to Media Studies and the push towards vocational application and employability, the increasing prominence of creative industries policy is significant. Notably Sue Thornham and Tim O'Sullivan's discussion (2004) of their three-year HEFCE Fund for the Development of Teaching and Learning project identified the increasing concentration on 'employability'. I too would highlight this focus, but would also stress the extent to which creative economy/industries discourse is shaping concepts of employability.

With the often-cited 2001 Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) published *Creative Industries Mapping Document*, various 'creative' sectors were grouped together, including film, television and radio, publishing and gaming. In surveying this formation, David Hesmondhalgh (2009, p.246) highlights how, 'in spite of the deep conceptual confusions, these varying definitions have had a strange mutually reinforcing effect, leading to a veritable cult of creativity'. It is this prominent and pervasive concern with creativity that is playing a formative role in shaping questions of employability in media industries.

Questions of the media industries and media training are framed in terms of 'creativity' and realizing 'creative talent'.

In this respect, the 'supply of graduates' approach that Brown et al. (2003) highlight can be refined as the supply of 'creative industry-ready talent'. This creative talent discourse is most prominent in the DCMS 2008 *Creative Britain* report. This report works from the premise that 'ideas are the raw material of the creative industries' (p.12) and 'the creative industries start with individual creativity' (p.13). A key challenge is then identified in 'developing world-class talent': 'talent is the life blood of the creative industries. If the UK is to retain a world leading creative sector, it will be through winning the race to develop our creative skills' (p.19). Philip Schlesinger (2007) has described this pervasive creative economy discourse as 'extraordinarily banal'. Along the same lines, being 'uncreative' seems a curious aspiration. That said, 'creativity' is being vigorously advocated and propounded with regard to employability attributes.

In the following sections, a research project with a university-operated and commercially orientated media production studio will be introduced to examine the *identity practices* that are emerging in relation to the creative economy framing. This focus engages with the notion of the 'creative' and seeks to explore the empirical resonances and implications.

The studio context
The following draws on research conducted at Artswork Media - a media production studio developed as part of a Centre for Teaching and Learning (CETL) initiative employing 'creativity', 'technology', and 'employability' as the keywords. The project is ongoing and this paper draws on research conducted up to November 2009 – two interviews with staff, eight student interviews, one focus group, and a series of participant observations including following production projects, observing briefing meetings and guest sessions with industry professionals. Students were either taking a top-up year to their Foundation course in Broadcast Media, or were completing the level six 'Creative Enterprise' module.

The industry and employability focus was clear in comments from the studio's director when describing his and the technical demonstrator's involvement: »

We're working in the industry trying to drum up business for ourselves, so we know one of the key things to get anywhere in the business is to know what the business wants: how you fit in the business; what value you add to the business; are you connected with the business; are you networking with the business?

The aim of transcending boundaries and developing a space in which students were able to realize work within an industry-modeled environment is highlighted in the different priorities and ethos that were described:

I know that within the university the mantra is 'it's not the completion it's the doing that the matters', the process matters more than actually realising it. But I think that if you're going to put people into a real-life working environment, then delivery is very important. So one of the things I've stressed to people here is that actually delivery of a completed film is important.

These 'business-facing' and 'working environment' factors are crucial in distinguishing Artswork Media's commitment to employability. This emphasis can be traced in how students would discuss notions of professionalism.

Creative contexts and creative identity

In discussing their HEFCE project, Thornham and O'Sullivan suggest that, 'recontextualizing the teaching of production skills within a university environment may prove uncomfortable for the university, but it also radically changes the *what* and the *how* of the learning that occurs' (p.733). With Artswork Media, there is a recontextualising of *what* and *how* with regard to the creative economy context and notions of professionalism. The teaching of production skills is recontextualised within the university, and then further recontextualised in this crossover space. As the perspectives and commentaries provided by students illustrate, this studio space was crucial in terms of their understanding of industry and how they came to understand and relate to themselves as potential media workers in-the-making.

Paul du Gay's work on identity is instructive for examining the interplay of identity and context. The notion of 'cultural

making-up' was outlined by du Gay, Salaman and Rees (1996, p.264) as the 'adoption of certain habits or dispositions [that] allows an individual to become – and to become recognised as – a particular sort of person'. This has been developed in terms of the 'specific forms of 'personhood' that individuals acquire as a result of their immersion in, or subjection to, particular normative and technical regimes of conduct' (du Gay, 2007, p.11). The importance of context is highlighted in terms of 'the practical means through which individuals are equipped with the capacities to conduct themselves as particular sorts of persons' (du Gay, 2007, p.23)

The following sample of comments illustrates how students related to the studio space and understood themselves as particular sorts of persons:

It is a nice environment, it feels very professional. You are away from the university for a good part of it [working week]. You just end up feeling much more professional (Student RE).

[Using skills] in a professional environment boosts your confidence and makes you more prepared for the real world (Student RE).

It was more like an office here, so you feel a bit more in charge of the space and the brand (Student MA).

You've got everything you could possibly need and you've got a little restaurant there. You feel you're being quite professional anyway, but you're doing it in this environment so it automatically ups your status to want to work more because of where you are; you don't just feel like you're at uni (Student DK).

