



Aston Business School

# **Good Practice Guide in Learning and Teaching**

**Volume 7**

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## EDITORIAL

It is with great pleasure that we launch this, our Seventh Good Practice Guide. Over the last seven academic years we have published over 60 articles produced by a wide range of academic and administrative staff. Not only has the Good Practice Guide become a bit of an institution at Aston Business School, it is also testament to the active engagement and innovation in Learning and Teaching, which the School has become known for. It is pleasing that this work is now being recognised as important across the University, and we are grateful for this.

As last year, some of the contributions have arrived as a result of CLIPP Learning and Teaching grants, while others have been commissioned following innovation identified in annual Module Reflection Forms. The articles continue to represent some of the current preoccupations of Learning and Teaching practitioners, both at Aston and nationally. The key themes are Diversity, Interaction and Reflection.

There is a continual need for academic staff to find ways of engaging students in the learning process. Two of the challenges currently facing academic staff are the wide variety of experiences and backgrounds that students have and how to engage students who are now used to the many different and currently developing methods of communication (particularly electronic) available.

In order to ensure that students from all backgrounds are prepared for the challenge of their University education, Binner has produced a document which is handed out to students on the undergraduate module Economic Environment of Business. Her paper, 'Approach on how to be a good student' outlines the reasons for this attempt to manage diverse expectations and the results so far.

Embracing new technology, Feiereisen describes the use of videotaping student presentations on the postgraduate Marketing Psychology module as a way of moving away from passive listening and note taking. She reports that students felt that they learned a lot by watching themselves as they were able to reflect on the experience. Goddard also describes how he was able to engage students on the postgraduate Corporate Governance module. Using a more low-tech method, he was able to introduce interactive learning into his lectures by the use of voting cards. Another feature of this method was the immediate feedback that he was able to give to students in response to their replies. Even in a large group he was able to engage individual students and reply to their individual responses. Goddard admits that electronic voting would also achieve similar results but the voting card system still has several important advantages and could be easily adopted by anyone without much investment of time or resources, to big effect.

Immediate feedback to students was also a theme in the paper by Higson which describes how the Blackboard™ Grade Centre was used on the undergraduate module BN1101 International Foundation of Management. Students, who are now used to on-line communication were encouraged to submit up to five draft reflective journal entries in order to gain immediate feedback. This system enabled students to improve their submissions over a period of 5 weeks and students reported that it made them feel closer to the lecturer.

Foster explores the issues of creating a more positive learning environment for overseas students. At the time of going to print full results are not available but we await her findings with interest. Guillaume's paper, also addressing cultural diversity, highlights the need to raise intercultural awareness because of the difficulty experienced by students of working in culturally diverse groups. He highlights the importance of setting an appropriate task to ensure group members focus on the task rather than their differences. However, he also stresses the need to ensure that the differences are not completely ignored because of the value of diversity. Alpion's paper on a similar theme

reviews the Intercultural Awareness week held in May 2009 and highlights the current good practice across the University in raising intercultural awareness to both staff and students.

Finally, leadership development through embedded learning is described by both Butler and Towl and Senior, who provide the results of their surveys looking at undergraduate attitudes to research training and employability. Both studies show a sensitivity towards students' learning journey and to understand their varying starting points when designing learning.

By request, we have included a short summary of each article below:

<b>Videotaping students presentations</b>	Active learning: videotaping of student presentations for the BMM626 Marketing Psychology module that took place with the help of Aston Media in March 2009
<b>Intercultural Awareness Week – Managing international students' expectations at Aston</b>	How Aston University is facing the challenge of the increasing numbers of international students and assessing the significance of the Intercultural Awareness Week
<b>Approach on how to be a good student</b>	A document that outlined clearly what is expected of students and what they can expect from the lecturer; the quality of the services our students are entitled to is balanced with responsibilities placed upon them. The document explains how students can make the most of the opportunities that the University student experience has to offer in order to maximize the benefits available during their time at University and beyond. It is hoped that this paper could become the first step towards a full Aston University Student Charter.
<b>Use of Blackboard™ Grade Centre for immediate feedback</b>	An effective way of providing formative feedback to students and increasing interaction in the class using the VLE
<b>Leadership development through embedded learning - The case of 'Strategy for Future Leaders</b>	To show how embedded learning can encourage students to consciously articulate their emerging leadership practice which opens up their approach to challenge, testing and change
<b>Undergraduate research training and employability</b>	Undergraduate were surveyed and both the prospective and retrospective attitudes towards research training participation were recorded. It was found that while Psychology undergraduates expect to be trained in contemporary research techniques it is the sense of community development that is the prime motivator for participation. These findings are placed within the context of increasing the employability profile of the undergraduate cohort.
<b>It takes two to tango</b>	Cultural diversity is a double edged sword that can undermine student's learning in work groups, but also has the potential to enrich students' learning experiences. Common interventions (such as setting group tasks, rewarding group rather than individual effort, and asking students to fill in contribution evaluation forms) may well help to overcome the negative effects of cultural diversity. However, only when culturally diverse work groups are able to create a learning environment in which students believe in the value of cultural differences, they will be able to harness cultural diversity for their individual learning.
<b>Creating a positive learning environment for non-EU students</b>	Exploration of the issues of creating a more positive learning environment for overseas students - ongoing research
<b>Voting Cards in lectures: promoting participation and providing feedback</b>	To record experiences and initial reflections on using voting cards in a lecture environment.

This Good Practice Guide continues to be linked with ABS's Research Centre in Higher Education Learning and Management (HELM). One of the highlights of HELM activity each year is its lively seminar series. A list of the HELM seminars for 2009/2010 is listed in **Appendix 1** of this publication. Further details can be obtained from Selena Teeling ([s.teeling@aston.ac.uk](mailto:s.teeling@aston.ac.uk)), who coordinates the HELM seminars. Suggested journals rankings to guide ABS staff who wish to publish in this area are set out in **Appendix 2**.

Finally, we have attached the catalogue of the HELM Sizer Library as **Appendix 3**. Professor John Sizer, who sadly died in 2008 bequeathed his management of higher education collection to HELM and this is being augmented with books and journals on HE pedagogy and management. These items are available to borrow from Selena Teeling in Main Building 6<sup>th</sup> Floor HELM Office.

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# VIDEOTAPING STUDENT PRESENTATIONS

STEPHANIE FEIEREISEN

## Introduction

This report describes the videotaping of student presentations for the BMM626 Marketing Psychology module that took place with the help of Aston Media in March 2009.

## Rationale

Recent evidence suggests that active cooperative learning is a way to build knowledge and skills in marketing courses (Laverie, 2006), as by placing less emphasis on transmitting information and more on developing skills and exploring course material, students are involved in higher-order thinking (Hunt and Laverie, 2004). Videotaping presentations has been identified as an active teaching method, and the adoption of this teaching technique is in line with previous calls for more active methodologies in teaching marketing (Cavaliere and Sgori, 1992; McCorkle, Diriker and Alexander, 1992). "Active" methodologies are those in which the students are participating at a level exceeding listening and note-taking. Students must discuss and/or be engaged in solving marketing research problems (Bonwell and Eison, 1991). Both education and marketing researchers tend to agree that active or high involvement teaching methods are far more effective than passive methodologies. Particularly noteworthy for the present study is the study by Stock, Hugues and Wahl (1990), which compared one active exercise (creating a videotape) with one passive exercise (writing a paper). Based on student feedback and other observations, the authors concluded that students using the active method learned more. Lagace and Longfellow (1989) examined a participative vs. lecture format in increasing students' interest in a sales class. The authors concluded that participative methods i.e. role playing, videotaping presentations and discussions, as opposed to traditional lectures, better encourage students in a sales class to consider sales as a career. According to Baker and Thompson (2004), videotaping student presentations is also an effective way of enhancing students' presentation skills.

I first discussed the possibility of recording student presentations during a meeting organised by Helen Higson and associated with the Postgraduate Certificate in Professional Practice. I was going to teach a MSc module i.e. Marketing Psychology with 120 students. The group coursework required students to design a communications campaign and present it to a panel of examiners. In previous years, 20 groups were presenting during one afternoon, five groups at a time in the same room. Each group had one examiner they had to 'pitch' their campaign to.

However, this format had several limitations. The students had to present at the same time as other groups, which may have caused a disruption. Moreover, a large number of examiners were required to evaluate the presentations, and finding enough examiners who had the expertise to judge students' presentations in this specific area proved difficult.

After exposing these issues, a colleague came up with the idea of videotaping students' presentations. The advantages identified at the time were as follow:

- For the students:
  - They would be able to present separately in a dedicated environment.

- Reflective learning: They would be able to watch a video of their presentation afterwards, which would help them reflect on the content and their presentation skills.
  - Action-based learning: the students would be able to participate actively to the preparation of their presentation
  - Use of technology and e-learning as part of the Virtual Pedagogy initiative.
- For the lecturer:
    - This would make it possible for only one examiner to evaluate the work of the students. This was regarded as an improvement, as the previous format made it impossible for the lecturer to see all student presentations, as they were taking place five at a time.
    - Moreover, this format would enable lecturers to watch student presentations in their own time, but also to replay some parts of the presentations if necessary. This can be useful as an examiner can miss some parts of a 'live' presentation, mostly when required to watch several presentations in a row.
  - For the external examiner:
    - External examiners are usually unable to watch student presentations, and have highlighted this as an issue in the past, as they can only evaluate presentations based on presentation slides. This makes it impossible for them to take into account presentation skills, and the actual content of the whole presentation. Videotaping student presentations would make it possible for the examiner to send a copy of the presentations to the external examiner as the main basis for evaluation.

## The Experience

The twenty student presentations took place in March 2009, and were recorded by Aston Media. The presentations were organised with considerable support from Steve Ellis, Helen Higson, Marika Jones and Leo Coelho.

### *A week before the presentations*

Prior to the presentations, the students were informed that they were expected to wait in a room opposite the recording studio so as not to disturb the presentations taking place before theirs. They were also informed that their presentation would be recorded and that they were expected to look either at the camera (which can be pretty difficult!) or at the lecturer who would be sitting opposite them during the presentation.

Each 15-minute presentation was given a 30-minute slot to account for possible last minute delays. The students were also told that they should arrive 15 minutes in advance.

Technical problems, such as compatibilities between different Powerpoint versions, were considered beforehand. Therefore, although a computer was available in the studio, the students were advised to bring the laptop on which they created the presentation whenever possible.

### *The Day of the Presentations*

At the beginning of each presentation, the students were 'briefed' by Marika Jones, who first informed them of fire alarm regulations. Following this, Marika explained that Leo would be videotaping the presentations from the booth at the back of the room. The students were reminded that they had 15 minutes to present, and that they were expected to look either at the camera or at the examiner sitting in front of them.

Marika then explained to the students that they had to present using a microphone, which was to be held firmly in front of them to avoid unnecessary noises and disturbances in the video.

The students were finally told that the camera would focus on an area behind a desk that could include up to three people, and therefore had to make sure they would stay in this area during the presentation.

### **Positive**

Overall, the experience was a success. The students arrived on time, most presentations ran smoothly. The students were all required to wear suits, which reinforced the professionalism of the experience.

### **Negative**

Some technical issues did arise, mainly related to compatibility issues between different versions of PowerPoint. In the future, lecturers may want to insist that students bring their own laptop whenever possible to minimize this problem. Some groups had also embedded a video in their presentation, and therefore we had to make sure that all videos were working before each presentation.

Holding the microphone properly was an issue for some of the students who tended to shuffle it instead of holding it firmly (due to lack of experience and to the stress of the presentation). In one instance, a student who was particularly stressed turned off the microphone twice during the presentation. The students had not been told that they would be using microphones, and this seemed a rather daunting experience for some of them.

Students also had a tendency to look back towards the main screen which actually did not appear on the video. The result was that on many videos the students are looking backwards a few times during the presentation.

To improve this, a possibility would be to show the students an example of what the video will look like, as the video is divided in two sections:

- video of the person(s) presenting;
- the slides used in the presentation.

## **Feedback**

### *Feedback from students following the presentation*

Feedback was collected from the students following the presentations. The following points were made:

- The experience was very innovative, and could not be compared to any other presentation they had during the MSc programme;
- The experience was more stressful than presenting to a large lecture theatre. This was a particularly interesting comment, as one could have thought that presenting to a room with 100 people would be more stressful than to present in a studio with less than 10 people.
- I also received several emails from students afterwards thanking me for this presentation and telling me that they learned a lot from the presentation and from the format used.

Overall, the feedback received by the students after the presentation was very positive, which is a particularly encouraging point. An interesting anecdote is that one of the students even told me "*now I've done that, I can do anything!*". Furthermore, there were no negative comments regarding the presentation in the module feedback form.

### *Feedback as the lecturer/examiner*

#### **Positive**

From a lecturer's perspective, the use of videos as an evaluation tool was very enjoyable. Students demonstrated a lot of creativity and enthusiasm. Getting such a positive feedback from the students was very rewarding. My role was not only to explain the format of the presentation but also to provide reassurance before and after the presentations as the students were particularly stressed due to the conditions of the presentation.

The format was also helpful to mark the presentations, as I was able to play them in my own time, stop the presentations, rewind etc. The videos were in a very convenient format, supported by MediaSite. I was able to pay more attention to details and notice spelling mistakes I would have probably missed during the presentations, as I had to watch up to twelve presentations in the same day. I found it particularly helpful to be able to stop the presentation to write down my comments/feedback.

#### **Negative**

In terms of the effort required, the time spent attending and marking all the presentations was very demanding. The presentations were running for almost two days. As it was the first time that Aston Media was recording student presentations, I believed it was important for me to attend the presentations to make sure that everything ran smoothly and to provide reassurance to the students. However, in the future it would be useful to develop/follow specific guidelines so that the lecturer does not need to be present throughout all the presentations. I am hoping the present paper will be a first step in developing such guidelines.

### *Feedback from the external examiner*

The feedback from the external examiner was particularly encouraging:

*"Thank you for the comments on the running of the module and the CD with the presentations which I found very interesting and informative. I am happy with the grades given. I was very impressed with the presentations and diaries."*

## **Future Directions**

The teaching method presented here i.e. videotaping student presentations is in line with recent calls for continuous improvements through teaching innovations to effectively reach today's students (Matulich, Papp and Haytko, 2008). Students in today's classrooms comprise what is being called the 'Digital Millennial Learner' or the 'NetGen' learner. The learning environment for this generation should be active, collaborative, experiential, team-based and as self-paced as possible (Twenge, 2006). Today's students prefer to learn from pictures, sound and video, via interactive, engaging and spontaneous methods (Oblinger, 2003), which is why the use of videos and in particular videotaping presentations should be encouraged.

I only used the videos as a format to mark the students' presentations. However, much more could be done with these. A few options include:

- Collecting more specific feedback from the students: Did the experience meet their expectations, did they find it useful, how did it compare with other presentations they had during the year, what emotions did they feel before/during/after the presentation, and importantly did they watch the video after their presentation?

- Asking the student to watch the video of their presentation and to reflect both on the experience and on the end results: how could they improve their future presentations, at university and in the workplace? This would help increase student autonomy and encourage the student to own their learning experience.
- Uploading all the presentations onto a website (possibly on Blackboard™) and asking the students to provide constructive feedback not only on their own presentation but also on other groups' presentations. These actions would all encourage reflective student learning and would be worth considering in the future.

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Example used with BMM626 Marketing Psychology

# INTERCULTURAL AWARENESS WEEK - MANAGING INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS' EXPECTATIONS AT ASTON

DASHI ALPION

## Summary

In this article I initially concentrate on how Aston University is facing the challenge of the increasing numbers of international students. I then assess the significance of the Intercultural Awareness Week which took place in May 2009 followed by some recommendations regarding international students' support at Aston.

## The national context

Increasing the number of international students studying in the UK has been on the Government's agenda for some time. In 1999, the then prime minister, Tony Blair, launched an initiative for International Education, known as the Prime Minister's Initiative (PMI), to recruit more international students (non-EU) to the UK. (<http://www.ukcisa.org.uk/pmi/index.php>). This initiative was very successful; as a result, the recruitment numbers exceeded by an additional 43,000 students. Launched in April 2006, the Prime Minister's Initiative for International Education, phase 2 (PMI2), is a five year strategy which focuses on strengthening the UK's position in international education. The main targets of this strategy are to:

- increase the number of international students coming to study in the UK by an additional 70,000 in HE and 30,000 in FE by 2011;
- ensure that international students studying in the UK have a positive experience of their studies. (<http://www.britishcouncil.org/eumd-pmi2-about.htm>)

The increasing international student population in the UK is very important because they contribute more than £10 billion a year to the UK economy and at the same time enrich the UK's capacity for research, technological growth and innovation. (<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/education/4917642.stm>).

There are several reasons for the increase in the number of international students in the UK. According to Sally Hunt, General Secretary of the University and College Union, "*There is much to celebrate about higher education in the UK, particularly the work done by staff as overall student numbers continue to increase*". (BBC News, <http://bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/education/8271287.stm>, published 2009/09.)

