Aston Business School

Good Practice Guide in Learning and Teaching

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CONTENTS

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

HELEN HIGSON

Once again this publication is produced to celebrate and promote good teaching and learning support and to offer encouragement to those imaginative and innovative staff who continue to wish to challenge students to learn to maximum effect. It is hoped that others will pick up some good ideas from the articles contained in this volume.

We have again changed our approach for this 2006/07 edition (our fourth) of the Aston Business School Good Practice Guide. As before, some contributions were selected from those identifying interesting best practice on their Annual Module reflection forms in 2005/2006. Other contributors received HELM (Research Centre in Higher Education Learning and Management) small research grants in 2005/2006. Part of the conditions were for them to write an article for this publication. We have also been less tight on the length of the articles this year. Some contributions are, therefore, on the way to being journal articles. HELM will be working with these authors to help develop these for publication.

The themes covered in this year's articles are all central to the issues faced by those providing HE teaching and learning opportunities in the 21st Century. Specifically this is providing support and feedback to students in large classes, embracing new uses of technology to encourage active learning and addressing cultural issues in a diverse student population. Michael Grojean and Yves Guillaume used Blackboard™ to give a more interactive learning experience and improve feedback to students. It would be easy for other staff to adopt this approach. Patrick Tissington and Qin Zhou (HELM small research grant holders) were keen to improve the efficiency of student support, as does Roger McDermott. Celine Chew shares her action learning project, completed as part of the Aston University PG Certificate in Teaching and Learning. Her use of Blackboard™ puts emphasis on the learner having to do something to help them meet the learning outcomes. This is what learning should be like, but many of our students seem used to a more passive learning experience, so much needs to be done on changing expectations and cultures about learning. Regina Herzfeldt also looks at cultures. She was awarded a HELM small research grant and carried out some significant new research on cultural diversity in ABS and what it means for developing teaching methods. Her results fit in with what many of us are experiencing in practice. Gina leaves us with some challenges for the future. Her paper certainly needs to be published.

This volume finishes with Stuart Cooper and Matt Davies reflecting on how to keep students busy in lectures and Pavel Albores working with students on podcasting. Pavel's work, which was the result of another HELM small research grant, will also be prepared for publication as a journal article. The students learnt more from this work that any formal lecture and Pavel will be using the approach again this year.

Some staff have been awarded HELM small research grants in 2006/07 and these will be published in the next Good Practice Guide.

In the second volume we mentioned the launch of the School's Research Centre in Higher Education Learning and Management (HELM). Since then HELM has stimulated a lot of activity across the School (and University) particularly linking research and teaching. A list of the HELM seminars for 2006/2007 is listed as ***Appendix 1*** of this publication. Further details can be obtained from Catherine Foster (c.s.foster@aston.ac.uk), who coordinates the HELM seminars. For 2006 and 2005 HELM listed, 20 refereed journal articles, 7 book chapters, 1 published conference papers, 20 conference presentations, two official reports, nine working papers and £71,535 of grant money produced in this research area across the School. I hope that this shows that reflection on learning is alive and well in ABS. We have also been working on a list of target journals to guide ABS staff who wish to publish in this area. These are included as ***Appendix 2*** of this publication.

May I thank the contributors for taking time out of their busy schedules to write the articles and to Julie Green, the Quality Manager, for putting the varying diverse approaches into a coherent and publishable form and for agreeing to fund the printing of this volume.

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USING BLACKBOARD™ TO AUGMENT STUDENT LEARNING IN LARGE CLASSES: EXPERIENCES AND LESSONS LEARNT FROM A LEADERSHIP CLASS

MICHAEL GROJEAN & YVES R F GUILLAUME

Introduction

Large classes pose major challenges to lecturers and students alike. On the one hand, because of limited time resources, lecturers may find it rather difficult, if not impossible, to address students' individual learning needs. On the other hand, because the attention span of students decreases as a function of class size, and because their individual learning needs can only be addressed with difficulty, a large lecture leaves many questions unanswered. One means that we found particularly useful to overcome these problems is the use of Blackboard™.