In examining findings from the Artswork Media project, the studio space constituted the 'practical means' through which students could strive to conduct themselves as professionals. Artswork Media is situated in Paintworks, 'Bristol's Creative Quarter', and students flagged up the resonances they felt through working in this environment. From comments on the restaurants, branding, equipment, proximate businesses, and client and work relationships, students discussed the ways in

which they understood 'professional media worker' as a form of personhood.

The sense of being 'professional' ran alongside accounts of being 'creative'. Professionalism and creativity were interweaved so that to be professional relied on channeling and understanding creativity in ways that echoed professional workers' practices. In this respect, the lead on being creative was taken from professionals who, in being 'professional', are seen to embody and practice creativity. These comments point to the language of 'creativity' that was commonplace within interview sessions:

Everyone around you is creative so you feel you fit in (DK).

It's just really nice to be in a creative environment because Paintworks is obviously the creative port of Bristol [...] and they'll be lots of creatives there as well (MA).

When you are making films it is about being creative (BA).

This is not to claim that the discourse (or doctrine) of creativity that Schlesinger (2007) discusses is being adopted by students in a clear cut or instrumental manner, but rather that creativity was referred to and employed in how students made sense of their practices and articulated how they could understand and relate to themselves. Importantly, du Gay suggests that personhood is limited and distributed in that it does not refer to an essence that one has all the time. Rather, the approach is to explore the means and contexts that individuals have to 'understand and relate to themselves as persons' (2007, p.88). Alongside the broader area and the dedicated studio space, the presence of industry practitioners was noted as significant.

Thornham and O'Sullivan highlight Lindahl Elliot's comments that professionals are not socially nor discursively neutral and that practitioner-lecturers bring with them notions of 'professional identity, relation and order' (2000, p.27 cited 2004, p.723; see also Ashton, 2009). Artswork Media is a specific place underpinned by notions of how a professional space could be constituted. Care was taken to highlight that particular demands, for example on time and resources, were

not as pressing as within a commercial, media production studio. It was rather that this was a space for development and transition. Or, noting the creative economy talent discourse, where creative skills can be honed.

Employability and creative skills

Through the framing of personhood and the comments from students, an 'industry-ready creative' form of personhood may be described. This form of personhood is bound up with the employability discourse introduced earlier and is nuanced in terms of creativity.

In terms of being industry-ready, students were equipped and trained with contemporary industry products: 'we make sure that we keep apace with the industry that they're going into [and] wherever they are in that cycle they will be always be at a correct point'. Moreover, being industry-ready in terms of attributes was also expressed. The focus group references to 'generic skills' such as team working and communication connects here with the attributes of 'individuality, originality, and analysis' and 'learning to think' that were identified as sought-after by the employers that Thornham and O'Sullivan interviewed (2004, p.725). These examples indicate that the studio space fostered a sense of what counts as important for heightening employability. These comments can be seen to resonate with the student perception on production work and employability that Thornham and O'Sullivan identified: 'when asked specifically about improving employability, many students focused on increasing the amount of production work in the syllabus or on work placements' (2004, p.727). Further to these points on production work and placements, I would stress that improving employability is intricately connected with questions of identity and how students would articulate professionalism and creativity.

Through the interviews and participant observations, employability can be identified with the forms of identity and articulations of professionalism and creativity that were developed in a specific space. Being an 'industry-ready creative' signals expectations about proficiency in equipment that can be documented in a precise manner, and the more intangible 'professional' and 'creative' quality about using that equipment. Creative skills and talent resides in the melding »

of technical production skills, generic graduate skills, and 'creative' application.

In the final section, I will consider that if the studio is the context for forming professional identities, how could it also be the context for reflecting on these identities?

Reflexive and sensitive

The 'industry-ready creative' framing has been introduced to highlight processes, at the intersection of industry and higher education, through which students prepare for working in the creative industries. However, as Rosalind Gill and Andy Pratt (2008, p.19) argue, 'to understand emergent subjectivities [...] we need to understand not only the possible becomings, but also the *not-becomings'*. Mark Banks' study of cultural entrepreneurs can help us to consider how students who are attentive to notions of professionalism and creativity within a specific context could be encouraged to explore and interrogate them. In other words, rather than seeing being 'professional' and being 'creative' as equaling 'employability', how else can these ways of relating to oneself be explored? At the core of this is a rethinking of what professionalism and creativity can be about when untied from or repositioned in relation to employability.

As Banks (2006, p.465) outlines:

A number of our entrepreneurs revealed themselves to be self-reflexive and sensitive actors, acutely aware of the embeddedness of their firm within a particular geographical and social milieu, and concerned to achieve a balance between the pursuit of instrumental goals and the articulation of moral-political values of socially useful character.

The significance of articulating 'moral-political values' was highlighted by Artswork Media's director:

They're setting up businesses, so they're supporting an area; there's a social enterprise element to it. That's an interesting thing to consider in a place like this - to what extent you want to impose some sort of value? I think that could be quite appealing to students because

[they] are very interested in issues of environmental, social, community, etc. It's interesting that actually quite a lot of the stuff we've been doing already has had an environmental angle.