## The Aston context

Increasing international student numbers is a high priority at Aston University and is part of the Aston 2012 strategy. As a result, during the 2008-09 period, international student numbers were 1,944 or 241 students more than in the previous year. This increase in the international student numbers has included students both at undergraduate and postgraduate level.

International students bring cultural diversity to Aston and this can be a good experience for the whole student population. By having a diverse student population, both students and staff will be helped to appreciate the cultural differences that exist as a result of this diversity.

Increasing the number of international students and meeting their expectations are challenges for any institution of Higher Education. Referring to this issue, John Fielden argues in *Global Horizons for UK Universities* that awareness of the intense international competition has led to an increase in the attention given to caring for international students so that they return to their home countries with positive stories about the UK (2007, p. 30).

At Aston University, these challenges are faced head-on. The first step towards meeting such challenges was creating the post of Pro-Vice Chancellor of International Relations in 2006. The post-holder, Professor Helen Higson, acknowledges that “Aston’s growth strategy for the recruitment of international students is challenging but realistic” (*Aspects*, May 2009, p. 15).

The international strategy Aston implemented in 2008 aims to develop a greater international profile by increasing the numbers of international students and by making sure that a high standard of support is provided.

Lacking the resources to support the increasingly growing number of international students will be an ongoing problem for institutions of Further and Higher Education. At Aston, steps have been taken to minimise the resources challenge and as such in 2008 an additional International Students Adviser was recruited and in September 2009 an International Students Employability Adviser was appointed.

Another initiative to maintain high standards of student support was the project carried out by the Working Group for Intercultural Awareness. This group, which was initiated and chaired by the Pro-Vice Chancellor for External Relations in January 2009, included members of staff from across the University. I was one of the members to participate actively in this project.

The increasing number of international students means that staff who teach and support these students should be trained on cultural awareness issues. That is what the above-mentioned project focussed on and it culminated in the successful launch of Intercultural Awareness Week.

## **The Intercultural Awareness Week**

This event, which took place in the week commencing 11 May 2009, aimed at showcasing good practice across Aston University in raising intercultural awareness amongst staff and students through training in a range of different contexts, reflecting on current practice and developing a new strategy and action plan for the institution.

Staff were encouraged to attend different training workshops delivered throughout the week by internal and external contributors. The themes of workshops ranged from *Intercultural Communication for Postgraduate Students*, delivered by Kathryn Priest and Claire Richardson, to *Innovative Approaches to Intercultural Training with Artist Practitioners*, delivered by the MAP Consortium. The latter has continued to be delivered to both students and staff. I contributed to the event by putting together the workshop *Managing International Students’ Expectations at Aston*.

## **Managing International Students Expectations at Aston**

This two hour interactive training included contributions from Catherine Foster, ABS Student Support Manager at the time, and Vikum Rajapakse, second year student representing the Guild of Students.

The session aimed at:

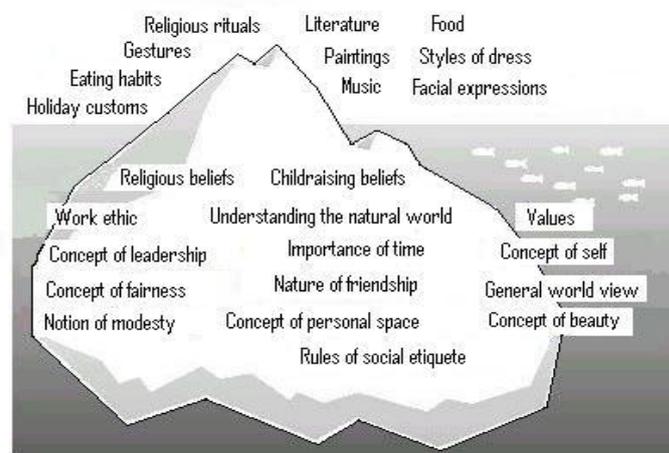
- developing cultural awareness and understanding by exploring different aspects of the notion of culture;
- identifying the expectations of international students when they come to study at Aston;
- discussing how to manage students’ expectations.

**Different aspects of the notion of culture and cultural awareness explored.**

In this part of the session, I explored the concept of culture focusing mainly on Gary. R. Weaver’s work *Culture, Communication and Conflict*. According to Weaver (2000, quoted in *Going Global* 2005, p. 65), culture is defined as:

*‘a system of shared values and beliefs which gives us a sense of belonging or identity. Culture can be discussed in terms of ways in which people pertaining to a group, society or organisation behave, communicate and think, and perceive reality. Each culture exhibits people’s perceptions of reality’.*

The participants found the Iceberg Exercise (the activity related to the concept of culture) particularly interesting. Just as an iceberg has a visible section above the water and an invisible section below the water, culture has visible (observable) and imagined (invisible) aspects. Completing the Iceberg, as illustrated in the example below, showed that groups identified the same observable behaviours and invincible aspects of culture.



Source: <http://www2.pacific.edu/sis/culture/File/sec1-1-1h1.htm>

Following on from Weaver’s definition of the concept of culture, I concentrated on intercultural awareness and the challenges of communication, behaviour and traditions we face when interacting with students and staff from different cultures. I described briefly how to improve cross-cultural communication concentrating on the importance of avoiding stereotyping. I explained both the importance of understanding others’ cultural behaviour and explaining our own. To illustrate the understanding of cultural behaviours I provided the group with short case studies where a Frenchman, a Briton and a Dutchman visit countries such as Saudi Arabia, Thailand and Malaysia. During the meetings they had with their business partners in these countries, there are conflicts of intercultural communication and behaviour. The participants had to guess what these conflicts were. This exercise gave the participants the chance to discuss in pairs as well as share with other group members why culture awareness is important. As Margaret Mead puts it: *“As the traveller who has once been home is wiser than he who has never left his own doorstep, so knowledge of one other culture should sharpen our ability to scrutinize more steadily, to appreciate more lovingly, our own”* ([http://womenshistory.about.com/cs/quotes/a/qu\\_margaretmead\\_3.htm](http://womenshistory.about.com/cs/quotes/a/qu_margaretmead_3.htm)).

These are some of the comments made by the workshop participants:

*‘...very interesting, interactive and reflective. The concept of culture was explored in detail in the context of how it affects us all and our daily interactions. It raised awareness about stereotypes and generalisations but also highlighted the positive aspects of multiculturalism and working in diverse teams. I found the role plays and team discussions excellent. I also enjoyed the sharing of personal experiences’.*

Carolina Salinas, International Placement Officer, ABS

*‘This interesting, lively and interactive workshop examined culture and the challenges we face and assumptions we make regarding differences and similarities in our multi cultural environment. The session combined serious learning with fun and stimulating activities that generated much discussion and debate. We came away with a greater understanding of how we are all shaped by our culture but also how we still remain individuals in our societies’.*

Ellen O’Brien, International Students’ Employability Adviser

### **Identifying the expectations of international students when they come to study at Aston**

This part of the session concentrated on the findings of a questionnaire conducted by the Guild of Students to identify what international students’ thoughts were on services such as student support, placement and careers support, teaching and learning facilities etc. Sharing the outcomes of this evaluation, which was completed just before the event took place, as well as his personal experience, Vikum Rajapakse commented:

*‘I was very pleased and impressed by the University’s initiative to develop its services to help international students realise their true potential. Furthermore, I believe having direct participation of international students in enlightening services related staff about what international students expect from the University was very thoughtful. Finally I was delighted with the amount of interest participants took in our presentation and with their positive engagement with the presenters and want to encourage the University administration to build on it for the future’.*

### **Managing students’ expectations**

For this part of the session the group was given the performance data for home, EU and international students. The members of the group were asked to comment on the impact cultural background has on student performance. Catherine Foster gave an account of the increasing numbers of International Students studying at Aston in the last three years. Catherine found the session:

*‘a great opportunity to meet with fellow colleagues and discuss experiences and challenges that we all face within the University. The changing nature of the student cohort offers us an opportunity to review our current practices to ensure that they support students to achieve their full potential. It was also very useful to have the student perspective and learn from each other’.*

## **Conclusion and recommendations**

I personally believe that finding out what students’ expectations are from the point of admission to becoming an Aston alumni is something that could benefit both students and staff.

One of the many recommendations that were put forward as a result of this project was to encourage staff across departments to collaborate towards a shared target of meeting the expectations of international students in relation to teaching and learning experience.

In my view, Intercultural Awareness Training should become compulsory for every member of staff and be integrated into the induction policy of the new members of staff.

The Intercultural Awareness Week showed that there is valuable expertise across the University on Intercultural Awareness and the Staff Development Unit should use the expertise to organise further training for both support and academic staff.

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# APPROACH ON HOW TO BE A GOOD STUDENT

JANE BINNER

## Introduction

Many academics complain that 'students aren't what they used to be' and that standards are dropping. The most common complaint is that many students are no longer prepared to work things out for themselves but demand help from their lecturers the moment that they are faced with a problem. Whilst this is clearly not true for all students, it is firmly believed that the best students are every bit as good as they ever were. It is true that the advent of systems such as Blackboard™, which makes information available to students at the click of a mouse, and the introduction of the National Student Survey has encouraged students to be more demanding of their lecturers. Many do certainly seem to come running for help when a few minutes of thought or activity would enable them to work things out for themselves.

With teaching on the ABS first year Economic Environment of Business module, a module with over 500 students on it (rising to nearly 600 in 09-10), there is a tremendous potential for very large amounts of academic time to be spent just responding to inappropriate student questions. Classic examples are demands to know on which particular pages in text books key information is located rather than being willing to read the whole of a relevant chapter (despite it being required reading) or to expect coursework to be checked before it is formally handed in. Following a review of best practice at other universities, I decided to introduce a document that outlined clearly what is expected of students and what they can expect from me; the quality of the services that we believe our students are entitled to is balanced with responsibilities placed upon them. The document explains how students can make the most of the opportunities that the University student experience has to offer in order to maximize the benefits available during their time at University and beyond and is intended to help them become young professionals. It is hoped that my paper could perhaps become the first step towards a full Aston University Student Charter. For a discussion of the quality of the teaching/learning relationship set up between academics and students, or within an institution, please see Biggs and Tang (2007).

## The Document

After a few iterations, the current document states that:

*"In the Aston Business School our goal is to produce the business experts of the future, whether in research, management, policy or technical roles. To achieve this in a fast-changing and complex world, we provide a high quality learning environment that is designed to produce employable graduates with enquiring minds. However, it is up to each and every student to take maximum advantage of what we provide".*

As an ABS student, we expect you to demonstrate the following skills during your time with us; they will all be vital to you in later life whatever job you end up doing:

- To be an independent individual who is able to 'stand on their own feet'. We expect you to have the ability to work by yourself, e.g. by preparing for taught sessions in advance by undertaking background reading; by reading around a subject without necessarily being told to do so; and, just as importantly, by recognising when you need to ask for help.

- To be self motivated, proactive and in charge of your own learning processes. This involves working out when, where and how you learn best. It also means being persistent and being prepared to tackle subjects that you find challenging.
- To be organised. We expect you to put the required effort in to understand the organisation of your programme of study and the modules involved; to attend ALL scheduled learning and teaching activities; to know when, where and how your work has to be handed in; to know the dates for your examinations; to check and keep up to date with your university emails and diary commitments daily.
- To be willing to work with others, whether you personally like them or not. You will often be expected to work in teams and it is expected that all members of a team will put in the required effort and not leave the work to others.
- To be professional about what you do. This means not handing in second-rate work when you know that you can do better. You should also respect other students as well as the lecturing staff, e.g. by not disrupting the learning of others by talking in lectures. We will treat you as young professionals and we expect your behaviour and commitment to your studies to reflect this.
- To engage with your subject in a critical manner. This means taking the time to think about what you are being taught, not just accept everything at face value and then learn it parrot-fashion for the exams.
- To be able to handle uncertainty and change. Universities are complex organisations and you will need to develop the skills to allow you to deal with occasional information overload, information updates and activities and topics that may take you out of your comfort zone.

Each of the above characteristics are appreciated by all employers and, if you take the time to develop them, you will find that not only will you get a much better degree but the transition to employment after university will be easier, smoother and more rewarding to you personally in the future.

We hope that your relationship with Aston University will be one which you value both during your time with us and after you leave. Please note that we ALWAYS value your feedback, your comments and suggestions about how this and other modules – and the learning experience generally – can be improved. You might also like to comment on this document and whether it has helped you to gain a better understanding of what it means to be a student in this University. Our goal, and my goal, is to help you to become the very best that you can be – this will not be achieved by my doing your work for you. Please think about the ideas in this short document and how you can apply them to help you make the transition to becoming a well qualified, capable, professional.”

## Results

Since I started using this document on my module, which I outline to the students in the first lecture, I have seen a decrease in the number of ‘petty enquiries’ from students not willing to learn things for themselves. I will not pretend that they have ceased altogether, I suspect that is an impossible goal, but they have reduced and, although it is still early days, I think that reminding students that their time at University is a transition to becoming a young professional is something that is well worth doing.

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# USE OF BLACKBOARD™ GRADE CENTRE FOR IMMEDIATE FEEDBACK

HELEN HIGSON

## Introduction

Module BN1101 International Foundations of Management is a compulsory first year module for international students. The module is designed to help students from outside Europe who often have not had a traditional anglo-centric School experience to gain some knowledge of the issues covered in the UK education system. The learning experience, therefore, has a UK-centred approach, but the methods of teaching are adapted to suit the learning styles of students from different cultures, and comparative international perspectives are important.

Throughout the module students are advised in the use of analytical approaches and encouraged to reflect on their learning through regular contributions to a reflective learning journal. This encourages the expression of individual opinions, often a new dimension in the learning experience of international students.

The reflective journal is developed on a week by week basis. It encourages international students to develop their skills of reflection on the curriculum and their individual learning experience. As Gibbs and Simpson (2004) argue, assessment should be designed to support worthwhile learning.

## Reflective learning journals

The reflective learning journal is worth 40% of the module assessment. The submission date for the journal is week 7. Students were encouraged to submit up to five draft journal entries between weeks 2 and 5 in order to get feedback on their progress. The procedure was set up so the students could only submit one journal entry per week. This was to ensure an even spread of marking which was calculated at approximately six hours per week (there were 220 students). Students were advised that if they missed submitting a journal entry in one week they would not have the opportunity to submit an entry for that week at a later date.

The profoma below was provided on Blackboard™ for the students to upload.

**ASTON BUSINESS SCHOOL: INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATIONS OF MANAGEMENT**  
**REFLECTIVE LEARNING JOURNAL TEMPLATE**

**Student Number:** .....

**Reflective Learning Journal Entry Number:** .....

**Date:** .....

<b>Current Learning Goals:</b>
<b>Targets along the way:</b>
<b>What have I done so far:</b>
<b>How am I meeting my targets? How sensible are the targets? Do they need changing?</b>
<b>What feedback have I received from others?</b>
<b>How have I made use of this feedback?</b>
<b>Things I have learnt about other myself, other people or the task so far</b>
<b>Strong points about my attitude, approach and performance</b>
<b>Things I could improve about my attitude, approach and performance</b>
<b>How have I changed during in trying to achieve this target?</b>
<b>What are the next steps</b>

When the student had completed their journal entry they were asked to submit it, before the weekly deadline date, using the Blackboard™ screen below. Detailed instructions were also provided to the students using the Powerpoint presentation below.

[\(2009-10\\_BN1101\)\\_INTERNATIONAL\\_FOUNDATIONS\\_OF\\_MANAGEMENT\\_\(2009\\_BN1101\) > COURSEWORK & ASSESSMENT > REFLECTIVE JOURNALS > UPLOAD ASSIGNMENT: JOURNAL ENTRY](#)



### Upload Assignment: Journal Entry

#### 1 Assignment Information

**Name** Journal Entry

**Instructions** Submit example only

#### 2 Assignment Materials

**Comments**

**Attach local file**

**Currently Attached Files:**

[Add Another File](#)

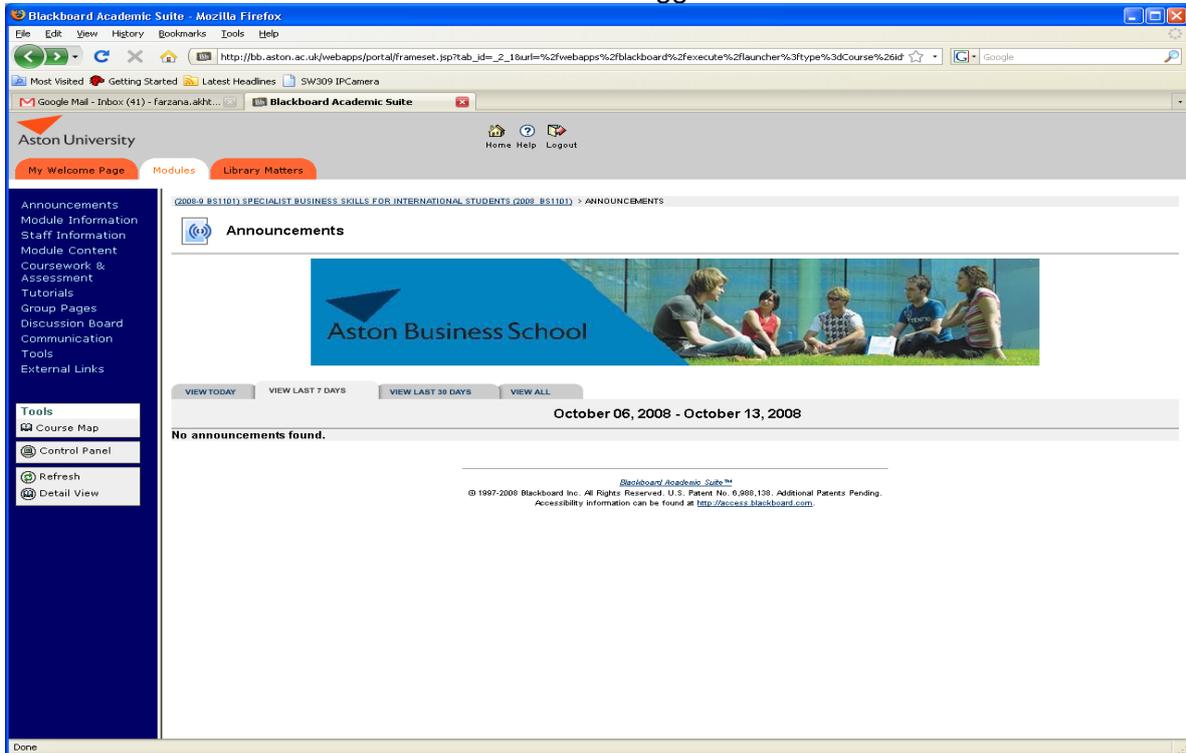
#### 3 Submit

Click **Save** to stop working and continue working later. Click **Submit** to finish. Click **Cancel** to quit without saving changes.