Process

In this summary we would like to share our experiences and the lessons we learnt from using Blackboard™ in BH3319: Theory and Practice of Leadership, taught during 24 consecutive weeks in the academic year 2005/2006. The size of this class was 120 students, who were assigned to 22 learning groups. The set up of Blackboard™ for this class allowed students asynchronous access to class material, to post questions and inquiries in a discussion forum, to which all students and lecturers could reply to, and to interact with members of their learning groups in separate forums enabling them to share and post files, discuss, and communicate with all group members. We had access to each of these areas and could feed back our comments and thoughts to students.

To begin with, one of the more useful aspects of Blackboard™ is the drop letterbox mechanism, allowing us and the students to communicate with each other through posting of messages/information. We partitioned the module into several areas to control the flow of information, manage expectations and engage the students in dialogue.

Prior to the start of the module, we established a course information area where we provided students with information about the module allowing them to gain a better understanding of how the module would be run (thus managing expectations). We also engaged them in early dialogue in the discussion area by posting the general expectations we had, and allowing them to respond and share their own expectations. We used the announcements and calendar section to co-ordinate the students' readings, to synchronise external projects, and to ensure that they had the latest up to date information.

The only cautionary note to make here is to manage students' expectations about timing of responses. At times, students will post questions or make comments very late at night and expect answers by the next morning. We suspect this is a by-product of 'texting' communication style and participation in non-academic discussion boards. We told the students that we would read and answer comments and queries at a specific frequency, so they could expect when they might receive a response. A reasonable time for non-emergency responses is that we would check the boards on Mon, Wed and Fri – so there was rarely more than 48 hours without a response.

Discussion Boards

Perhaps the most significant element of Blackboard™ was the discussion board area. Within the discussion board area we had several opportunities for students to interact with each other as well as to post questions, concerns and comments. What we found was that by having students post questions and concerns anonymously, if desired, we received more candid questions than in the open classroom. In addition, this medium allowed more questions to be asked, and we could ensure that everyone had access to the answers and thus could then proctor the information more appropriately. We also found by the end of the module that the students were answering each other's questions and had assumed ownership for sharing information. This is fairly amazing given the class size.

When using discussion boards, a couple of points should be noted. The first is that for students to participate there has to be something of interest for them to draw their attention to. By posing a provocative question, by making a response part of an assignment or by stimulating an open debate on controversial concepts, students were more likely to take the time off-line to engage with each other through the discussion board section.

One of the forums was titled “the helpdesk”, and this was a general help area that allowed students to pose questions. Examples of these questions were everything from not understanding a particular theory to asking for clarification on submission guidance for presentations. By the end of the module there were over 140 questions and responses posed in the helpdesk section. As noted earlier, this is fairly significant in that it allowed the tutors, to engage with the students off-line and once again to share this information.

One aspect that we were not able to engage with, but plan on in future sessions, is to bring in a guest ‘moderator’ for a discussion board. This capability allows us to give the students contact with a person of note (perhaps a top researcher in the field, perhaps a CEO, etc…) while minimizing the overhead required for bringing such a person in physically.

Group Work

Perhaps the second most significant area for utilisation in Blackboard™ is the group area. Blackboard™ allows tutors or facilitators to partition class members into smaller groups and each of these groups can then possess their own area. This area has a group discussion board which only the members of that group and the instructors will be privy to, collaboration sessions which allows them to have on-line chat sessions, whiteboard, and a variety of other mechanisms. It also allows the ability to exchange files, and if they do not have group e-mails, then Blackboard™ provides e-mail addresses to them.

We used 22 groups within the Leadership module ranging in size from 5-7 members. We attempted to keep the group sizes consistent with each other and the variation was typically due to having exchange students join the group either for the first 10 sessions or for the second 10 sessions. Out of the 22 groups within the module, seven used the Blackboard™ facilities extensively, several used them for dropping a comment or two and the remainder did not use at all. One of the benefits speaking with the groups that used it, was that it allowed them to engage asynchronously with each other. They did not have to co-ordinate a meeting time, all they had to do was to suggest that during the course of the week everyone log on to this board, read the comments and respond to them. Therefore, it made it much easier for the students with their busy schedules to co-ordinate information, exchange, and to in fact work on collaboration of joint projects.

The students that did not use Blackboard™ invariably complained of one or more students not being able to attend meetings and the difficulty of arranging a meeting time for all members. Thus, using Blackboard™ to support the group work of students becomes an extremely efficient way of collaboration and exchange of ideas.