Moreover, as highlighted by du Gay's focus on context and Banks' reference to geographical and social milieu, the studio context may prove crucial in exploring these diverse articulations of the 'creative' and 'professional'. As hinted at here, wider social concerns are evident. Given that social concerns are evident as part of the concerns that students' raise, I would suggest that the studio context could be a revealing space for exploring social concerns connected with employability and the media industries (see Gill and Pratt, 2008). Banks (2006, p.466), highlights that, 'beyond the caricature of the individualized, desocialized creative, some entrepreneurs may be recast as progressive, motivated actors that pursue varied ends in the context of place-embedded cultural work'. Adopting Banks' comments and recognizing the engagement with social concerns already evident, how could the identities that are emerging within the student space be explored within this space?

Noting the contextualisations of learning noted earlier, the studio space could be the context for the formation *and* recontextualisation of creative identities. Instructive for such a place-embedded exploration of identity could be Sara Bragg's (2007) 'everyday pedagogies' approach that attends to the personal investments and desires of students (such as a career in the media industries).

Summary

The creative economy investment in creative identities calls for an analysis of employability that engages with questions of identity alongside technical competence and transferable skills. Exploring the contexts and practical means for the formation of particular forms of personhood responds to this. Whilst perhaps not widespread, the studio space embodies the increasing importance placed on industry engagement and employability. It also provides an opportunity for exploring situated identity practices. Following Banks' suggestions, care should be taken not to reduce a concern for employability and being industry-ready to a limited

instrumental drive. Instead, there are opportunities to recognize a wide range of meanings and concerns (i.e, social and environmental). In doing so moreover, we can be alert to how analysis of specific contexts and place-embedded work can be revealing. In this respect, notions of 'professional' and 'creative' fostered in a particular space can equally and productively be explored and contested within that space. Employability should not exist as a distinct set of attributes that can be acquired, but examined as a way in which an individual can come, or not, to understand and relate to themselves.

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Biography

Dr Daniel Ashton is is Senior Lecturer in Media and Cultural Studies. This paper emerges out of his current 'Media Studies, Higher Education Pedagogy and the Industry-Ready Agenda' research project supported by a Promising Research Fellowship from Bath Spa University. He has published recently with *Journal of Education and Work* and *Journal of Media Practice.*

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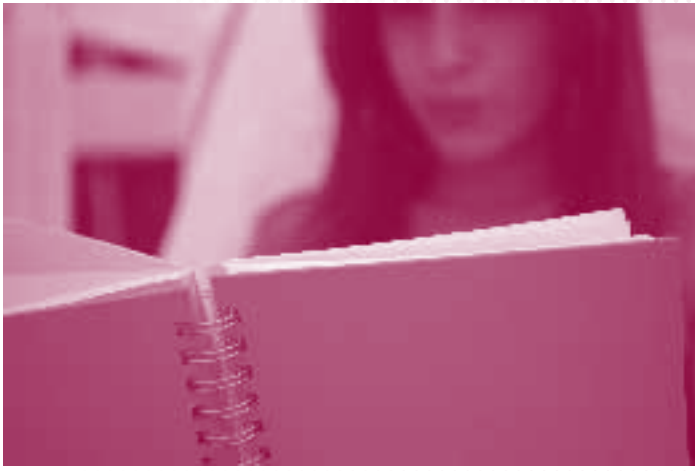
Square pegs in round holes:

What impact do outcomes have on creative subjects within Higher Education?

By Louise Ramage, Department of Adult and Continuing Eduation (DACE), University of Glasgow

This article investigates how Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) impact on the outcomes and systems of creative subjects within Higher Education (HE) by examining the context of assessment matters within Higher Education (HE), the ILOs within this context and the subsequent effect this model has on the context of creative courses. Drawing on the current research of key theorists and policy makers such as the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA), further analysis is made of the university system requirements discussed and their active working role in creative subjects. It concludes by highlighting the necessary need for change to the ILO structure to better accommodate creative courses at university level.

Access the full article at:
http://www.adm.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/features

5 Projects

Creating Relationships: Effective higher education and media industry partnerships

This project is part of the HEFCE Workforce Development Programme funded via Skillset, the Sector Skills Council for Creative Media.

Skillset has asked ADM-HEA to produce a resource with the aim of offering:

- support to other media courses and departments on creative and media industry guided curriculum development and workforce development;
- general guidance to other areas of higher education aimed at creative industries, for example: the fine arts, design and performing arts.

The resource will take the form of 17 case studies; one from each of the participating Skillset Media Academies. Each case study will provide an example of how effective engagements with media industry partners are formed, how this has shaped the design and delivery of courses and/or how education for those already learning in the workplace is provided.

The case studies will help answer questions such as:

- How was the engagement formed? Was it an approach evolved from an external partner, existing networks (through teachers who work in the HEI and in industry), brokered by Skillset or an RDA?
- How was the activity implemented, for example, what staff, resources and other enablers were required?
- What were the barriers and how were these overcome? For example, what were the cultural and organisational differences in expectation, such as HEI's validation and QA process versus?
- What were the benefits of the engagement? How has the engagement added value to the experience of students on undergraduate /postgraduate programmes? Were there benefits to teaching staff, such as opportunities to up-date industry skills? Have other 'spin-off' projects emerged such as joint ventures, knowledge transfer and/or research?

- How did the Media Academy develop its curriculum for work-based learners? How was curriculum content identified, what kinds of learning and teaching activities were employed? What was the site of learning? For example, did it take place in a work environment?
- Has the experience provoked structural change in the HEI? Is there any evidence for the engagement contributing to institutional strategic development?
- Is the engagement sustainable? How, and in what form, will the engagement evolve when the development funding ends?