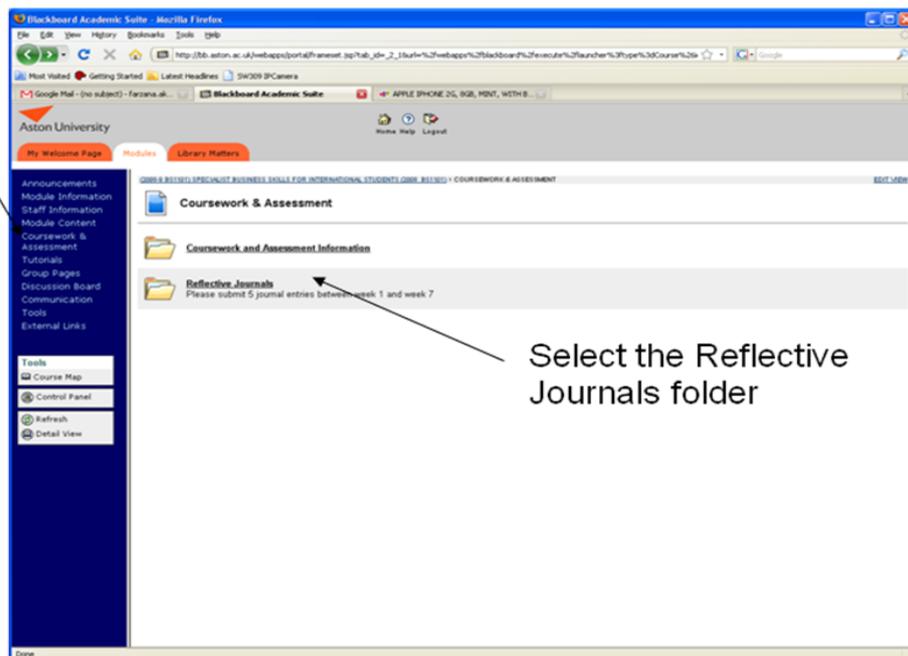


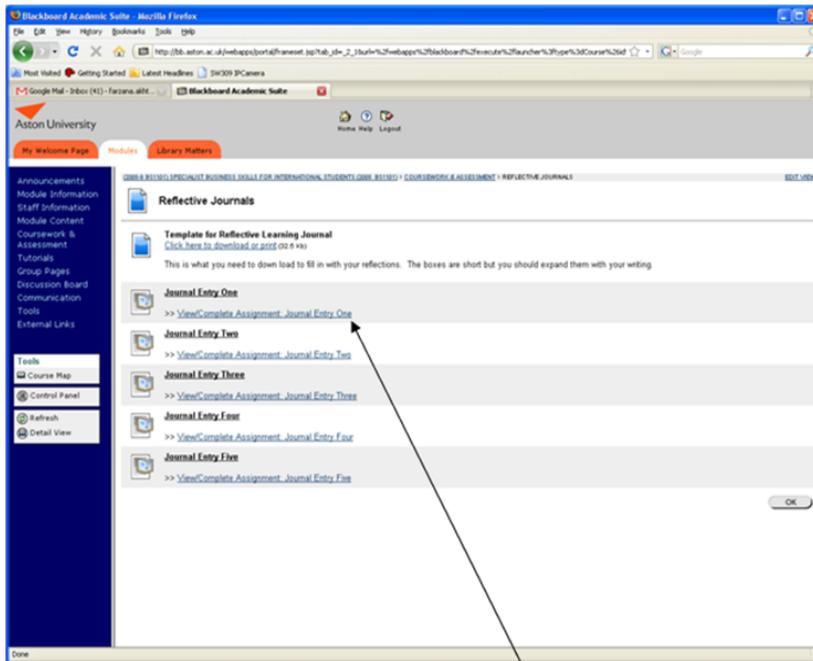
## How to Submit your Coursework on Blackboard

Select Module BS1101- Specialist Business Skills for International Students once logged into Blackboard



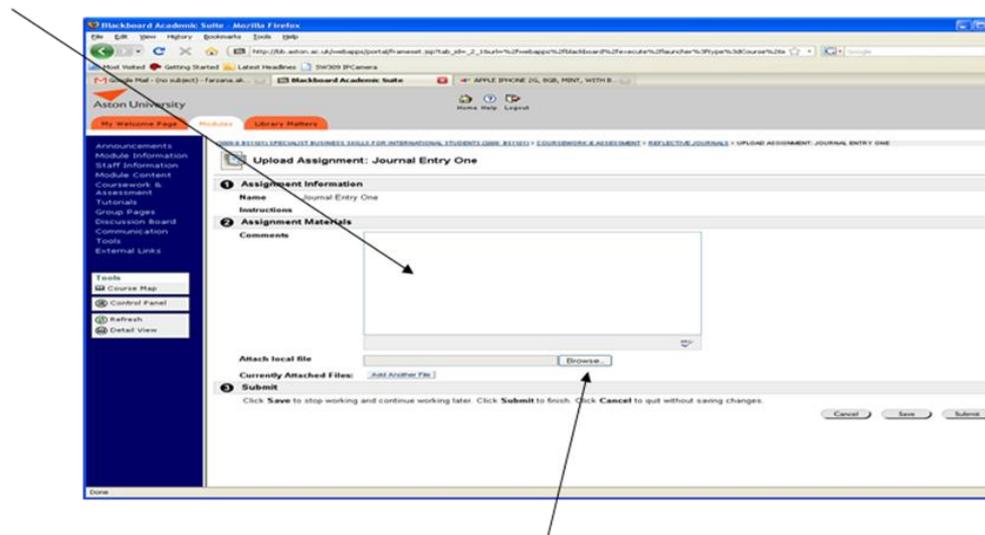
Select the Coursework and Assessment tab on the left hand side once in the module.





Select the appropriate week for the journal you want to submit by clicking on the link created

Write the name of the journal entry you are submitting into the comments box. You will have to attach your journal entry by selecting the browse button and then select the submit button.



**IMPORTANT:** Please do not submit your Journal entry in the comments box and make sure you attach it as a separate word document using the browse button

## Use of Grade Centre to provide immediate feedback

It was very important to provide feedback quickly in order that students could consider the feedback to improve subsequent entries.

The feedback process involves the lecturer going into the Grade Centre, choosing the work which needs marking, opening the document, reading it and then closing it. Closing the document reveals the screen on which a mark and written feedback can be typed. The marker for this module recorded a few sentences which, normally included some idea of where the student had got the task right and where further work should be directed. These comments are then immediately conveyed to the student by the tutor entering indicative marks and comments on the screen below.

Blackboard Academic Suite - Microsoft Internet Explorer provided by Aston University

http://bb.aston.ac.uk/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp?tab\_id=\_2\_1&url=%2fwebapps%2fblackboard%2fexecute%2faunche

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Blackboard Academic Suite

Aston University Home Help Logout

My Welcome Page Modules Library Matters

Column Journal Entry Three (Assignment) Details

Grade Type Score

Description

Attempts

Creation Date	Last Submitted/Modified Date	Value	Feedback to User	Grading Notes	Actions
		<input type="checkbox"/> Exempt user from this item.			Save Cancel

Grade History

Date	Last Modified by	Value	Comments
This grade has no history.			

Icon Legend OK

Powered by Blackboard

Local intranet 100%

Start Document2 [Compatibilit... Good Practice Guide.doc... Blackboard Academic... 15:31

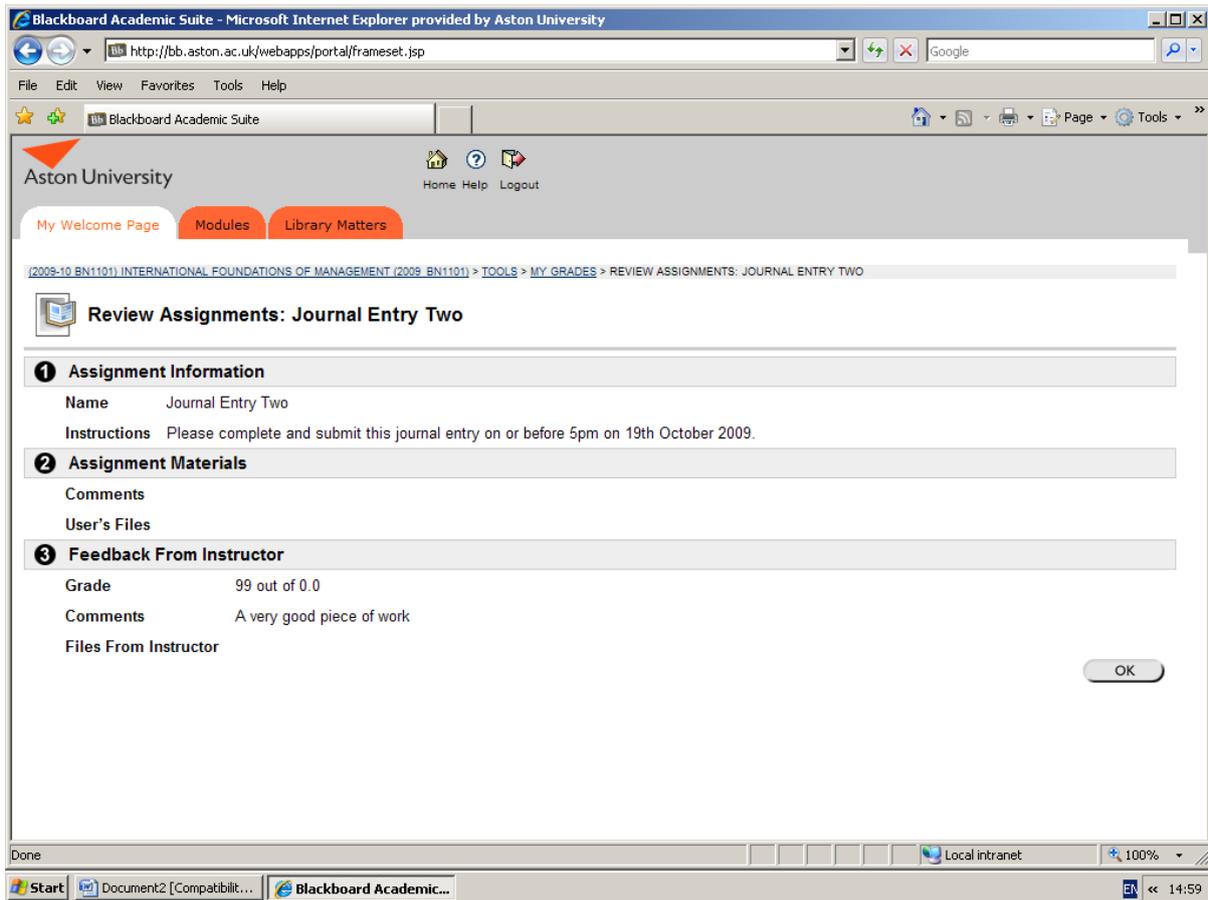
From Blackboard™ Welcome Page students could view their grades as directed below.

### **How to review the feedback?**

You can do this via the Welcome Page and under the Tools section (far left)

1. click on "View Grades."
2. Click on BN1101 and scroll down to see your feedback.

The student can then read their feedback on screen.



Typically the students' grades improved over the five week period as shown in the example below:

Last Name	First Name	Journal Entry 1	Journal Entry 2	Journal Entry 3	Journal Entry 4	Journal Entry 5	
Student	xxx Sample	xx	55	40	58	58	62

### Advantages of this method:

- Kulik and Kulik (1988) found that immediate feedback is more effective than delayed. The students are given quick and direct formative feedback which helps them to improve their work. You can really see the power of feedback as they hone their skills before you.
- Interestingly, the students feel closer to the lecturer. They are used to this form of online/electronic communication. They feel they know you in class and are more interactive and they use the on-line discussion board more.
- The summative assignment is much quicker to mark as you have the formative feedback to work from.
- ISA, via Gillian Bishop, support the Grade Centre (both tutor and students) extremely well.

## Disadvantages of this method:

- It is time consuming.
- You have to manage the student behaviour by giving a closing date for submissions (you can set Blackboard™ up to do this automatically). Students need a deadline. You also need to be firm about not accepting work in any other form or late.
- A few students find the technology difficult.
- Students will email you a lot more because they feel they have built up a closer relationship with you.

## Conclusions

I have now used this system twice and refined it year by year. I have reduced the number of opportunities for feedback and may do again. I have been more proscriptive with deadline dates and have become quicker with marking turnaround time (4 days this year). For 5 weeks a year it takes up a large part of my life, but it is worth it. The students grow in front of you and show what individually directed learning can do. The mid-module feedback shows a positive attitude from the students and my peer reviewer sensed the consequent closeness between lecturer and student in class.

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# LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT THROUGH EMBEDDED LEARNING – THE CASE OF 'STRATEGY FOR FUTURE LEADERS'

MICHAEL J.R. BUTLER

## Teaching Case Study

Shaping the development of future leaders is not easy. There is no prescriptive ideal type which can be used to benchmark current progress. Parry and Bryman (2006), for example, identified five types of leadership theory and research. In historical sequence, the trait approach seeks to determine the personal qualities and characteristics of leaders, the style approach focuses on leadership behaviours and the contingency approach places situational factors at the centre of leadership. More recently, there are a variety of new leadership approaches, including the well known distinction between transactional and transformation leadership. Post-transformational leadership has been critiqued, for instance, Fullan (2001) prioritises embedded learning or learning from experience and failure.

Despite the variety of approaches, leadership development is one of the necessary tasks of education so that organisations and civic society can function well. This teaching case study focuses on an undergraduate second year module called 'Strategy for Future Leaders' delivered at Aston Business School, UK. The module runs over the first two teaching periods from October to April. In 2008/9, 75 students are enrolled. The module is used to show how embedded learning can encourage students to consciously articulate their emerging leadership practice which opens up their approach to challenge, testing and change. In their daily routines students lead change, either in part-time work, volunteering activity or participation in student societies. In addition, embedded learning enhances future employability. As part of recruitment processes, students are asked to demonstrate their leadership potential and how it might benefit their chosen organisation.

## Integration of Embedded Learning

The case will now discuss the three ways that embedded learning is integrated in the module: as a learning outcome, assessed through an essay and developed interactively using blended learning. It will then draw on two student assessments from 2008 to show the range and depth of performance outputs of this learning process.

One of the three module learning outcomes emphasises the importance of learning from experience, students will be able to:

*'become more reflexive, having the capacity to reflect upon yourself and others, but more importantly, focused this capacity by thinking about how you might manage in the future by thinking about how you have been managed in any work you have done in the past or are currently doing'*

(Module Outline, BH2296 – Strategy for Future Leaders, 2008/9)

The learning outcome is assessed through a 2500 word essay, handed in after teaching period 2. In particular, the essay assesses how students articulate their management philosophy, how they use critical incidents which have developed their beliefs and how they justify their philosophy in terms of relevant theory. The critical incidents can be either real (experiences with family, university and work) or imaginative (film, music or any other source). The students then give examples of how they apply

their concept of management and reflect on how the module has confirmed or suggested changes to their management philosophy.

Blended learning takes the form of face-to-face contact and digital communication. I use tutorials to set and clarify the assessment task, and to formatively help students to write the best essays they can. Students work in small groups of five or six. An Aston University student peer mentor is assigned to each group who asks each student to discuss their ideas as they develop from essay plan to draft essay. I have an oversight role, moving between the groups and answering specific questions that could not be answered within the group. Tutorials are supported by e-mail exchanges between me and individual students, but I promote the use of the discussion board function within Blackboard, which acts as a module intranet, to share exchanges of ideas with all the students.