The participating Skillset Academies will also be asked to complete a questionnaire to provide quantitative and qualitative data on the impact of their activities on students and the scale and range of their industry collaborations.

Together, the case studies and questionnaire results will be included in a single, integrated report being »

produced by David Clews, Co-Director of ADM-HEA.

The report will offer an overview, the background and scale of the project, the number of students and creative and media industry businesses, organisations and individuals involved in the Academies. It will make the positive experiences and lessons learned apparent to a wider audience including senior managers in HE, FE and sector agencies, creative and media industry and government departments and agencies. An analysis of all the case studies will aim to provide a better understanding of effective practice, suggest factors informing this and how it can be applied in other contexts.

The Media Academies have been invited to submit draft case studies during June, 2010 and the final report is expected to be completed by January, 2011.

The Skillset Academies were set up within UK colleges and universities and designated as Media and Screen Academies for excellence and quality in education and skills training in television, interactive media and film. Their intention is to collaborate seamlessly with industry partners to develop new curricula, innovative teaching, research and development and students' business acumen.

For more information visit: http://www.hefce.ac.uk/econsoc/ employer/

http://www.skillset.org

Blended Learning Works: enhancing and enriching an art and design community through learning technology

// The School of Art & Design at the University of Wolverhampton has been successful in its application to the second round of the Higher Education Academy's Discipline-focused Learning Technology Enhancement Academy.

The carefully selected project team includes proposal co-authors Marc Austin, Technology Supported Learning Coordinator and Dr Lindsey Marshall, Principal Lecturer for Learning and Teaching. Jon Rhodes joins the team from the Centre for Learner Support in his capacity as Technical Blended Learning Advisor, with Sharon Watts, Course leader for Fashion and Textile Design, an experienced and student-focused academic.

The team is completed by Gemma Oldfield. Gemma is a second-year Visual Communication student specialising in Multimedia who is happy to be involved and enthusiastic about bringing a student perspective to project work. She says her involvement in the project offers an exciting and challenging opportunity to work with staff.

This ambitious project seeks to engage staff from all disciplines in the School of Art & Design in the use of technology enhanced learning and approaches to Blended Learning. This is in light of the University of Wolverhampton developing a new curriculum, moving from a 15 to 20 credit structure for delivery in 2010/11. The aim is to enhance and enrich the student experience, supporting the development of a learning community and providing opportunities for interaction and reflection in a variety of situations, not just classroom-based.

The project aims to create an interactive, innovative and well-researched means of using technology to enhance learning and, at the same time, help to provide parity of experience for all students irrespective of discipline, (dis)ability, culture and learner environment.

Marc Austin, Project Leader University of Wolverhampton

For further information about the project contact m.austin@wlv.ac.uk

New ADM-HEA Projects
Eleven projects launched within three key themes

// **This year's ADM-HEA project funding round focused on three key themes for ADM-HEA's work during the current year:**

- Education for Sustainable Development

- Quality enhancement and student assessment.

- Student Engagement.

51 applications were received and all eleven of the successful project holders were invited to attend a one-day event at the Custard Factory in Birmingham on 9 March, 2010.

The aims of the day were to: provide opportunities to share practice and network with colleagues and to enable ADM-HEA to offer project support and guidance on completion requirements including evaluation and dissemination of project outcomes.

The day proved to be a very useful information sharing exercise, with potential collaboration opportunities identified, particularly for those undertaking projects under the Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) banner where, in discussion, common ground between project holders became immediately apparent.

Interim and final reports from the projects will be published in *Networks* and what follows are abstracts from the successful project proposals within the themes:

Quality enhancement and student assessment

Title: An examination of art and design student formative assessment and feedback - its relationship to learning outcomes and learning experiences.

Project Holder: Dr. Bernadette Blair, Kingston University

This project explores student assessment in art and design delivered through the formative and ipsative feedback available to students. How do the discipline areas of art and design ensure that students understand and learn from the formative feedback given in relation to project/module learning outcomes? Using constructive alignment, it examines how this feedback relates to learning outcomes and how examples of good practice can enhance students' learning experiences.

Although there has been a good deal of literature around feedback, assessment and learning in pedagogic research in Higher Education (Askew & Lodge, 2000; Baume, Yorke & Coffey, 2004; Biggs, J., 2003; Black & Wiliam, 2003; Harlen & James,1997; Rust, 2002) and a growing research body of work around assessment and feedback in the art, design & media sector (Austerlitz & Aravot, 2002; Blair, 2003,2004,2006,2007; Davies, 2000, 2002; Crooks, 2001; Shreeve, Baldwin, Faraday, 2003; Orr, 2004, 2007) the »

sector does not seem to have a common interpretation or understanding of what feedback is and how this informs learning (Cannatella, 2001).

This project aims to capture and analyse multiple perspectives, based on scholarship of teaching and learning, and use this increased understanding to develop professional development materials for staff and students in art and design.

Title: Quality enhancement and prospective quality assurance through teaching exchange workshops in media and communications.