## Results

Taking this learning approach stimulates energetic debate and links student experience to theory. The approach can lead to stunning work. The essay with the highest mark (90%) was written by Kohinoor Meghji and had the following feedback:

*'The task was its focus on reflexivity, which this essay achieves, not just in a summary section, but on every page. Honesty is integrated with breadth of reading and skilled crafting of an argument.'*

To give an example of Kohinoor's use of self knowledge in her essay to drive leadership growth, is her transition from

*'My slow reaction to responding to the escalating situation (poor results and bad attendance) inevitably resulted in failing the year.'*

to

*'The following summer, I volunteered to teach English in Tsunami affected villages in Thailand, where I realised the importance of team processes. Being in such a varied environment with new people, I took on a more Leader Participative, and Leader Supportiveness approach. I encouraged members to critically look at what they had achieved over the month, which lead to a more driven, positive attitude. Adopting a supportive supervisory style is an effective driver of creative performance within leaders and I felt this was also effective in evaluating what I had achieved, and what we, as a team, had the opportunity to pursue ...'*

The transition came from the support of

*'my friends, family and importantly my new personal tutor. I found that I was able to identify more with a leader who displayed emotional intelligence, showing personal and social abilities, as I felt more comfortable discussing my problems.'*

Of course, not all students react similarly to the embedded learning approach. The essay with the lowest mark (45%) had the following feedback:

'Although you reflect on yourself, there is not enough detail or analysis – there is no title, or page numbers. To improve:

- read around the subject more
- follow instructions more fully
- use more critical thinking, that-is-to-say, identify strengths/weaknesses in ideas'

Nevertheless, the vast majority of students benefit from embedded learning and its potential for continuous leadership development. As Kohinoor herself concludes:

*'As a manager [she is now an intern at Hewlett Packard] I want to strive for excellence ... by creating a culture of continuous self-development to push potential. This requires the need to be critical of mistakes, but also highlights the importance of understanding and learning'*

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# UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH TRAINING AND EMPLOYABILITY

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## Abstract

Formal opportunities for Psychology undergraduates to carry out research training are starting to emerge. In spite of the fact that such training programmes would have a high authentic learning component little is known of undergraduate expectations and attitudes towards such programmes. Here 108 undergraduate participants were surveyed in two experiments that recorded both the prospective and retrospective attitudes towards research training participation. Questionnaires and focus groups were employed and the data were triangulated together to converge on an understanding of student expectations towards authentic learning programmes. It was found that while Psychology undergraduates expect to be trained in contemporary research techniques it is the sense of community development that is the prime motivator for participation. These findings are placed within the context of increasing the employability profile of the undergraduate cohort.

## Introduction

Modern day Psychology is an empirical science and as such a good grounding in the basic research skills are needed to be a competent professional psychologist. Given that such research skills are part of the professional psychologists portfolio undergraduate degree courses that deliver such training would have a high 'authentic learning' component (Cronin, 1993; Herrington & Herrington, 2006). These courses are more appropriate and specific to the world of work that the graduate is entering into and are likely to be considered more popular (Nicaise et al 2000; DeHaan 2005) yet little is known of the student attitudes and expectations towards such training. The aim of this paper is to address this and examine student attitudes towards a program of authentic training.

The instigation of such research training programs was driven in part an influential report published in 1998 and commissioned by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching in the United States of America. This report maintained that prior to 1998 actual 'hands on' research training that was relevant to the world of work was practically non-existent. Furthermore for higher education to deliver authentic learning universities would need '*...to be able to give their students a dimension of experience and capability they cannot get in any other setting...*' (Boyer, 1998, p 27). Boyer's report showed that authentic learning would be best facilitated by a culture based on discovery that was guided by mentoring rather than solely on the traditional didactic transmission of information.

As it challenged the existing educational orthodoxy the Boyer report was initially greeted with controversy and debate. In the same year as Boyer's publication an opinion article on the potential impact the report would have was published in the Chronicle of Higher Education. Here it was noted that '*Institutions are having a hard time placing PhD students in academic jobs and are now being forced [our underline] to pay more attention to...undergraduates*' (Wilson, 1998 p. 13). It has only been in recent years that a significant number of universities have started to realise the '*...opportunity to offer such experiences to undergraduates represents a real asset...*' (Katkin 2003 p. 24) and develop such authentic learning programs. Despite the recent interest in undergraduate research there still exist a number of major challenges for universities to overcome.

Yet despite the rise of such research training programmes there has been little attempt, if any, at examining the factors that may contribute to the improvement of subsequent employability related to such programmes. An early focus group study on the student attitudes to the research experience did show that students felt that the most important aspects of the experience was '*...enjoying independence in working... as well as ...being given responsibility...*' (Goodlad, 1998, p.352). Thus suggesting that undergraduates do benefit from being part of a professional community and been given ownership of the research process (Tinto, 1997). However, given the rapidly shifting attitudes of the undergraduate body it remains imperative that a contemporary analysis be carried out to examine those factors that lead to improved employability (see e.g., Frand, 2000).

To examine this question a triangulation method was adopted. First a questionnaire survey was carried out on a second year undergraduate psychology cohort prior to taking part in research training. To place their expectations within a framework of actual experiences a series of semi-structured interviews were then carried out on final students who had previously participated in research training. The earlier questionnaire data was then placed within the thematic framework developed from these interviews. While it is possible to obtain detailed information via structured questionnaires (e.g., experiment 1) such data is limited insofar as it fails to capture the richness of our everyday social interactions. On the other hand, focus group interviews do capture such socially rich data but have a relatively unconstrained structure compared to questionnaire measurements (Greenhalgh & Taylor 1997). By combining both techniques in a mixed methods approach, it is possible to exploit the structure of questionnaires as well as the breadth of interviews. In the current paper we triangulated the data between the two experiments (see e.g., Todd et al, 2004). Taken together these data provide a comprehensive analysis of the attitudes, experiences and expectations of undergraduate students towards research training and how it can facilitate their transition into becoming contemporary Psychologists.

## Experiment One

### **Method**

**Participants:** One hundred undergraduate students (85 female: 15 male) who were enrolled on a first year single or combined honours Psychology program took part in this study. The mean age was 21 yrs (18-30 yrs).

**Procedure:** An 11 item questionnaire (*see Table 1*) was constructed and uploaded on to the local Intranet. Each of the questions consisted of two parts, first a section that was designed to solicit a yes/no response which was then followed by a free response section where each student was invited to expand and justify their initial response. The questionnaire was left online for a period of six months along with the relevant study information and consent forms. Details were also included that instructed the student to email the completed questionnaire to the researchers. As is standard in a number of other universities undergraduate students enrolled on the Psychology program were required to complete a number of research participation hours and upon return of the completed questionnaire each student was given two research credits.

**Analysis:** A mixed methods approach, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative analysis was adopted. Firstly, the descriptive responses for each of the questions were tallied and differences calculated via standard non parametric statistical tests (chi square test). This initial approach guided the subsequent analysis of the free response data. The qualitative data was analysed via summary thematic analysis (Boyatzis, 1998). This is a qualitative approach involving a series of systematic steps. The first analyst independently identifies a number of emerging themes, then confirms interpretations and clusterings of themes with the other analyst in the research team in order to develop a final list of super-ordinate themes. These themes are then placed within the emergent framework revealed by the initial quantitative responses. Contradictions between the descriptive data

and the thematic analysis are also interrogated and hypotheses for why these contradictions occurred are formulated.

## Results and Discussion

**Table 1: The questionnaire items used in experiment one in addition to the responses and the chi square comparing the responses.**

Questionnaire Statements	YES	NO	$\chi^2$	p	Maybe
(1): Are you interested in carrying out psychological research?	85	11	57.0	**	4
(2): Do you think that you would be confident enough to carry out research with help from a mentor?	61	30	11.1	**	9
(3): Do you feel that you would benefit from doing some research?	93	3	84.3	**	4
(4): Do you think that you should be able to carry out scientific research (under the guidance of a mentor)?	82	8	60.8	**	10
(5): Would you undertake a research placement even if it was unpaid?	29	38	1.2	ns	34
(6): Do you think that there are extra skills/benefits to be gained by going overseas for your placement?	78	7	59.3	**	15
(7): Would you be interested in taking parting a research programme during the summer months only?	54	26	9.8	*	20
(8): Would you rather go abroad as part of your research experience?	53	38	2.4	ns	9
(9): If the research programme was paid would you be more inclined to take part?	86	11	57.9	**	3
(10): Would you participate in a research placement if you were awarded another qualification in research training?	90	5	76.0	**	5
(11): Would you expect a dedicated office desk on campus (opposed to working primarily from home)?	36	39	0.1	ns	25

\*  $p \leq 0.05$  \*\*  $p \leq 0.001$

By combining the data from table 1 with the thematic data that was obtained from the free response sections of each of the questions it is possible to construct a detailed frame work of themes from the students. Three main themes were identified from the data collected, these being, a): 'positive attitudes towards training', b): 'positive attitudes towards research in general', and, quite interestingly c): 'attitudes towards the overall design of the training experience'. The first items in the questionnaire concern the students attitudes towards actually participating in a research program. The students indicated that they were interested in carrying out research, they would be confident to carry out the research (with the supervision of a mentor) and also they felt that they would benefit from the experience. Given that all of the respondents in this first experiment were first year undergraduates it is of interest that responses to the first items suggest that they are very aware of the importance of research experience at such an early stage of their careers. This suggestion finds support in the thematic analysis of the free response data as well. Here, it was clear to see that the students had several reasons why they felt it important to be able to carry out research was clearly supported:

*'I think carrying out psychological research is extremely interesting and, more so, it can be rewarding, for both experimenter and participant. Conclusions and findings found from simple experiments can be fascinating and indeed make you want to study the area into even more depth.'* Participant 16

*'Because I would learn skills of how to organise an experiment and all the procedures needed to go through in producing an experiment e.g. which ethical issues there could be and how to resolve them. I would also learn how to analyse the findings and have practise at statistical tests'* Participant 44

*Here, it is evident that the students clearly recognise the need for hands on research experience with the experience making 'you want to study the area in more depth' Participant 16*

Participant 40, below, goes further and highlights the importance of research experience for successful completion of the final year dissertation.

*'Since undergraduates have to conduct an important piece of research in the final year I feel that I would benefit from doing research now as it would enable me to practice and improve the technique.'*  
Participant 40

The fact that the final year project forms an integral and significant aspect of most UK based degrees is evident, in this student's opinion the long term 'strategic' value of the research experience is clear. This contention is supported by the fact that 93% of the respondents felt that they would benefit from carrying out research. However, such positive attitude towards research is mirrored with the concern that some students may feel overwhelmed by the opportunity to carry out (what would be for most) their first piece of scientific research:

*'If I was confident in the background work of doing research, it would be something I would have liked to. Getting involved in research at this early stage of my study could be quite overwhelming.'*  
Participant 50

However although students do realise the importance of the research training the fact that they are largely unpaid does also feature strongly in the decision making process. See for example Participants 92 and 38 (below), who were explicit in describing the main factor in deciding whether or not take a placement year:

*'No... I feel I would not be able to cope financially' Participant 92*

*'I am interested in the area, but I want to have a paid placement, so I am thinking of other areas of research, e.g. consumer research.'* Participant 38

It is also interesting to note that, although not significantly different, 39% of the students did not feel that they should be assigned a dedicated desk space in order to successfully complete the training. The 25% who indicated that they were unsure as to whether or not a dedicated desk space was important suggests that first year undergraduate students are unclear as to what to expect on a day to day basis from the research experience.

However some respondents indicated that if they were to work from home they would not feel '*..as important..*' which reinforces the fact that the students recognise the importance of a professional relationship with the university community in general as well as the supervisor specifically. However, the comments below highlight the possibility that the expense of coming into the university every day may render it more beneficial for the student to work from home.

*'A single desk space could be made available for all researchers to use, however I don't feel the amount of time it is used could justify a desk for each researcher. If you could work elsewhere, computer rooms, library or at home, it allows the ease of collating data etc, without being confined to one particular space, plus it may save time on travelling into uni to do work, when it can just as easily be done at home.'* Participant 80

Both the student and the university must consider that the student will incur a personal expense to participate in a period of research experience. The issue of a financial burden surfaced on numerous occasions throughout. However, the responses from the students suggest that this burden could be offset by other incentives. When asked whether or not they would participate in a research placement year where they received a bursary, 86% indicated that this would be a good incentive however 90% indicated that accreditation with an additional qualification would be a better incentive.

*'I think the extra experience and qualification would benefit students in so many ways before they have even left uni! I am sure employers would find this very impressive!' Participant 16*

When combined together the data from the questionnaire and the free response data provide a prospective overview of student attitudes and expectations to work relevant authentic training. To examine how these actual expectations are met by participation in the research training a second experiment was carried out. Here a group of final year students who had already taken part in a period of research training were surveyed.

## Experiment Two

### Method

#### **Participants:**

Eight people who had previously taken part in a period of undergraduate research training were approached (either a year long or a summer only period of training). Three were subsequently excluded due to machine error (*see Table 2* for details)

**Table 2: demographic details of the students that took part in the focus groups. Student who took part in summer only as well as yearlong research placements were interviewed. Data from three of the students were excluded due to an error with the transcription machine**

Pseudonym	Age	Sex	Ethnicity	Length	Data
Participant 1	22	Female	White British	Year	Included
Participant 2	22	Female	White British	Year	Included
Participant 3	22	Female	White British	Year	Included
Participant 4	21	Female	Indian	Summer	Included
Participant 5	26	Female	White British	Summer	Included
Participant 6	22	Female	White British	Year	Excluded
Participant 7	21	Male	White British	Year	Excluded
Participant 8	21	Female	White British	Year	Excluded

#### **Procedure:**

After obtaining specific consent to record the interviews each participant was interviewed individually in a dedicated interview room. The interviewer used a 14 item semi-structured schedule (Robson 1993) including questions like: 'Did you feel part of the psychology community before you did your research training?', 'Do you feel that you have contributed to psychological research in the university?', 'Do you feel that you have gained any transferable life skills from doing the research training?'. Interviews were transcribed verbatim and analysed using thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke 2006). All participants were assigned pseudonyms and any identifying information was removed from the transcripts. As described above the analysis involved multiple readings of the transcripts and identifying common patterns and inconsistencies within participants' expectations and experiences.

## Results and Discussion

Two main themes i): 'involvement in a research community' and ii): 'development of transferable skills' were identified from the data. These themes were evident in those transcripts from students taking part in a year long period of research training as well as those completing a summer period only. Each of these themes are elaborated below.

### ***Involvement in a research community***

Community involvement was the prevalent theme that emerged throughout all of the student data. It seems that merely participating in a period of research training is enough to ensure that the students become more integrated into the academic community at large, see for example:

*'I think doing a research placement at our university, has kinda made me speak to the lecturers and technicians on a level that I probably wouldn't have before...'* Participant 1

The comments above clearly highlight a change in the general academic community for the student. Such a shift is also shown with participant 2 (below) who was asked about her community standing before and then after the research experience she responded:

*'I have always felt a bit nervous around lecturers actually, some of them are ok, but some of them are a bit intimidating, but my personal tutor and a few of my lecturers in second year I felt I could approach. But now quite a lot of the lecturers know who I am from doing my research, the technicians who work in the labs, know me quite well, and yeah I think I can be quite confident with them..'* Participant 2

The need for community involvement is so strong that the students even identified factors that precluded such involvement. The comments below show that suitable office accommodation and Internet access is an important factor in the research experience and without these the student fails to become fully integrated.

*'It was a bit tough ... we didn't have a proper office until a little bit later into it, and we didn't have internet access, which is a bit annoying, cos we had to work around the classes in the computer rooms and stuff like that, errrm but yeah it was really... really good otherwise'* Participant 1

*'Ups and Downs- you know things like not having space to work was an issue and obviously we did get given a room, but it was very small for so many people to get crammed into it. We didn't feel that we had the space to work, err and the support we needed. I mean there were two of us working on the project and at times we did feel quite isolated.'* Participant 2

*'Yeah, we didn't have an office for the first six weeks, then we got put into an office we had just settled in and then we were moved, to an office with ten other people in. So, but having that set place to go and work, cos I can't just work in the library all the time. If you don't have the internet at home then it's really difficult.'* Participant 3

The clear need for suitable accommodation for those students carrying out their research over a year it is in direct contrast for those students who spent the summer period carrying out research. Here it was clear that they felt that they did not require such access to specific accommodation, but still felt they needed access to a dedicated working environment such as the library etc.

*'I didn't have a desk, it depends how long you were doing it I suppose, errmm, if you were doing it full time over the summer, eeerrr, it depends on what you were doing. If you are doing a lot more of computer stuff, then maybe, if you were doing a lot of data collection then probably not. Like it depends on what you are doing. I didn't have a desk, and what I did was get ...to give me SPSS to take it home and then did it at home. So well I suppose everyone has got a desk at home, with the computer stuff and you could really work home, and get it done there.'* Participant 4

*'... as long as they have somewhere to work, would be an idea to have somewhere to work, it would be an ideal situation, somewhere for you to sit and a computer for you to use specifically but, over the summer the library is free, as all the students have gone home, as long as you can physically find somewhere to sit with a computer then that might be alright, ... I wouldn't expect any one to demand an office.'* Participant 5

The differences between the summer students and those that undertook a year long research program allows further insight into factors that facilitate community involvement.

*'the fact that it was quite isolated. I think having a network with other placement students would be great, having more of a network with other lecturers'* Participant 1

*'I think if it was more formalised, , cos my bit was like what shall I do, and then it was a bit impromptu in a way. So if there was more of a structure to it and there was more of a errr you know people, like they do in a part time placements, at the moment, there is a set kind of task that has to be done and you do it, instead of errmmm I kind of analysis and then left it, so I think a bit more formal and a bit more structure to it then it would be better.'* Participant 4

Here the need for a formal structure to the training program and community network is highlighted. Further suggesting that the students are aware of the full structure of the research process and acknowledge that they need training in areas over and above than data collection and analysis.

The comments above show that the students are eager to participate in the research and to contribute to the decision making process at every level of the training. Such community involvement also suggests that the students require a degree of ownership over the research process.

*'...the advertisement actually took my eye, which is very unusual but very interesting and then I saw it was with ... So I arranged an interview with him and talked it through basically, before actually saying that I wanted to do it...'* Participant 2

Here the student recognises the relative strengths of a specific member of staff and then engage with the application process before they agree to participate. The outcome of such community involvement is a more detailed understanding of the real involvement of the research process.

Such an affiliation to the research process is often seen with more experienced researchers and is unusual for it to occur within the undergraduate population at such an early stage of their careers. More interestingly, those students that only took part in research training over the summer period also demonstrated evidence of ownership over the research process. When asked whether it would have been better to work in a team or individually, Participant 4 responded with:

*'Probably a team, cos you get more done, and cos it is quite a short period of time, everyone can take away bits and do different parts to it and then come back and amalgamate it altogether to make one big project, as opposed to having lots of small bits that don't add up to much...'* Participant 4

The comments above show that this student is aware of the limitations of the scope of any given research problem and even makes suggestions towards a successful completion of a research project.

## **Development of transferable skills**

Taking the additional levels of confidence in talking to staff members that is discussed above in hand with the scope of a period of research training can result in a panoply of transferable skills that the student can take when they enter into employment post graduation. The comments below highlight the development of authentic learning strategies that could be transferred to the everyday world of work.

*'... we learn about stats, but it is much easier when you have context, when you know, you can learn about it in class and you are given the scenarios and you have got to work it out. What is it actually to do with research ? You find yourself getting a lot more involved with it, and it registers a bit more, and you learn a bit better that way, cos you have a bit more of a grounding to it, and you can think, aaahhhh I know what these numbers mean. Instead of them just being numbers that you are taking from a sheet and analysed.'* Participant 4

The identification of a real life context places the understanding of statistics into an easier to learn scenario. The students themselves go on to identify potential mechanisms that allow them to develop such authentic learning strategies. Take for example:

*'I found it really good. I'm really glad I got to go and do conferences and poster presentations and stuff like that.'* Participant 1

*'Yeah Definitely- especially from the conference, we actually went to two conferences – and it's being thrown in the deep end, because you are actually expected to talk to real psychologists about your data, and actually A understand it and B have confidence that it is telling something interesting.'* Participant 2

*Definitely, I'm a lot more confident in my speaking ability, presentation wise, I had never done a proper presentation before, scary but I really glad I did it. Overall I think I am more confident in my stats ability.* Participant 3

The above data taken from three subjects highlights conference attendance as an important factor in the development of a professional skill set. However, the opportunity to present at a conference may not be possible for those students who are undergoing a summer long research period due to its relatively short duration. Here, merely attending a professional conference can provide opportunities for the development of transferable skills:

*'...I got the chance to go to the ... conference, and that was, it was quite overwhelming. It was 5 days and people from all over the world attended, and listening to those people talking about their experiences with academics, and researchers, definitely gave me a more realistic view on what a psychological researcher does, being involved in that sort of field... i never really understood it before, so it was quite an eye opening to say the least.* Participant 5

Taking the above in hand, attendance at a conference is not the only avenue by which students can develop transferable skills. Take, for example:

*'...probably time keeping, cos obviously there were deadlines, and things and errrrmm well if SPSS is a life skill, then I guess that. I guess probably more Psychology Skills then life skills, but it has definitely helped me, cos u know i discussed with ... about research that he was doing, so it has helped me relate to my employers research at the moment.* Participant 4

*' I don't know if it is a life skill, but it did really motivate me towards my degree, and it was good to build up a mature working relationship with..., just to earn their trust and just to have their help. To be in the back seat, and get someone to guide you through things was a really good experience, because it was so in depth and so technical that I needed their help, you know, it was nice having two people who are really knowledgeable, just helped me out and stuff. And organisation was a definite, something that I need. My organisational skills aren't the best, and I think that they had improved with doing this placement because you have to be organised in order to keep up with the work load and juggle other commitments as well, so it was a good experience...Participant 5*

These data show that those students on a summer long research period do not necessarily have to present their findings at a professional conference to develop professional skills. Participant 5 highlighted that fact that even during the summer long research placement she has developed an

understanding of the mentor/mentee relationship. The recognition of such a relationship is ubiquitous throughout the world of work and one that does facilitate various employee factors such as job satisfaction (Roch, 1979).

## General Discussion

The aim of this paper was to examine undergraduate attitudes towards authentic training in the form of hands on research experience. Student attitudes towards such training was firstly assessed via a questionnaire which was then used to develop the themes for subsequent focus groups. It is clear that undergraduate students realise the importance of these training programs and how it can help them professionally. The student expectations revealed in the first experiment were largely supported by the findings of the second where students who had participated in a period of research experience felt more confident towards research and had developed key working relationships with members of staff.

The results of the first experiment show quite clearly that undergraduate students do want to take part in research training (85% vs 11%) and that they would benefit from such experience (93% vs 3%). Perhaps what is more surprising here is the fact that 11% indicated that they had no interest in carrying out such training. This figure may have been due to the student demographics as some may have been enrolled on an interdisciplinary or combined honours program, within an equal emphasis on subjects such as French or Biology.

The findings above show that the students are aware of the importance of the mentor / mentee relationship. The significant role that this relationship plays within organisations is well noted (e.g, Roch, 1979; Day, 2000). While the focus of Roch's research was on the development of corporate executives it is clear that the social skills needed to facilitate the relationship in work can be first developed in an undergraduate cohort. Taking this in hand it is clear that an opportunity to participate in research training provides the opportunity to match the students intent which in turn allows for the development of effective mentoring (Sherman, 1995).

The notion that students are willing to participate in such activities in their own time is supported by these data. In addition to this students do not expect to be assigned dedicated office/laboratory space. Not only does this show that more emphasis is being placed on the importance of the supervisor relationship but further highlights an awareness of the transferable nature of such research. In light of the current drive to increase student mobility across national borders e.g., the British Councils Erasmus Scheme, it is perhaps quite surprising that students don't recognise the importance of such travelling. This may be in part because students may still a period of overseas travel as incurring an additional financial burden.

The results from the second experiment support the findings from the first questionnaire survey. Insofar as the experiment showed the experience and knowledge gained by students who participated in research training was beneficial. All who took part enjoyed the experience and *'found it really good'* participant 2, and left with a positive attitude towards research and the programme, this is further backed up when asked if they would recommend the placement to a first or second year. All replied that they would, participant 4 even states that *'I have done in fact'*, which suggests that the importance of the research experience is being communicated to other cohorts. Others feel first and second years should take part in research as it has *'helped me so much for this [final] year'*, also *'it is a fantastic opportunity, you learn a lot'*. The second experiment also allowed further insight into the transferable skill set that the students acquired. Take, for example the comments made by participant 3 *'I'm a lot more confident in my speaking ability, presentation wise'*

Furthermore, participant 5 stated that *'it did really motivate me towards my degree'*. Other participants showed an increase in confidence in 'stats ability'. The research placement also showed the students more in-depth knowledge of the research process. Here the student felt that the experience allowed her to see *'a more realistic view on what a Psychological researcher does... seeing how much work goes into getting just one paper out'*. It is clear that the students who had participated in a period of

research training had developed a transferable skill set that is likely to raise their employability profile after graduation.

From taking part in the research training student indicated that they had experienced developed sense of community within the research group specifically but also within the greater psychology community in general. It is this sense of community that the earlier Boyer Commission indicated was very absent from the higher education sector at the time. Moreover, it is this sense of community that will allow the student to realise the focused task objectives when they enter employment. The current findings show that a period of research training for psychology undergraduates improves the transferable skill set. Even though such training is an example of work based skills that are relevant to Psychologists it is highly likely that a period of such authentic work based training that is specific to other disciplines would also benefit the employability of those students. However, whether the attitudes and expectations of those undergraduates are the same as the Psychology students that were sampled here remains to be seen.

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Example used with undergraduate students who were enrolled on  
a first year Single or Combined Honours Psychology Programme

## **IT TAKES TWO TO TANGO:**

**IF YOU WANT STUDENTS TO HARNESS CULTURALLY DIVERSE SYNDICATE GROUPS FOR THEIR LEARNING, ASSURE HIGH INTERDEPENDENCE AND STUDENTS VALUE CULTURAL DIFFERENCES**

**YVES GUILLAUME**

### **Introduction**

Aston Business School's student body is one of the most culturally diverse in the UK. Students often differ from each other in their ethnic background as well as in their nationality. While this is often associated with the hope to enrich student's learning experiences in particular during group work, student's often fail to harness cultural diversity for their learning in such groups.

I will show that cultural diversity is a double edged sword that can undermine students' learning in work groups, but also has the potential to enrich students' learning experiences. I will then demonstrate that common interventions (such as setting group tasks, rewarding group rather than individual effort, and asking students to fill in contribution evaluation forms) may well help to overcome the negative effects of cultural diversity. However, only when culturally diverse work groups are able to create a learning environment in which students believe in the value of cultural differences, they will be able to harness cultural diversity for their individual learning.

### **Learning in Cultural Diverse Work Groups**

(Brodbeck, Guillaume, & Lee, 2009).

Group work facilitates students' learning when group members share information and insights, when they collectively experiment, seek and give each other feedback, and when they point out and discuss each other's implausible assumptions and errors. While such learning behaviours allow group members to improve their individual learning outcomes as a consequence of interacting with each other, they also come with a 'risk' in particular in culturally diverse work groups. Social interactive learning behaviour may evoke embarrassment, rejection, or punishment, and consequently the belief that a work group is not a safe forum for personal exploration, which reduces engagement in learning behaviours. Thus, learning via social interactive elaboration in work groups is a double-edged sword, with the potential to gain information, but also to suffer from emotional harm and motivation loss.

#### ***How does cultural diversity facilitate student learning in work groups?***

(Brodbeck, Guillaume, & Lee, 2009; Fay & Guillaume, 2007).

Part of the potential advantage of diverse groups over homogenous groups lies in the greater pool of task-relevant information and expertise diverse groups may have at their disposal. For instance previous research demonstrated that cultural diversity results in differences in terms of group member's worldviews, cultural norms and preferences, cognitive orientations, forms of reasoning, causal attribution styles, and logical analysis. Furthermore, evidence from experimental and field

studies shows that exposure to multiple cultures can enhance creativity, insight, learning, remote association and idea generation, integrative complexity, and information elaboration.

### ***How does cultural diversity undermine student learning in work groups?***

(Brodbeck, Guillaume, & Lee, 2009; Fay & Guillaume, 2007).

Cultural diversity undermines the exchange and elaboration of information, because people are less inclined to share and elaborate information with group members that are different from themselves. Students in cultural diverse groups tend to perceive each other not as unique individuals, but in terms of their membership in a particular cultural group. Accordingly they categorize self and people with the same cultural background as in-group members (e.g., 'we are English'; 'we are Chinese'), and members from a different cultural background as out-group members (e.g., 'they are not English'; 'they are not Chinese'). However, it is not this categorization into in- and out-group members per se that leads to the disintegration of culturally diverse work groups. In fact, I will discuss later in more detail that perceiving other group members in terms of this in- and out-group distinction is essential for students to harness cultural diversity for their individual learning. Rather, they are threats to group member's cultural identity that undermine the social integration in culturally diverse work groups. Such threats may be instilled for instance when an out-group member (e.g., 'one of the Chinese'; 'one of the English') does not pull the full weight or makes mistakes. In return, members of the in-group (e.g., 'the English'; 'the Chinese') start disliking the out-group members (e.g., 'the Chinese'; 'the English'), start mistrusting them as a valid source of information, start derogating their contributions, and accordingly stop sharing information with them.

## **Harnessing Cultural Diversity for Student Learning**

(van Dick, van Knippenberg, Hagele, Guillaume, & Brodbeck, 2008)

A common means to overcome these negative effects is to ensure high task, goal, and reward interdependence by such means as setting a common group task, asking students to discuss and agree on common group goals, asking students to fill in group contribution sheets, and rewarding group effort rather than individual effort. Under such conditions students in culturally diverse work groups re-categorize themselves, and start perceiving themselves rather as members of their work group than as members with a different cultural background. While these means are very effective to assure high social integration in culturally diverse work groups enabling the free exchange and elaboration of information, it is not a sufficient means to harness cultural diversity for individual learning.

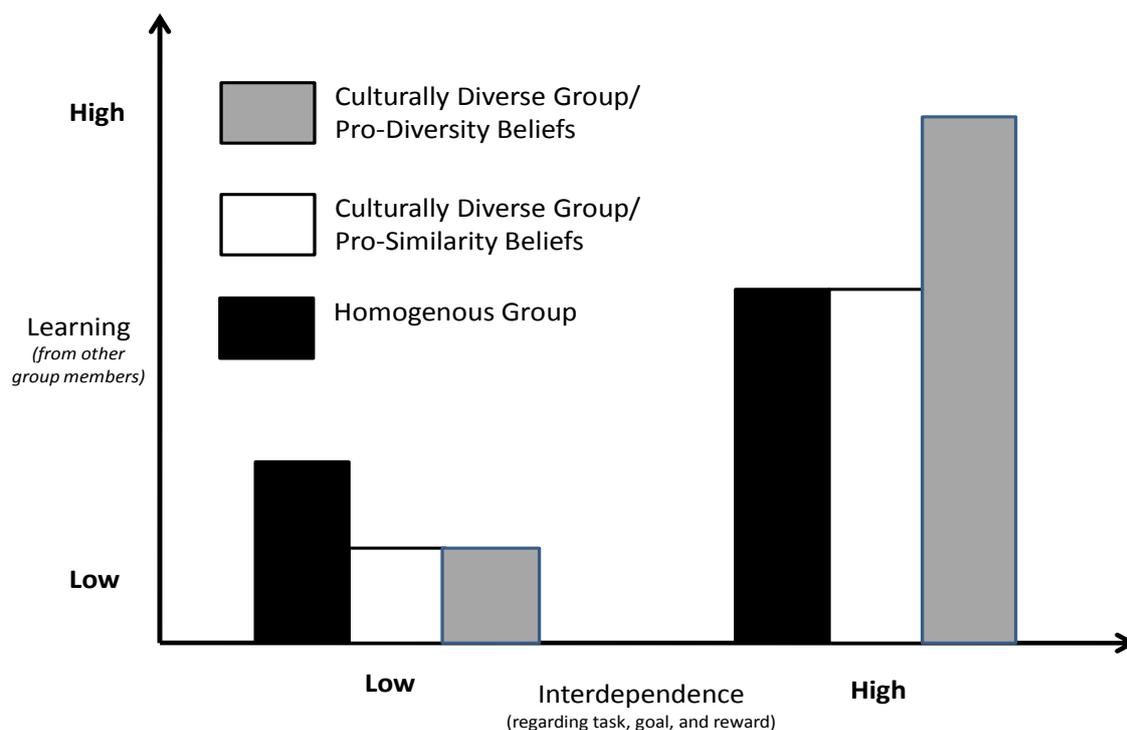
When group members re-categorize themselves as group members they stop focusing on differences and start focusing on similarities. For instance, group members may focus on the similarities they share as students from the same university, and neglect differences stemming from their diverse cultural backgrounds. Accordingly when tackling their group tasks they will be more likely to draw on similar knowledge, tools and techniques, which they have learnt at their university, rather than drawing on different knowledge and problem solving techniques, which they may have learnt by growing up and being socialized in a given culture. In other words cultural diversity won't cause any troubles under such conditions; however, students also will not be able to harness the positive effects of cultural diversity.

For an intervention to be an effective means that enables students to harness cultural diversity for their individual learning, the intervention needs also to assure that group members do not start 'ignoring' that they are culturally different. What then are the conditions to preserve these cultural differences? Recent research showed that when group members uphold so called pro-diversity beliefs, they remain aware of their cultural differences, and perceive them as an asset rather than as a threat to work group functioning and performance. Pro-diversity beliefs thereby refer to group members' beliefs about the value of diversity to work group functioning and performance. Thus, if

group members in a culturally diverse work group think that culturally diverse groups typically perform better on their group assignments and experience more pleasant group processes than homogenous groups, they will not only draw on their shared knowledge, but also on their unshared knowledge. In return group members are enabled to harness cultural differences for their individual learning.