Project Holders: Mehita Iquani, Kings College London and Anna Feigenbaum, Richmond University

Our project aims to generate a workshop model that contributes to teaching quality enhancement and quality assurance through 'Teaching Exchange' (TE) workshops focused on enhancing the student experience. These workshops respond to the need for a proactive, collaborative and reflexive 'ground-up' approach to quality enhancement and quality assurance. In addition to providing a forum for exchange and discussion amongst teaching staff at various career and experience levels, the workshops themselves will generate two tangible outputs: (1) a school/ department specific best-practices summary sheet for each participating institution and (2) a Teaching Exchange handbook for broader institutional

use with information on the process of implementing the workshop and its contributions to quality assurance and quality enhancement. Successfully piloted in the LSE's Media and Communications department in May 2009, with further enrichment the 'Teaching Exchange Workshop' has the potential to become a key tool for departmental management, curriculum development, the cultivation of a 'quality culture' and the enhancement of the student experience. Toward this aim we will host a series of 'Teaching Exchange Workshops' at six diverse institutions in the UK. The transcripts and outcomes of these workshops will then be critically evaluated toward the production of a TE handbook and dissemination of findings.

Title: Artfully Assessing Artwork: An investigation into grading and feedback practices in art and design

Project Holder: Dr Susan Orr, York St John University

Not enough is known about how art and design lecturers make judgements about student artwork. Whilst there has been a proliferation of learning outcomes and assessment criteria there is very little research that identifies how these are used/interpreted/ignored when lecturers assign grades to artwork.

The aim of this project is to explore how art and design lecturers approach marking and feedback. The study will focus on how lecturers mark

artwork through engagement with the assessment criteria and learning outcomes. This study aims to identify the extent to which lecturers use personalised and/or tacit criteria. This study will also look at the ways student feedback statements are constructed. The purpose of the project is to *inform* and *enhance* marking and feedback practice to *contribute* to the literature in this under-researched field.

Student Engagement

Title: Linked

Project Holder: Christine Blaney, University of Ulster

The *Linked* project actively promotes student engagement by involving students across disciplines and students from 'other' year groups in peer interaction via dynamic, motivating, meaningful and fun workshops.

It is evident that students are keen to participate in and engage with peer and interdisciplinary groups to develop their learning but require a formalized environment for this to take place. The project uses peer interaction and experiential learning to engage students in, '...the whole of the experience of being a student' (Anderson and Boud, 1996).

The *Linked* project aims to develop student engagement and learning via experimental drawing activities (traditional and digital).

The project provides activities, experiences and forums for discussion that connect students to their peers and enhance the 'whole student experience'.

Title: FdA Creative *Networks*

Project Holder: Michael Smith, South Cheshire College

Many students in the field of design and media find it increasingly difficult to gain credible industry experience in the early stages of their training. The project will provide students on FdA Graphics and Digital Media with opportunities to counteract this issue in the form of live briefs from commercial clients through the establishment of an online talent pool.

The formation of the web-based FdA Creative *Networks* portal will allow the hosting of incoming live briefs from industry enabling students to engage with commercial clients on a formal basis, under the guidance of specialist tutors from within the college. A facility for client and peer feedback will be incorporated, as will the opportunity for wider feedback and evaluative processes.

Students will take ownership of their own profiles giving them control over how they present themselves and their work to clients.

Essentially, the portal will allow FdA Graphics and Digital Media students to engage with industry in professional

business facing relationships, providing valuable CV building experiences and opportunities in the early stages of their design careers.

A direct support network will be

provided with specialist staff on hand to help students tackle the live briefs, providing a buffer for industrial engagement.

FdA Creative *Networks* will be transferable to other groups of HE students (e.g. photography, film production). Equally, knowledge and experiences will be shared among the Creative Industries Curriculum Group. As the lead partner in this, South Cheshire College welcomes the opportunity to share its experiences wider across the HE sector.

Title: From 'the course reading pack' to 'the liquid reader'

Project Holder: Joanna Zylinska, Goldsmiths, University of London

This project proposes to problematise the one-way, closed form of knowledge transfer in university education that is encompassed by the static, photocopiable 'course reading pack' - typically designed by course leaders and handed out to students. Moving beyond this format, it seeks to engage art, design and media students in a dynamic pedagogic process of devising a fluid, open-access, online 'reader'. The content and form of the reader will be negotiated, updated and altered

by students themselves, under the guidance of the course leader. The outcome will be an innovative, student-centred, customisable learning tool which will involve students in curriculum design. Promoting the socially significant 'open scholarship' and 'open learning' under the open access agenda, these liquid readers will be easily disseminated, free of cost, across the art, design and media community nationally and internationally, via a collaboration with the Open Humanities Press' Liquid Books Project.

Education for Sustainable Development Theme

Title: Sparking Sustainability

Project Holders: Alex Lockwood & Caroline Mitchell, University of Sunderland

This project aims to increase student engagement with Sustainable Development through teaching and learning activities that explore the possibilities available in the practice of 'communicating sustainability'.

Students from radio and journalism departments at Sunderland University will gain critical knowledge and practical skills in producing 'sustainable' content and practising 'sustainable' processes that will amplify the project's reach through the university's partnerships with local and community media, in particular radio station Spark FM and the Sunderland Echo, integrating experiences of student life and the lives »

of people of Sunderland and the North East of England.

The project will help us to develop problem-based learning curricula to 'spark' student engagement and self-determined understandings of sustainability in personal, local and universal contexts. While articles, radio programming and online/transmedia narratives are measurable outputs, the focus remains on how the stakeholders involved—students, staff and local communities—can develop competencies for living more sustainably beyond the lifespan of the project.

We see this as the pre-cursor to a programme of engagement with sustainability among broadcast and journalism departments across the UK.

Title: Visual tools for sustainable design education

Project Holder: Dr Vicky Lofthouse, Loughborough University

This projects sets out to investigate the requirements and identify the attributes of resources to support the social element of sustainable design education. It will identify the types of topics which are relevant to designers, then feed these findings into the redevelopment of the 'Ecodesign web' (used widely by higher education institutions to support some elements of sustainable design teaching), but which only focuses on environmental issues, into a 'Sustainable design web' which will additionally support the social

element of sustainability. This new 'Sustainable design web' will be tested and refined.

Title: Communicating Science and Environmental Issues

Project Holder: Jairo Lugo, University of Stirling

The project is responding to a call from the Research Councils UK (RCUK) which has encouraged media departments across the UK to deliver teaching that can facilitate the understanding of science in general and environmental issues in particular. It aims to develop a model for a new module/course on science communication, with particular emphasis on environment and sustainability. The idea is to design guidelines for teaching students undertaking undergraduate courses in media and/or journalism how to report and communicate science in general and environmental issues in particular.

The project falls into the category of education for sustainable development and it will assist the development of curricula that will provide media and journalism students with the necessary skills and knowledge to participate and help shape the science and environmental debates. It also aims to deliver basic media skills to science students, as the module would be open to other disciplines. The main outcome will be a model for teaching science communication in the context of media and journalism courses in the UK. In so doing, it will present options

and recommendations for curriculum design, teaching delivery, pedagogical strategies and assessment and evaluation modalities.

Title: Developing New Regional Talent for the Welsh Creative Industries

Project Holder: Dr Gary Pritchard, Newport School of Art, Design & Media, University of Wales

The Welsh Assembly Government has recently established the University of the Heads of the Valley's Institute (UHOVI). The University of Glamorgan (UoG) and the University of Wales, Newport (UoWN) are lead partners in establishing a bold project to help regenerate one of Wales' most economically deprived areas, engaging 4000 new learners in the process.

The School of Art, Media & Design at Newport will play a crucial role in the UHOVI project, leading initiatives to encourage these new cohorts to go on and serve as entrepreneurial pioneers in the creative industries. A central plank of this objective is to support the identification and development of new talent in students in the region.

This project aims to fully develop accessible audio and visual resources drawing on the established research and successful integration of Dr Gary Pritchard's 'strengths-based learning' initiative. A strengths-based approach involves a process of assessing, teaching and designing experiential learning activities to help students

identify, develop and apply their strengths and talents in the process of learning, intellectual development, and academic achievements to levels of personal excellence.

Funding for this project will facilitate an interactive resource that will be accessible in both face-to-face and virtual (off campus) contexts.

Title: Tools for teaching and learning in fashion that contribute to all our collective futures.

Project Holder: Nina Stevenson, London College of Fashion

How can we integrate the principles of design for sustainability into teaching and learning practice so that designers can share a collective approach whilst retaining their individuality? This requires a collective building of knowledge, skills and values in order to develop approaches and tools to individually engage with a collectively agreed set of challenges and opportunities. This is a very new approach for fashion design – a discipline characterised by its elusive nature, its secrecy and its fierce protection of ideas and rights to ownership. It requires a new approach where trust can be fostered and an understanding that it is not knowledge that gives creativity, it is its application. Through a nurturing of thinking, sharing and developing of knowledge and practice, we can evolve ways in which we can teach and learn better ways to approach both what we do and how we do it.

Conclusion

All the projects are of 12 months duration and will complete at the end of May 2011. Updates on the projects will appear in future issues of *Networks* and on our website at: http://www.adm. heacademy/projects/adm-hea-projects/ learning-and-teaching-projects-2010-11

6 Reviews

Inspiring Writing in Art and Design: taking a line for a write

Author: Pat Francis

Publisher: Intellect

Publication date: 2009

ISBN: 978-1-84150-256-4

Price: £14.95

Review by Jac Cattaneo, Cultural and Supporting Studies Coordinator, Northbrook College Sussex

// A few years ago I signed up for a workshop with Pat Francis at the University of the Arts; the session offered strategies for tutors who were involved in encouraging art, design and media students to write. When I strolled into the seminar room, I was met by a kindergarten table: piles of brightly coloured paper spread in luminous fan shapes, lolly sticks and fabric, paper plates, scissors, string and glue pots. A man in a suit asked worriedly if this was the right place for Contextual Studies. The workshop leader beamed and nodded. For a moment I thought she was going to hand him a smock.

Pat Francis is a sessional specialist writing and dyslexia tutor at the University of the Creative Arts. Her book *Inspiring Writing in Art and Design* is a collection of ideas she has developed, initially with individual dyslexic students, and then later in workshops like the one I attended. Most art, design and media degrees have an academic requirement which involves oral presentations, essays and a dissertation module. Most art, design and media students baulk at this – not only because many are dyslexic or spatially orientated, but because they feel that they came to college to work with materials, images and design processes, not words. Those of us who teach Cultural or Contextual Studies often have to overcome our students' strong resistance to writing. This book is intended for use by students as well as the support and academic tutors who teach them.