**Figure 1** summarizes these findings graphically. Under low task, reward and goal interdependence (see the three columns on the left side of the figure) learning is low in both homogenous work groups (black column) and culturally diverse work groups (grey and white columns), whereby the culturally diverse work groups do even poorer. This disadvantage of culturally diverse compared to homogenous groups is eliminated under high task, goal and reward interdependence (see three columns on the right side of the figure). However, only when group members in culturally diverse work groups uphold pro-diversity beliefs (see grey column) they are able to harness cultural diversity for their individual learning, and provide an even more favourable learning environment than homogenous groups.

**Figure 1. The combined effects of interdependence and diversity beliefs on students learning in culturally diverse and homogenous work groups.**



## Recommendations

In order to enable our students to harness cultural diversity for their individual learning we need to do at least **two** things: establish high interdependence and assure students value cultural differences.

### **How can you assure high interdependence?**

1. Set a group task
2. Reward the group, not the individual

3. Ask students to fill in a group contribution sheet
4. Ask students to set and agree on common goals

**How can you assure students value cultural diversity?**

5. Do the following little exercise when you introduce group work:
  - Tell your students that various research studies have demonstrated that culturally diverse groups typically perform better on their group assignments and experience more pleasant group processes than homogenous groups.
  - Ask your students to list 5 reasons why culturally diverse groups may typically perform better on their group assignments and experience more pleasant group processes than homogenous groups.
  - Midway through your course you may want to reinforce this by repeating step b) this time asking your students to draw on their own experiences.

**Anything else you should do?**

Group work in culturally diverse work group is inevitably more difficult and complex. It therefore often takes more time and effort for culturally diverse work groups to perform on the same or even higher level than homogenous work groups.

6. Highlight this to your students and ask them to take 5 minutes before and after each of their group meetings to reflect upon task, process and people and to take action if necessary.

## Further Readings

Brodbeck, F. C., Guillaume, Y. R. F., & Lee, N. (2009). Diversity as a multilevel construct: Predicting cross-level interaction effects on group members learning performance. *Working Paper, Aston University*.

Fay, D., & Guillaume, Y. R. F. (2007). Team diversity. In S. Clegg & J. R. Bailey (Eds.), *International Encyclopedia of Organization Studies* (pp. 1510-1513). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

van Dick, R., van Knippenberg, D., Hagele, S., Guillaume, Y. R. F., & Brodbeck, F. C. (2008). Group diversity and group identification: The moderating role of diversity beliefs. *Human Relations*, 61, 1463-1492.

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Work and Organisational Psychology Group  
Example used with postgraduate students

# CREATING A POSITIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT FOR NON-EU STUDENTS

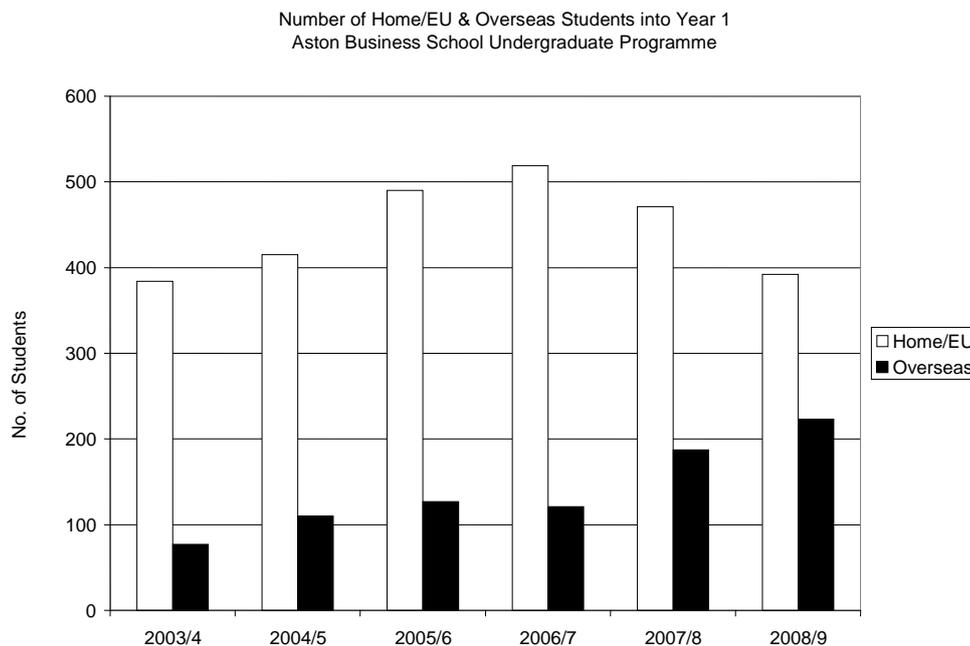
CATHERINE FOSTER

## Background

Over the last twenty years, the Higher Education (HE) environment has changed and evolved, specifically with increasing participation rates and the introduction first of tuition fees and then deferred variable fees for Home students, and the increasing participation of International Students. Over the last 20 years, student numbers have increased from 600,000 students (undergraduate and postgraduate) in the 1960's (Greenaway & Haynes, 2003) to over 2.3 million students in 2007/8 (HESA, 2009).

Within Aston University, these changes are also detectable, specifically the increasing numbers of International Students (non-EU). In particular, during the last five years, the number of international students has increased dramatically within Aston Business School.

The graph below illustrates the student body in the Undergraduate Programme within Aston Business School. This table excludes those students beginning an International Foundation Programme or other Year 0 programmes.



It is clear that the student cohorts have evolved over the five years shown, with over twice as many International Students in 2008/9 than in 2003/4.

Within this changing environment, the current mechanisms for academic support at Aston University, as across the UK Higher Education sector, are deeply rooted in a UK centric model. Within this environment, non-EU students are expected to perform, and achieve, as equals with EU students, and specifically those from the UK. This environment has remained constant over a period of years,

including assessment criteria which have not changed and a league table rankings system featuring the number of Firsts and Upper Second class degrees. In order for students to perform to the best of their ability, not only does the academic teaching and learning need to be reviewed and developed, it is important that the academic support structures are also in place to enable those students to achieve. Therefore, this research proposes to investigate the current support provision to gauge whether this is appropriate to the student body at Aston Business School and how this can be improved to assist students in their academic achievement.

## Literature Review

Although research has been undertaken into the experiences of international students at university, this has focused on a variety of different aspects of the students' experience and not specifically on academic support. Such research into the international student experience includes Robertson et al (2000), Misra et al (2003) and Abel (2002). Robertson et al (2000) aimed to identify the potential differences in expectations of international students and the staff involved in delivering academic programmes within the Australian system with a view to recognise the problems and issues international students may encounter in their studies and how these can be factored into the provision. They found that there were similarities between the staff and student views but with slightly different emphasis, for examples, one key element raised by both groups involved language. Staff reported that international students were reluctant to voice opinion within sessions whereas the students reported they had a difficulty with the language being used, especially colloquial language. Additional key elements highlighted through this study included feelings of isolation and finance issues faced by international students.

Misra et al (2002) investigated the role of four constructs on the experiences of international students within the USA. They recognise that all students undergo a transitional period when starting University which brings a variety of stressors with it but that for International students, there are additional stressors with which the student must deal with and continue to perform. Their research indicated that international students did indeed have greater stresses than home students did and that life stress predicts academic stress. They found that international students had increased stress due to "frustration, lack of resources, failure to achieve goals, and feeling like social outcasts" (2002:151).

Whilst neither study has been conducted within the UK, and there can be criticism of their methodology (i.e. sample size) they nevertheless provide some background to the experience of international students upon which this research is based.

In contrast to the above research, in a special edition of *New Directions for Higher Education*, Abel (2002) provided guidance to international students on how to achieve within the American Higher Education system. Drawing on key literature, he identifies issues such as preparation for the differing teaching and learning climate, expectations of the relationship with tutors/professors, time management and work/life balance. Whilst these are issues that all students could relate to, for international students they are more fundamental due to the contrast of the education systems between home and university.

In addition to literature directly looking at the International student experience, existing literature regarding student retention (including student support) may also help with understanding the experience. Although the key findings from these research papers can be beneficial in understanding the international student situation, they cannot be generalised to those students. This literature focuses specifically on Widening Participation students, i.e. those from non-traditional groups, and not on Non-EU students (e.g. Bean & Metzner (1985), Tinto (1975), Reay (1998), Thomas 2002)) but has helped Universities understand the varying student experiences and has encouraged Universities to acknowledge no two students will have the same experience of Higher Education. These papers (Tinto, 1975 and Bean & Metzner, 1985) have examined student attrition and retention to identify the stages of the student experience and how this varies between 'traditional' and 'non-traditional' students. Whilst this focuses on home students, it does provide some evidence of the differing student experiences.

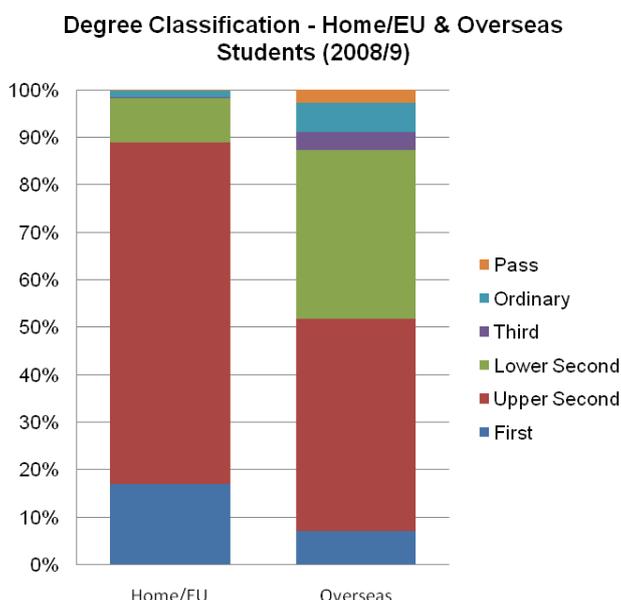
Both Reay (1998) and Thomas (2002) the concept of “Institutional Habitus” is discussed in relation to student retention. She argues that despite pressures on students such as finance and part time work (often cited as reasons for withdrawal for non-traditional students), many students persevere with their studies. They propose that institutional habitus plays a significant role with the decision to remain at University. Thomas states “If a student feels that they do not fit in, that their social and cultural practices are inappropriate and that their tacit knowledge is undervalued, they may be more inclined to withdraw early” (2002:431). As withdrawing is not as easy for International Students (due to VISA issues and family expectations), they instead may withdraw from the programme/institution and not perform as well as they are able to.

In the Thomas paper (2002), she also highlights key aspects to the student experience that are important when considering student retention. Again these seven facets are reflected in the experience of international students. The facets are Academic Preparedness; Academic Experience, Institutional Expectations and Commitments, Academic and Social Match, Finance and Employment, Family Support and Commitments and University Support Services. Whilst these have been suggested within the context of non-traditional UK students, the parallels to the International student experience is clear.

## Aims

It is essential that the support provided to international students is reviewed and developed. It is our proposition that the Learning and Teaching support methods have not changed over the last few years and that it is essential to investigate the needs and requirements of the new student body in order to support them to achieve their full potential.

Within Aston Business School, the performance of Undergraduate International students has also been highlighted as lower than Home/EU students. Consistently over the last four years, International students have not only achieved lower degree classifications than Home/EU but are also more likely to repeat/restart modules/academic years. The graph below highlights the degree classifications awarded in 2008/9 by Home/EU and Overseas students. It is clear that there is a dramatic difference in the final degree classifications awarded.



## Methodology

A series of focus groups, leading to focused interviews conducted with approximately 10 students, will be undertaken with students in the second and final year of their studies in ABS and key colleagues across the academic and support staff structures. Although for a full and detailed understanding of the issues and needs of international students it would be preferable to undertake a series of interviews with a number of students and staff, time and financial constraints make this impractical.

This research will focus on ABS students in the first instance. Although the implications of this research will be applicable to a wider audience, a narrower focus will be maintained initially. A survey method has not been selected for this research as it is felt that students are frequently surveyed for many other research projects and that survey exhaustion is a potential problem.

## Results

At the time of writing this article, the focus groups are being undertaken. Initial participation has been significantly lower than expected and as such, further focus groups will be offered after the January examination period.

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- Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) (2008) All students by institution, mode of study, level of study and domicile 2007/08. Accessed December 2009, URL: [http://www.hesa.ac.uk/index.php?option=com\\_datatables&Itemid=121&task=show\\_category&catdex=3](http://www.hesa.ac.uk/index.php?option=com_datatables&Itemid=121&task=show_category&catdex=3)
- Misra, R., Crist, M. and Burant, C.J. (2003) 'Relationships Among Life Stress, Social Support, Academic Stressors, and Reactions to Stressors of International Students in the United States'. *International Journal of Stress Management*, Vol 10, No. 2 pp 137-157
- Reay, D. (1998) 'Always knowing' and 'never being sure': familial and institutional habituses and higher education choice'. *Journal of Education Policy*, Vol 13, No. 4, pp 519-529
- Robertson, M., Line, M., Jones, S. and Thomas, S. (2000) 'International Students, Learning Environments and Perceptions: a case study using the Delphi technique.' *Higher Education Research & Development*, Vol. 19, No. 1 pp 89-102
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- Tinto, V. (1975) 'Dropout from Higher Education: A Theoretical Synthesis of Recent Research'. *Review of Educational Research*, Vol. 45, No. 1, pp 89-125

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# VOTING CARDS IN LECTURES: PROMOTING PARTICIPATION AND PROVIDING FEEDBACK

ROBERT GODDARD

## Background

A little over a year ago I watched a daytime television programme in which members of the audience were asked to vote by raising one of two large paper cards. You may have guessed what those cards depicted: a red tomato and a green pepper. There were, I guessed, one hundred people in the audience and the programme's presenter required a few seconds to work out the audience's preference. What struck me most about this voting process was the speed and ease with which it was organised. Would it, I wondered, be transferable to the lecture theatre and in what ways could voting be used to encourage student participation and provide feedback? In the first few months of 2009, Claire Howell and I found the answers to these questions. In this contribution to the *Good Practice Guide* my purpose is to record our experiences and initial reflections; I shall be no more ambitious.

## Method

We decided to trial the use of voting cards in the postgraduate Corporate Governance module which we team teach with Sir Adrian Cadbury. Approximately one hundred and twenty students were enrolled on the module and teaching took place in a tiered lecture theatre. The module is compulsory for students on the MSc Accounting and Finance and MSc Finance and Financial Regulation. The great majority of students on these MSc programmes completed their undergraduate education outside of the United Kingdom. The weekly, three hour session was split in a fairly traditional way between a formal lecture, group discussion and (in some weeks) student presentations. At the start of the module we provided each student with four A4 cards: one white (labelled A), one yellow (B), one blue (C) and one orange (D). The cards were placed in a plastic wallet along with a case study. The students were told to bring the cards and the case study to each lecture and this they did. We introduced the cards in the first lecture with questions incorporated into the session's PowerPoint presentation. The first question was this:

Have you previously studied corporate governance?

A: No.

B: Yes -- only in the context of the United Kingdom.

C: Yes -- not the UK but in the context of my home country

D: Yes -- in my home country and in another country

When all the students had raised their chosen coloured card we quickly saw that the majority had not studied corporate governance before: the white cards dominated. There were a few orange, blue and yellow cards raised and we asked the students raising these cards to say a little more about their previous studies and background, linking their prior studies with the content of our module.

Later in the lecture we asked other questions. Some of these were designed to elicit students' perceptions regarding the scope of the subject being studied; others sought to test their understanding of the material covered. For example:

**Corporate governance: some definitions**

- A:**  
The system by which companies are directed and controlled
- B:**  
The relationship among various participants [chief executive officer, management, shareholders, employees] in determining the direction and performance of corporations
- C:**  
The process of supervision and control intended to ensure that the company's management acts in accordance with the interests of shareholders

9

**In whose interests should the directors be required to run the company?**

- A:** The shareholders only.
- B:** The shareholders and any stakeholders directly affected by the company's activities
- C:** Anyone or anything affected by the company's activities including the environment.
- D:** It should be for the directors to decide, depending on the circumstances.

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Throughout the module we used the voting cards, asking the students to vote no more than five times during a lecture. In most cases the questions were incorporated into PowerPoint presentations in advance of the session but we also used the cards when asking *ad hoc* questions, responding to students questions and testing their understanding. On most occasions one of us would record how students had voted on the whiteboard at the front of the room. An unpredicted consequence of recording the votes in this way was that it enabled the person counting the votes to engage and interact with the students as they decided which card to use. Through such interaction, and from the start of the course, we established our expectation that the sessions would be interactive and the students were expected to be more than passive learners. It was also enjoyable for us to see how the students responded to questions and to interact with them as they voted.