Inspiring Writing in Art and Design is comprehensive in its scope, using theory gained from the Writing PAD project (purposeful writing in art and design), as well as creative writing practice and insights from art and literature. The book's core principle is that writing needs to be practised in the context of creativity, rather than as a set of academic rules and rigours. Francis proposes that when writing practice is fun and creative, the insight gained by students will allow them to develop the skills necessary for the written requirements of a degree course. But this is not an instrumental approach, working inexorably towards the conventions of academic form. Many of the methods Francis suggests, such as a range of ways of using reflective journals, produce outcomes which enhance students' understanding of both theory and practice. Francis talks about breaking down in order to build up; this methodology of analysis and synthesis always seems to result in a new whole.

The book is divided into a number of sections, although the material contained in each is not discrete and there is often an overlap of methods and themes. An introduction is followed by a section on 'Connecting Inspiration, Theory and Practice,' which cites influences ranging from Riding and Rayner's theory of learning preferences to a Guardian article by Jeanette Winterson. There is then a brief discussion on 'The Process Visual', a model for visualising the writing process.

The introductory chapters are followed by Section 1: *Principles*. This section is broken down into 'Methods', 'Reading', 'Practice and Process' and 'The Writer: Self and Others'. Section 2 is *Practicals* which, as Francis states in the book's Resume, is 'full of short and useful exercises.' Section 3 is 'full of *Examples*.' 'Full' is the correct description, because each page is bursting with ideas. For example, page 52, in the Methods section of Principles, is titled *Postcards*. On this single page there are paragraphs on the collection of postcards by Ringo Starr memorialising the Beatles era, Beth Nelson's use of postcards to aid the construction of an artist's journal and Tom Phillip's National Gallery exhibition of postcards as an archive of social history; these examples lead to a discussion of the ways in which a tutor could use postcards to encourage the telling of stories, generate research and reflect on personal histories and memories.

This sheer wealth of ideas, a strength of the resource, does run the risk of bewildering the reader. I have found the intersecting organisation of material difficult to negotiate, although as I continue to make use of the book, its logic may become more apparent. An example of this kind of overlap would be Francis's discussion of 'reflectionnaires'. The concept is explained in 'Methods' (Section 1), with the comment that 'a few samples are given in Section 2.' My personal preference would be for the theory and practice to be in the same place, particularly as 'theory' here is only a description of method. However, both the 'Contents' pages and 'Index' are comprehensive, so the determined reader is able to make connections across the various sections and subsections of the text.

Francis' methods range from the conceptual to the material; her gift is that she is able to make both accessible to the reader. Often the two are combined, as when she discusses the notion of Time from a philosophical standpoint by drawing on paper plates. Her acknowledgement of the common reaction 'Oh this is like Blue Peter' reminded me of that workshop and the horrified look on the be-suited gentleman's face. An hour later he was happily writing on fabric swatches and bus tickets. While this may not be the most obvious way to persuade undergraduate art, design and media students to write essays, it could work as the first stage of re-casting writing as a creative activity. The book also comprehensively covers the later steps of 'Working Towards Essays', including 'Reading and Noting Techniques', 'Structuring' ('Classifying and Clumping') and 'Viewpoints'.

Inspiring Writing in Art and Design is an excellent resource for all those who wish to engage art, design and media students in the practice of writing. It contains a comprehensive bibliography which testifies to the breadth and depth of the author's research. I intend to choose a few key methods to use with students over the course of the next academic year, but there are probably enough suggestions here to last the rest of my professional life. I would highly recommend Pat Francis's generous and inspiring book.

Culture and Power in Cultural Studies: The Politics of Signification

Author: John Storey

Publisher: Edinburgh University Press,

Publication date: 2010

ISBN: 978 0 7486 4015 7

Price: £57.00

Review by Steve Hanson, Lecturer in Cultural Studies, Hereford College of Arts

// These essays and chapters were originally written between 1986 and the present day, and are re-published here under the themes of 'power' and 'the politics of signification'. This is not just an introductory book, nor an arbitrary anthology, it bears repeat reading and contains a very complex, well-linked set of critiques.

The term 'signification' makes the text essential for our purposes and Storey essentially begins where my students do, with Raymond Williams and his notoriously widescreen explanation of 'culture', before moving into its re-theorizing, via the work of Stuart Hall and others at the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS), who imported Gramsci and 'hegemony'. Storey then takes us through 'culture' and 'power' many times, weaving example after example into theory.

Raymond Williams began a similar journey across borders and ideas, through the lives and ruins of cultures, only a short walk from the lecture theatre in which I teach, for his essay 'Culture Is Ordinary', in 1958. Williams was collapsing high and low culture, moving away from F.R. Leavis and his generation. Fifty-odd years have changed nothing in that sense, 'culture' is still upper-case Ordinary, everyday, but worthy of serious attention, and Storey's book holds strongly to that idea.