## Advantages and Disadvantages

The voting cards brought an immediate benefit: we avoided the situation where the audience is asked a question and students are reluctant to answer individually or an answer is shouted out and it is not clear from which student it came. The voting process required the students to act collectively and we found that the students were willing to do this in preference to being one of a handful to raise their hand. Moreover, the cards gave us greater flexibility with regard to the questions we were able to ask: we were not limited to questions that could be answered by the raising (or not) of a hand. Asking students to vote also helped to bring more variety to each week's activities, as well as breaking down the barrier that can exist between lecturer and students in large group teaching. We were also able to provide immediate feedback to students on the basis of their voting responses thereby enabling, in a modest way, the students' to shape the direction of their learning.

I have explained my use of the voting cards to colleagues at Aston and elsewhere. A popular question has been: isn't there a more technologically advanced way of doing that? Electronic voting and data entry systems for use in lectures exist and these have advantages over voting cards. For example, electronic voting systems invariably permit the results of voting to be quickly displayed on screen and incorporated into presentations and stored for later retrieval. They may also permit a greater variety of responses from participants and the tracking and storing of answers. If anonymous voting is required – where, for example, the questions are sensitive – voting cards are clearly not appropriate. Electronic voting may also reduce the extent to which students' responses are influenced by how their peers have voted.

Nevertheless, voting cards have several important advantages. First, they are not reliant on electricity or computer technology; there is less to go wrong (before you ask: we had few problems with students forgetting their voting cards). Second, and more importantly, the lecturer can see students' responses immediately: you know by observation how the student sitting at the far left of the front row has voted and you can engage with her. You can also see if students are unsure and if they are waiting to see how their friends vote. It is therefore possible to interact with students about their responses in a way that is more difficult with handheld devices. Spontaneity and follow-up questions are possible. For example, students voting by raising a white card can be asked to keep their card raised and to explain their decision. I wonder whether electronic voting systems would encourage this degree of interaction between lecturers and students? I may, of course, take a different view with five hundred students in front of me instead of one hundred and twenty.

In conclusion, some advice for those who would like to use voting cards. First, several well chosen, and well placed, questions in the course of an hour's lecture are likely to be more valuable than asking questions every 5 minutes. Revision sessions can, however, be constructed around the use of voting cards, where the purpose is to test students' understanding and knowledge. Second, make sure you know why you are asking the particular question and what you – and the students – will gain from voting and make sure that you provide feedback that responds directly to how students have responded.

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BFM113: Corporate Governance

## APPENDIX 1: HELM SEMINAR SERIES 2009/2010

SW1109, 12:30pm - 2pm

19 November 2009

**Carole Parkes** (Aston Business School)

*Giving voice to values - reflective learning and interdisciplinarity in teaching ethics, social responsibility and sustainability*

10 December 2009

**Charlotte Gladstone-Millar** (Portsmouth Business School) and **Professor Helen Higson** (Aston Business School)

*Supporting the Development of New Academic Staff in Business Disciplines*

14 January 2010

**Dr Colin Beard** (Sheffield Hallam University) - **POSTPONED until October 2010**

*The Experience of Knowing*

11 February 2010

**Professor Lindsey McEwen** (University of Gloucestershire)

*Taught Postgraduate Learning Experiences*

11 March 2010

**Roy Smith** (Aston University)

*Managing the Student Experience for Cross-disciplinary Undergraduates*

8 April 2010

**Dr Valerie Clifford** (Oxford Brookes University)

*Negotiating Curriculum Change for Internationalisation for All Students*

13 May 2010

**Dr Odette Hutchinson** (Aston Business School)

*Using Motivational Techniques to Give and Receive Student Feedback*

## APPENDIX 2: HIGHER EDUCATION JOURNALS

Education-related journals	Impact Factor	Comment	Issues per year	Refe reed	Revie wed
Academy of Management: Learning and Education		USA	4	Yes	Yes
Active Learning in Higher Education		UK	3	Yes	
Applied Measurement in Education		US Based	4		
Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education		UK based	6	Yes	Yes
Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy and Practice					
British Educational Research Journal	0.526	UK	Bi-monthly	Yes	Yes
British Journal of Education Studies	0.263	UK	Quarterly	Yes	Yes
British Journal of Educational Psychology		UK		Yes	
British Journal of Educational Technology	0.574	UK		Yes	Yes
British Journal of Sociology of Education	0.476	UK	5	Yes	Yes
Cambridge Journal of Education		UK			
Canadian Journal of Higher Education		Canada			
Chronicle of Higher Education	No	US Based			Yes
Comparative Education	0.593	UK		Yes	Yes
Comparative Education Review	0.562	USA		Yes	Yes
Economics of Education Review	0.495	UK		Yes	Yes
Educational Action Research		UK		Yes	
Education, Equality and Social Cohesion		UK Based			
Educational Leadership	0.283	US			
Educational Policy	0.509	US Based			
Educational Psychology Review	1.333	US		Yes	Yes
Educational Research - UK	0.14	UK		Yes	Yes
Educational Review	0.39	UK			
Educational Studies	0.339				
Education and Training		UK		Yes	
Higher Education	0.495	based -The Netherlands		Yes	Yes
Higher Education in Europe		Based in Romania	4		
Higher Education Management & Policy		France			
Higher Education Quarterly		UK based		Yes	
Higher Education Research and Development		UK		Yes	
Higher Education Review		UK based		Yes	
Innovations in Education and Teaching International	0.2	UK			
Innovative Higher Education		Netherlands			
Interactive Learning Environments		UK			Yes
International Journal for Academic Development		UK			
International Journal of Education Development	0.233	UK		Yes	
International Journal of Excellence in Education		International			
International Journal of Innovation and Learning		UK		Yes	
International Journal of Innovation in Education		UK Based	4		
International Journal of Management Education		UK. Journal of BEST, not highly rated			
International Journal of Management in Education		UK		Yes	
Issues in Educational Research		Australia		Yes	

Journal of Educational and Behavioral Statistics					
Journal of Education Policy	0.671	UK		Yes	
Journal of Educational Research	0.377	US		Yes	Yes
Journal of Excellence in College Teaching		US Based.			
Journal of Experimental Education		US Based			
Journal of Further and Higher Education		Paper by Anne Davis	4		
Journal of Higher Education	0.333	Based in USA	4	Yes	Yes
Journal of Innovative Education		US Based			
Journal of Learning Sciences		US		Yes	
Journal of Marketing in Higher Education		US			
Journal of Technology and Teacher Education (JTATE)		US Based	Quarterly		
Journal of Planning Education and Research					
Journal of Workplace Learning		UK		Yes	
New Directions for Higher Education		Based USA			
Oxford Review of Education	0.3	UK	6		
Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher education		AUA Journal, not highly rated	4		
Reflective Practice		UK	5	Yes	
Research into Higher Education Abstracts			3		
Review of Educational Research					
Review of Higher Education	0.292	Based in USA		Yes	Yes
Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research		Norway	6	Yes	Yes
Sociology of Education	1.249	USA		Yes	Yes
Studies in HE	0.662	Highly rated journal	8		
Teacher Development		UK			
Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice		UK		Yes	
Teaching in Higher Education		UK		Yes	
The National Teaching and Learning Forum		No			
Westminster Studies in Education		Australia			
<b>Educational Technology, Open and Distance Learning</b>	<b>Impact Factor</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>Issues per year</b>	<b>Refe reed</b>	<b>Revie wed</b>
Association for Learning Technology Journal		UK Based	Tri-annual		Yes
Australasian Journal of Educational Technology		Australia		Yes	
Educational Technology Abstracts		UK Based	1		
Journal of Educational Technology and Society	0.475				
Journal of Interactive Media in Education		UK			Yes
The Technology Source		US			Yes
<b>Policy, Management, Quality</b>	<b>Impact Factor</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>Issues per year</b>	<b>Refe reed</b>	<b>Revie wed</b>
Educational Management, Administration & Leadership		UK Based	Bi-monthly		Yes
Higher Education Abstracts		US Based			
Higher Education in Europe		Duplicated in France (OECD Prog Link). Also in Educ rel j	4		
Higher Education Management					
Higher Education Policy		General trends	Quarterly		
International Journal of Educational Management					
International Journal of Institutional Management in Higher Education		France			

International Journal of Leadership in Education		US Based	4		
International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education					
Journal of Excellence in Higher Education		USA			
Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management		Australia/UK Good journal	4		
Policy Studies		US Based			
Quality Assurance in Education		Australia			
Quality in Higher Education		UK	3		
Technology Analysis and Strategic Management	0.446		8		
Tertiary Education and Management		Netherlands			
Total Quality Management		UK	12		
<b>Business and Management discipline-related journals</b>	<b>Ranking</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>Issues per year</b>	<b>Referred</b>	<b>Reviewed</b>
<b>American Statistician</b>	3	Target ESG	Quarterly		
Business Process Management Journal	4	Target for TOM Group			
European Business Review	3	Target for ESG			
Human Resource Management	3	Target for WOP Group			
International Journal of Public Sector Management	3	Target for Possem			
Journal of Knowledge Management	3	Target for KM			Yes
Journal of Management Development	2	Journal on WOP list			
Journal of Organizational Change Management	4 (TOM) 3 (WOP)	Target for TOM and WOP Group Impact 0.368			
International Journal of Training and Development					

## APPENDIX 3: HELM LIBRARY CATALOGUE

**These are available to borrow from the HELM Office on the 6th Floor of the Main Building**

### Books

<u>Author</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Place Published</u>	<u>Publisher</u>	<u>ISBN</u>
Albrighton, F.	1986	<i>Can I Quote You On That?</i>	Birmingham	Conference of University Administrators	
Albrighton, F. & Watts, S.	2001	<i>Can I Quote You On That? A Guide to Working with the Media</i>	Manchester	The Association of University Administrators	
Allan, D. (Ed)	1996	<i>In at the Deep End: First Experiences of University Teaching</i>	Lancaster	Unit for Innovation in Higher Education	
Andrews, J. & Higson, H.	2007	<i>Mislem Project: Manual of Operations and Methodological proceedings</i>	Birmingham	Aston University	978 1 85449 441 2
Arksey, H. (Ed)	1992	<i>How to get a first class degree</i>	Lancaster	Unit for Innovation in Higher Education	0 901800 09 0
Arya, R. & Smith, R.	2004/2005	<i>Living at Home: An Investigation into the degree to which University Facilities and access/utilisation policies are appropriate for the range of students' living arrangements currently experienced at Aston University</i>	Birmingham	Widening Participation Task Group	
Ashburner, L., Ferlie, E., Fitzgerald, L. & Pettigrew, A.	1996	<i>The Public Management in Action</i>	New York	Oxford University Press	0 19 828903 0
Atfield, R. & Kemp, P. (Eds)	2008	<i>Enhancing the international learning experience in business and management, hospitality, leisure, sport tourism</i>	London	Threshold Press Ltd	978 1 903152 23 2
Aylett, R. P. T. & Gregory, K. J. (Eds)	1997	<i>The Single Quality Agency: The Future Quality Agenda and its Implications</i>	London	Goldsmiths College	0 902 986 26 0
Bailey, S.	2006	<i>Academic Writing: A Handbook for International Students (2nd Ed)</i>	Oxon	Routledge	
Balderston, F. E.	1974	<i>Managing Today's University</i>	London	Jossey-Bass Ltd.	0 87589 236 1
Baldrige, J. V. & Tierney, M. L.	1979	<i>New Approaches to Management</i>	London	Jossey-Bass Ltd.	0 87589 420 8
Ball, C.	1985	<i>Fitness for Purpose: Essays in Higher Education</i>	Surrey	SRHE & NFER-Nelson	
Bargh, C., Scott, P. & Smith, D.	1996	<i>Governing Universities: Changing the Culture?</i>	Buckingham	SRHE and Open University Press	0 335 19538-5
Barnett, R.	2007	<i>A Will To Learn: Being a Student in an Age of Uncertainty</i>	Berkshire	Open University Press	978 033522380 0
Barnett, R. (Ed)	1992	<i>Learning to Effect</i>	Buckingham	Open University Press	
Barnett, R. (Ed)	2006	<i>Reshaping the University: New Relationships between research, Scholarship and Teaching</i>	Buckingham	SRHE & Open University Press	9 780335 217014
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Prosser, M. & Tirgwell, K.	1999	<i>Understanding Learning and Teaching: The Experience in Higher Education</i>	Buckingham	SRHE and Open University Press	0 335 19831 7
Race, P. & Brown, S.	2001	<i>The ILTA Guide: Inspiring Learning about Teaching and Assessment</i>	York	Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education	0 9541709 0 3
Redman, P.	2006	<i>Good Essay Writing</i>	London	SAGE Publications	1-4129-2011-6
Richards, M. D.	1978	<i>Organisational Goal Structures</i>	Minnesota	West Publishing Co.	0 8299 0210 4
Robbins, S.P., Coulter, M.	2009	<i>Management (Pearson International Edition. Tenth edition)</i>	New Jersey	Pearson Education Ltd	978 0 13 814366 4
Rust, C. (Ed)	2005	<i>Improving Student Learning: Diversity and Inclusivity</i>	Oxford	The Oxford Centre For Staff and Learning Development	
Rust, C. (Ed)	2004	<i>Improving Student Learning: Theory, Research and Scholarship</i>	Oxford	The Oxford Centre For Staff and Learning Development	1 904190 08 1
Schuller, T. (Ed)	1995	<i>The Changing University?</i>	Buckingham	SRHE & Open University Press	
Scott, P.	1995	<i>The Meanings of Mass Higher Education</i>	Buckingham	The Society for Research into Higher Education & Open University Press	0 335 19442 7

Scott, P. (Ed)	1998	<i>The Globalization of Higher Education</i>	Buckingham	SRHE and Open University Press	0 335 20244 6
Shattock, M.	2003	<i>Managing Successful Universities</i>	Berkshire	Open University Press	
Shattock, M.	2006	<i>Managing: Good Governance in Higher Education</i>	Maidenhead	Open University Press	0 335 21666 8
Shattock, M.	1994	<i>The UGC and the Management of British Universities</i>	Buckingham	SRHE and Open University Press	0 335 19161 4
Shattock, M. & Rigby, G. (Eds)	1983	<i>Resource Allocation in British Universities</i>	Surrey	Research into Higher Education Monographs	0 900868 97 X
Shattock, M. (Ed)	1983	<i>The Structure &amp; Governance of Higher Education</i>	Surrey	The Society for Research into Higher Education	900868 91 0
Silver, H.	1999	<i>Researching Education: Themes in Teaching and Learning</i>	Bristol	The Policy Press	
Sizer, J.	1985	<i>Department of Education and Science Research Project: Background Paper No. 1</i>	Loughborough	Department of Education and Science	N/A
Sizer, J.	1986	<i>Department of Education and Science Research Project: Background Paper No. 3</i>	Loughborough	Department of Education and Science	N/A
Sizer, J.	1987	<i>Department of Education and Science Research Project: Comparative Analysis of Universities' Case Studies</i>	Loughborough	Department of Education and Science	N/A
Sizer, J.	1987	<i>Department of Education and Science Research Project: Final Report</i>	Loughborough	Department of Education and Science	N/A
Smith, B. & Summer, J.	2004	<i>Communication Skills Handbook: How to Succeed in Written and Oral Communication</i>	Milton	John Wiley & Sons Australia Ltd	
Spee, A. & Bormans, R. (Eds)	1991	<i>Performance Indicators in Government Institutional Relations</i>	Unknown	Unknown	N/A
Spee, A. A. J.	1994	<i>Regulating Higher Education</i>	Enschede	Center for Higher Education Policy Studies (CHEPS)	
Stadtman, V. A.	Unknown	<i>Academic Adaptation: Higher Education Prepares for the 1980's and 1990's</i>	California	Jossey-Bass Inc.	
Steeple, D. W. (Ed)	1986	<i>Institutional Revival: Case Histories</i>	San Francisco	Jossey-Bass Inc.	87589 716 9
Stott, R. & Avery, S. (Eds)	2001	<i>Writing with Style</i>	Essex	Pearson Education Ltd	
Stott, R. & Chapman, P. (Eds)	2001	<i>Grammar and Writing</i>	Essex	Pearson Education Ltd	
Stott, R., Snaith, A. & Rylance, R.	2001	<i>Making Your Case: A Practical Guide to Essay Writing</i>	Essex	Pearson Education Ltd	
Stott, R., Young, T. & Bryan, C. (Eds)	2001	<i>Speaking Your Mind: Oral Presentation and Seminar Skills</i>	Essex	Pearson Education Ltd	
Stuart, B.E., Sarow, M.S., Stuart, L.	2007	<i>Integrated Business Communication in a Global Marketplace</i>	Chichester	John Wiley & Sons Ltd	978 0 470 02767 7
Taylor, J. & Whitchurch, C.	Unknown	<i>Developing People</i>	Manchester	Conference of University Administrators	
Temple, P. & Whitchurch, C.	1989	<i>Strategic Choice: Corporate Strategies for Change in Higher Education</i>	Reading	Conference of University Administrators	0 947931 15 5
Thomas, H. & Simkins, T. (Eds)	1987	<i>Economics and the Management of Education: Emerging Themes</i>	East Sussex	The Falmer Press	1 85000 208 8
Thomas, H. & Simkins, T. (Eds)	1987	<i>Economics and the Management of Education: Emerging Themes</i>	East Sussex	The Falmer Press	1 85000 209 6
Thomas, L. & Hixenbaugh, P. (Eds)	2006	<i>Personal Tutoring in Higher Education</i>	Stoke On Trent	Trentham Books Ltd	
Thompson, D.	2004	<i>Improving the Achievement &amp; Retention of Students from Low Participation Neighbourhoods: Final Report and Second Year Progression</i>	Birmingham	Widening Participation Task Group	

Thorley, H. (Ed)	1998	<i>Take a Minute: Reflections on Modern Higher Education Administration</i>	Lancaster	Unit for Innovation in Higher Education	
Thorne, M. (Ed)	1999	<i>Foresight: Universities in the Future</i>	London	Department of Trade and Industry	DTI
Tight, M.	2003	<i>Researching Higher Education</i>	Maidenhead	SRHE & Open University Press	0 335 21117 8
Tight, M. (Ed)	1988	<i>Academic Freedom and Responsibility</i>	Milton Keynes	SRHE & Open University Press	
Tissington, P., Hasel, M. & Matthiesen, J.	2009	<i>How to Write Successful Business and Management Essays</i>	London	SAGE Publications	9 781847 875914
Titmus, C. (Ed)	1985	<i>Widening the Field: Continuing Education in Higher Education</i>	Surrey	SRHE & NFER-Nelson	
Tomkinson, B.	1995	<i>Striking a Bargain: A Guide to Negotiating</i>	Manchester	The Association of University Administrators	
Truscot, B.	1951	<i>Red Brick University</i>	Middlesex	Penguin Books	N/A
Truss, L.	2005	<i>Eats, Shoots and Leaves: The Zero Tolerance Approach to Punctuation</i>	London	Profile Books Ltd	
Tucker, A.	1984	<i>Chairing the Academic Department: Leadership Among Peers (2nd Ed)</i>	New York	MacMillan Press Ltd	
Ulrich, N.	2005	<i>Monitoring and Supporting Mature Students at Aston University</i>	Birmingham	Widening Participation Task Group	
Unknown	2003	<i>A Framework for Higher Education in Scotland: Higher Education Review Phase 2</i>	Edinburgh	Crown	N/A
Unknown	1984	<i>A Strategy for Higher Education into the 1990s: The University Grants Committee's Advice</i>	London	Government Publications	0 11 270551 0
Unknown	2006	<i>Academic Credit in Higher Education in England</i>	Gloucester	Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education	
Unknown	2002	<i>Annual report and accounts 2001-2002</i>	Edinburgh	Scottish Further Education Funding Council	1899911278
Unknown	2006	<i>Approaches to Enhancing Student Learning: Proceedings of Annual Learning and Teaching Conference</i>	Nottingham	Audio CD	
Unknown	1993	<i>Assessment Issues in Higher Education</i>	Unknown	Employment Department Group	N/A
Unknown	1990	<i>Beitrag Zur Hochschulforschung</i>	Arabellastr	Bayerisches Staatsinstiut fur Hochschulforschung und Hochschulplanung	0171 645 X
Unknown	2006	<i>Code of practice for assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education: Section 10</i>	Mansfield	The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education 2006	
Unknown	2006	<i>Code of practice for assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education: Section 6</i>	Mansfield	The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education 2006	
Unknown	2006	<i>Code of practice for assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education: Section 7</i>	Mansfield	The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education 2006	
Unknown	1994	<i>Committee of Public Accounts Eighth Report: The Proper Conduct of Public Business</i>	London	HMSO	0 10 215494 5
Unknown	1990	<i>Committee of Public Accounts First Report: Financial Problems at Universities</i>	London	HMSO	N/A
Unknown	2007	<i>Destinations of Leavers from HEIs 2005/06</i>	Cheltenham	HESA	N/A
Unknown	2001	<i>Devolution and Globalisation: Implications for Local Decision-Makers</i>	Paris	OECD Publications	92 64 19656 0
Unknown	1983	<i>Excellence in Diversity</i>	Surrey	The Society for Research into Higher Education	0 900868 99 6
Unknown	1989	<i>Funding Choices: Methods of funding higher education in polytechnics</i>	London	The Polytechnics and Colleges Funding	N/A

		and colleges		Council	
Unknown	2004	<i>Good Practice Guide in Learning and Teaching: Volume 2</i>	Birmingham	Quality Unit: Aston Business School	
Unknown	2006	<i>Good Practice Guide in Learning and Teaching: Volume 3</i>	Birmingham	Quality Unit: Aston Business School	
Unknown	2007	<i>Good Practice Guide in Learning and Teaching: Volume 4</i>	Birmingham	Quality Unit: Aston Business School	
Unknown	2004	<i>Guide for Members of Higher Education Governing Bodies in the UK</i>	Bristol	HEFCE	1 902369 15 7
Unknown	Unknown	<i>HEFCE Fundamental Review of Research Policy and Funding: Sub-group to consider the interaction between teaching, research and other activities of HEIs</i>	N/A	HEFCE	
Unknown	1999	<i>Helping Students in Difficulty: A Guide for Personal Tutors and Other Staff</i>	Leicester	University of Leicester	
Unknown	1998	<i>Higher Education for the 21st Century: Response to the Dearing Report</i>	Suffolk	DfEE Publications	N/A
Unknown	1998	<i>Higher Education for the 21st Century: Response to the Garrick Report</i>	Edinburgh	The Scottish Office Education and Industry Department	N/A
Unknown	1997	<i>Higher Education in the learning society: Reports 1-14</i>	Norwich	NCIHE	1 85838 254 8
Unknown	1995	<i>Higher Education Management Review: Report of the Committee of Inquiry</i>	Canberra	Australian Government Publishing Services	0 644 462 73 6
Unknown	2001	<i>Higher Education Reform: Getting the Incentives Right</i>	The Netherlands	CHEPS	90 120 9268 X
Unknown	1988	<i>Higher Education: A Policy Statement</i>	Canberra	Australian Government Publishing Services	9 780644 083003
Unknown	1994	<i>Higher Education: The Lessons of Experience</i>	Washington	The World Bank	0 8213 2745 3
Unknown	Unknown	<i>How to Get Promoted: A Guide for Academics</i>	Unknown	The Times Higher Education Supplement	
Unknown	Unknown	<i>How to Get Published: A Guide for Academics</i>	Unknown	The Times Higher Education Supplement	
Unknown	1996	<i>Joint Planning Group for Quality Assurance in Higher Education</i>	London	CVCP	0 948890 93 2
Unknown	1998	<i>Learning for Life: Final report. Review of Higher Education Financing and Policy</i>	Canberra	Commonwealth of Australia	0 642 23733 6
Unknown	2005	<i>Learning to improve: quality approaches for lifelong learning</i>	Edinburgh	Scottish Executive	0 7559 4677 4
Unknown	1993	<i>Learning to Succeed: A Radical Look at Education Today and A Strategy for the Future. Report of the Paul Hamlyn Foundation. National Commission on Education</i>	London	National Commission on Education (Heinemann)	
Unknown	1995	<i>Managing for Quality Stories and Strategies: A Case Study Resource for Academic Leaders and Managers</i>	London	Higher Education Quality Council	
Unknown	2006	<i>Me Them Us: Making Equality Work for Everyone</i>	Birmingham	b:RAP	N/A
Unknown	1990	<i>Measuring Up: Performance Indicators in Further Education</i>	London	HMSO	0 11 494107 6
Unknown	2000	<i>Modernising Higher Education: Facing the Global Challenge</i>	Suffolk	DfEE Publications	1 84185 219 8
Unknown	1998	<i>New Partnership Between Universities and Industry in the 21st Century: A Report from the UK Team</i>	London	Foundation for Science and Technology	N/A
Unknown	1991	<i>Performance Indicators in Higher Education: Report of a Trial Evaluation Study. Volume 1</i>	Canberra	Commonwealth of Australia	0 644 14772 5
Unknown	1991	<i>Performance Indicators in Higher Education: Report of a Trial Evaluation Study. Volume 2</i>	Canberra	Commonwealth of Australia	0 644 14773 3

Unknown	8-9 July, 2004	<i>Proceedings of Conference on The Impact of Employability</i>	Lancashire	University of Central Lancashire	
Unknown	1994	<i>Quantitative Indicators of Australian Academic Research: Commissioned Report No. 27</i>	Canberra	Australian Government Publishing Services	0 644 33397 9
Unknown	1996	<i>Report of the SHEFC-COSHEP Joint Review Group on Quality Assessment</i>	Edinburgh	Scottish Higher Education Funding Council	N/A
Unknown	1985	<i>Report of the Steering Committee for Efficiency Studies in Universities</i>	Unknown	Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals	N/A
Unknown	1988	<i>Report. Accountancy Teaching in Universities (Business and Management Studies Sub Committee Accountancy Group)</i>	London	University Grants Committee	N/A
Unknown	2001	<i>Research and the Knowledge Age: A consultation document from the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council</i>	Edinburgh	Scottish Higher Education Funding Council	N/A
Unknown	2001	<i>Research Assessment Exercise: The Outcome RAE 2001</i>	Bristol	Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE)	N/A
Unknown	2000	<i>Review of funding options for higher education in the UK: A report for Universities UK by London Economics</i>	London	Universities UK	1 84036 052 6
Unknown	1993	<i>Review of Options for the Additional Funding of Higher Education: A Report by London Economics for the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals</i>	London	London Economics	N/A
Unknown	1987	<i>Review of the University Grants Committee</i>	London	HMSO	0 10 100812 0
Unknown	1999	<i>Scotland: Towards the Knowledge Economy. The Report of the Knowledge Economy Taskforce</i>	Edinburgh	The Scottish Office Education and Industry Department	0 7480 8220 4
Unknown	2001	<i>Scottish Higher Education Review: First Consultation Paper</i>	Edinburgh	Crown	N/A
Unknown	2002	<i>Scottish Higher Education Review: Second Consultation Paper. Shaping Our Future</i>	Edinburgh	Scottish Executive	N/A
Unknown	1992	<i>State Control in Higher Education</i>	Budapest	Hungarian Institute for Educational Research	
Unknown	1995	<i>The Financial Health of Higher Education Institutions in England</i>	Bristol	HEFCE Publications	N/A
Unknown	2001	<i>The Framework for Higher Education Institutions in Scotland</i>	Gloucester	Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education	
Unknown	2001	<i>The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland</i>	Gloucester	Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education	
Unknown	2004	<i>The relationship between teaching and research</i>	Unknown	HEFCE	N/A
Unknown	2004	<i>The Relationship between teaching and research: Agenda item 12</i>	N/A	N/A	
Unknown	1980	<i>Three Thousand Futures: The Next Twenty Years for Higher Education</i>	London	Jossey-Bass Ltd.	0 87589 453 4
Unknown	2005	<i>TQEF projects 2003-2005: Good Practice in Learning &amp; Teaching</i>	Aston University	Centre for Staff Development	N/A
Unknown	1985	<i>Wirtschaftlichkeitskontrolle an Hochschulen</i>	Essen	Arbeitsgruppe Fortbildung	3 925463 224
Unknown	2007	<i>Work based learning</i>	Unknown	The Times Higher Education Supplement	N/A

**Journals**

Author	Year	Title of Article/Paper	Title of Journal/Conference	Issue information	Page Ref
Baruch, Y., Budhwar, P.S., Khatri, N.	2007	Brain drain: Inclination to stay abroad after studies	<i>Journal of World Business</i>	42	99-112
Baume, D. & Yorke, M.	2002	The Reliability of Assessment by Portfolio on a Course to Develop and Accredited Teachers in Higher Education	<i>Studies in Higher Education</i>	27 (1)	7-25.
Baume, D., Coffey, M. & Yorke, M.	2004	What is Happening When We Assess, and How Can We Use Our Understanding of This to Improve Assessment?	<i>Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education</i>	29 (4) August	451-477
Bell, E. & Taylor, S.	2005	Joining the club: the ideology of quality and business school badging	<i>Studies in Higher Education</i>	30 (3) June	239-255
Bennett, D. & Greasley, A.	2004	A virtual learning environment for operations management: Assessing the student's perspective	<i>International Journal of Operations &amp; Production Management</i>	24 (10)	974-993
Birdi, K., Fay, D., Patterson, M., Shipton, H. & West, M.	2005	Managing People to Promote Innovation	<i>Creativity and Innovation Management</i>	14 (2)	118-128
Brown, G. H. (Ed)	1997 - 2009	Full Journal	<i>Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education</i>	Volume 1 - 12	N/A
Brown, S or Baldwin, L (Eds)	2000 - 2008	Full Journal	<i>Active Learning in Higher Education</i>	Volume 1 - 9	N/A
Carroll, J.	2008	Assessment Issues for international students and for teachers of international students	<i>BMAF Internationalisation Special Interest Group Conference, York St John University</i>	12th June	N/A
Christ, O., Van Dick, R., Stellmacher, J. & Wagner, U.	2003	When teachers go the extra mile: Foci of organisational identification as determinants of different forms of organisational citizenship behavior among schoolteachers	<i>British Journal of Educational Psychology</i>	73	329-341
Christ, O., Van Dick, R., Stellmacher, J. & Wagner, U.	2004	The utility of a broader conceptualization of organizational identification: Which aspects really matter?	<i>Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology</i>	77	171-191
Dahl, S.	2007	Turnitin: The student perspective on using plagiarism detection software	<i>Active Learning in Higher Education</i>	8 (2)	173-191
Dey, P. K., Higson, H. E. & Ho, W.	2007	An Integrated multiple criteria decision making approach for resource allocation in higher education	<i>Innovation and Learning</i>	4 (5)	471-486
Dey, P. K., Higson, H. E. & Ho, W.	2006	Multiple criteria decision-making techniques in higher education	<i>The International Journal of Management Education</i>	20 (5)	317-337
Filby, J. & Higson, H.	2005	The Contribution model: A School-level funding model	<i>Perspectives</i>	9 (3) July	86-91
Fletcher, K (Ed)	2001 - 2005	Full Journals	<i>International Journal of Management Education</i>		N/A
Foster, C. & Higson, H.	2008	Involving the family in higher education: do they really matter?	<i>Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning: The Journal of the Institute for Access Studies and the European Access Network</i>		
Game, A., & West, M.	2002	Principles of Publishing	<i>The Psychologist</i>	15 (3) March	126-129

Hadfield, C. (Arts & Business)	2000	Paper	<i>A Creative Education: How creativity and the arts enhance MBA and executive development programmes</i>	August	
Hawkrige, D (Ed)	2006-2007	Full Journal	<i>International Journal of Management Education</i>	10 (2) August	1466-6529
Higson, H.	2008	The Journey towards Cultural Competence: celebration diversity and developing international managers	<i>Speaking English</i>	41 (1)	12-16
Ho, W., Higson, H.E., Day, P.K., Xu, X., Bahsoon, R.	2009	Measuring performance of virtual learning environment system in higher education	<i>Quality Assurance in Education</i>	17 (1)	6-29
Lapworth	2004	Integrating research and Teaching Strategies: Implications for Institutional Management and Leadership	<i>Perspectives</i>	8 (4) October	103-107
Locke, M. S. (Ed)	1982 - 1984	Full Journal	<i>Education Management and Administration</i>	Volumes 10 - 12	N/A
Lucas, U. & Tan, P.L.		Developing a reflexive capacity: the role of personal epistemologies within undergraduate education			
Miller, H.		Power Plays: Researching University Staff			
Naismith, L.	2007	Using text messaging to support administrative communication in higher education	<i>Active Learning in Higher Education</i>	8 (2)	155-171
Plant, H.	2000	Putting Teeth in the Paper Tiger: Teaching case study			165-174
Sizer, J. & Howells, L.		The changing relationship between institutional governance and management in the United Kingdom: a Scottish higher education funding council perspective			
Swinerton-Dyer, P.	1991	Policy on higher education and research	<i>Rede Lecture</i>	10 May 1991	
Vita, G. D.	2001	Learning Styles, Culture and Inclusive Instruction in the Multicultural Classroom: A Business and Management Perspective	<i>Innovations in Education and Teaching International</i>	38 (2)	221-231
Vita, G. D.	2002	Cultural Equivalence in Assessment of Home and International Business Management Students: a UK exploratory study	<i>Studies in Higher Education</i>	27 (2)	N/A
N/A	2008	Full Journal	<i>The Academy of Management Journal</i>	51 (2)	N/A
N/A	2000	Full Journal	<i>Education and Training</i>	42 (8&9)	N/A
N/A	2004	Full Journal	<i>Higher Education Policy: The Quarterly Journal of International Association of Universities</i>	17 (1) March	N/A
N/A	1973 - 1976	Full Newsletters	<i>Group for Research and Innovation in Higher Education</i>	01-Jul	N/A
N/A	2004	Newsletter	<i>Learning and Skills Developmental Agency</i>	October	217-226
N/A	1991	Full Journal	<i>Performance Indicators in Higher Education</i>	2	N/A
N/A	1991	Full Journal	<i>Performance Indicators in Higher Education</i>	1	N/A
N/A	1995	Full Journal	<i>Corporate Governance</i>	3 (4)	N/A
N/A	1992	Full Journal	<i>Higher Education Policy: The Quarterly Journal of International Association of Universities</i>	5 (3) September	N/A
N/A	2007	Full Journal	<i>Active Learning in Higher Education</i>	8 (2) July	N/A

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