The point of this text is to allow people access to the tools with which they might take culture to pieces and

CULTURE
POWER
JOHN STOREY

...understanding now how signification and power courses through both Photoshop and institutional hierarchies, can only prepared their (students) for the 'real world', which critics of this kind of book claim to exist beyond its pages.

see how it operates. Understanding signification creates more effective communicators in any media industry, and sharper contemporary artists. In my experience, students who are starting out either leap right through cultural artefacts, searching for 'deep' meanings, which may ultimately be fugitive, or they remain on the thinnest of surfaces, tending to naturalize them. 'Depth' is a misleading term to use here though. What Storey often does is account for the way any one cultural artefact brings other significatory surfaces into play. In his example of recent car advertising, he shows how the automobile is often presented as solitary, rather than just another atom of congestion, essentially using discourse analysis to show that what is missing is just as important, sometimes, as what is presented or re-presented. The car advert reveals the myth of the individual, lone vehicle. This is a point Storey makes in passing, to illustrate something else, but it alerts me to the usefulness and scope of this text for students. It also serves, for me, as a metaphor for the doing of cultural studies, which should link isolated objects up to the wider social world and its issues.

Raymond Williams took his journey on a bus, Storey occasionally arrives in a

Rolls Royce, grandly stepping out to declare it a charabanc: 'Ceci n'est pas une Roller!' He describes the increasing visibility of opera in advertising, on film soundtracks, tracing this back to the invention of opera as art, in nineteenth-century Manchester. He collapses the continuing distinctions between art and entertainment, rightly seeing the danger in elitist discourses.

Storey then describes how 'the sixties' are articulated in an imaginary form, in and through the 1990s. Key to this is understanding how some seriously edgy narratives get channelled into consumerism for profit. This could be what Marcuse called, in that notorious mouthful, 'repressive desublimation', only Storey allows for agency at the same time as he accounts for the entertainment market's unstoppable assimilation, on permanent cruise control. 'Agency' here is a kind of lower-case 'resistance', the often-overlooked caveat to Foucault's work.

Storey turns things over thoroughly, viewing them as prisms. The range of examples he works through is appreciated. Taken together they explain how we can go in any historical direction, making different sized leaps, from the 1960s to the 1990s, or the 1880s to the 1980s, and make

some very potent insights about *now*. Grand-narrative history may be off the curriculum for good, but Storey does what Fredric Jameson urges - he always historicizes.

We know that Santa doesn't exist, but the essay on how Christmas was invented is a gift, not a disappointment. Exposing historical 'invention' is Storey's craft. He reveals the hidden, understanding how culture is made and re-made, rather than imagining it as developing from some original point of authenticity. This book does what all great cultural studies courses and texts should. It shows that the floor we stand on is less stable than we previously thought. As room-shakers we run risks though, if students leave lectures ever so slightly disturbed, things are going well. If they are so alarmed that they never return, we have gone too far. This book will rattle cages, but it also provides some advice on how to rattle back.

The humanities often unwittingly present easy targets for critics. This book's index features 'The Beatles', 'Ulrich Beck' and 'Beethoven, Ludwig van', because Storey considers high and low culture to have been shaken from the shelves, through the history of »

cultural studies, and its aforementioned little quakes. 'Foucault', 'The Four Tops' and 'The Frankfurt School' are a page away, but Storey presents a fast-moving target to the enemy, explaining how discourses are saturated with power at every step, staying with that core, undeniable drive.

He takes his subject seriously, describing how signifying practices such as melodrama and acid rock can reach outside their spaces of signification, for instance in a three night theatre run, and point to issues and debates outside that space. These are crucial things for students to understand. To see how power both shapes meaning and shape-shifts through it is possibly one of the few guaranteed transferrable skills any art college now provides. But then I would say that, wouldn't I, and perhaps I should also point to myself pointing it out, in a review of a book on cultural studies and power, by a cultural studies lecturer.

On my return from Planet Meta-, I find a country preparing to measure research via 'economic and social impact', so we do need to remember these points. Software packages change faster than Vice-Chancellors, but these issues remain, for media students as much as fine art acolytes, and

understanding how signification and power courses through both Photoshop and institutional hierarchies can only prepare them for the 'real world', which critics of this kind of book claim to exist beyond its pages.

Each case study confirms this. Storey re-inserts politics into the work of Matthew Arnold, claiming that he was hegemonic, as essentially a reformist, urging for the middle classes to step up to leadership and displace the aristocracy, rather than the more revolutionary recommendations posited by Marx. Arnold had some unpleasant things to say about the middle classes, but Storey reveals how cultural critics need to go further than the rhetoric on the surface, locating deeper veins, and even blacker track marks, on the skin of culture.

His 'symptomatic' reading of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* shows how it attempts to construct 'bad' imperialisms, which are bracketed off from British forms. In this case, the 'bad form' is Belgian, re-situating *Heart of Darkness* in a nationalist discourse, even though it is identifiably anti-imperialist, thus teasing out and revealing hidden strands of hegemony. Storey returns us to the way in which cultural texts refer to grand-narrative power discourses

such as imperialism at the same time as they resist them, creating ambivalences, as well as meanings, in their semi-lit, beating centres, with all of their shadows.

This level of nuance in Storey's critique is exemplary, a target for students to aim at, as a level of attainable detail, even if their take on the subject might be very different. At the end of this last chapter I sense a way in which reading Conrad like this might lead us to question more contemporary cultural documents and ask the 'imperialism' question of them all over again, in the manner Storey so ably demonstrates.

I have described how certain 'c' words have shameful connotations on this island before, connotations which need inverting, and so here 'c' stands for both 'clever' and 'compliment'.