Of those groups that utilised Blackboard™, the predominance of utilisation was within the group discussion board area. Here group members introduced themselves to each other and would pose ideas, establish group norms and procedures for how they would work together, discuss the group work requirement of the course, and/or share information that they gained external to sitting in the classroom.

Perhaps the most difficult task for the tutors at this point is to moderate the interaction within each of the group areas. Blackboard™ does not have an easily identifiable flagging system that allows tutors to note when new messages have been posted within group sections themselves. To find out that new messages have been posted, tutors have to go through five or six clicks to visually look at the group discussion board to see if there are new messages. One recommendation for the Blackboard™ team would be for them to identify a mechanism that allows when new messages are posted within the group boards that they are flagged to the tutors' attention, that there are in fact interchanges going on. The reason that this is critical is that both Yves and I were able to facilitate, and moderate the intra-group interactions, so as students wrestled with concepts and worked on their projects we could in fact intercede when they were using concepts and theoretical constructs inappropriately. We also could make suggestions that would allow them to come more quickly to understanding as they built their projects and worked together.

Although not completely conducive to tutors' monitoring, this is another strong area for the medium. In that the normal classroom situation with student numbers of this size, module leaders and tutors are typically unable to facilitate group processes. With the posting of communications on Blackboard™ it enables the module tutor to in fact monitor/observe and then to intercede if necessary, ensuring the group is meeting their objectives.

Assignments

The submission of assignments is also facilitated by using electronic media system such as Blackboard™. Students are able to submit electronically any document that they would have normally printed out and submitted in hard copy. By way of example, students were required to produce a Leadership Philosophy paper. They could save it as a Microsoft Word product and submit it electronically. The system automatically captures the date/time of submission, the electronic attachment is available to the instructor/marker immediately and the marker can in fact jot down comments on the document itself electronically and return the feedback to the students.

This is a slightly more cumbersome process for tutors than the former submission because it allows greater marker/student interaction. In the past when you conducted pen and ink marking, you wrote two to three sentences down on the sheet on top of the product, you gave it back, or perhaps one or two comments inside a written product. By having the electronic version available, what we found were that the markers spent significantly more time marking the assignments, resulting in the students receiving more feedback that is personal. This also caused our assessment strategy to take on a more developmental approach as well. So while it does take more time to do this we would argue that this is time well spent because it thus becomes developmental as opposed to pure assessment.

Some problems occurred during electronic submission of material, the first of which is that the students are not used to doing this. Therefore, there were some mistakes made during submission. For instance, one student attempted to save a draft of her submission, yet accidentally submitted it as completed. Once this occurred, the student could no longer access their material unless the instructor released it back to them.

Secondly, as they were unfamiliar with this function, some students were unaware of the location and had concerns that they had submitted the wrong documentation. Both of these issues could be addressed by having the students do a non-graded submission early in the course to rehearse the steps and procedures that they would go through for the actual submission of graded work.

One of the severe limitations of this approach is that students cannot submit their information anonymously. It is affiliated with their student name underneath Blackboard™, and thus the requirement for anonymity is not met. Within the Leadership module this is not as critical an issue in that most of the assignments require personal reflection and/or introspection which allows the markers to identify the students anyway.

We also found with using the electronic submission that not only did the markers tend to give more feedback on the actual assignment itself, but they would also provide more feedback in the electronic box available to them to give immediate feedback to students. The efficiencies of collecting all of the information electronically, of having a standing log of submissions and submission times makes a substantial savings of time for the Undergraduate Office, particularly as they process hundreds of course works from students in different areas. The drawback stated earlier is that student submissions are not anonymous.

In the end, we believe that the strengths of the electronic submission process and the efficiencies gained by it outweigh the small risk of biased marking due to non-anonymity of students.

As noted previously, Blackboard™ allows facilitators to post comments to students in the aggregate. We found it to be a very useful way at the end of each lecture to come back and redress questions and points that were bought up during that particular lecture. For example, when students were concerned and interested in what was expected of them for the case study, Yves and I were able to come back and in the message bulletin board, reiterate what we stated in class. This becomes a reinforcing communication strategy to ensure that shared understanding is achieved, and that expectations are being managed appropriately.

This is also an area to allow for external areas of interest to be offered to students. For instance, there are some students that were very interested in certain themes within the module, beyond just the coursework itself and had asked for additional readings or areas that they could satisfy their curiously. Blackboard™ not only allows this it allows students that want to do more to have access to websites, to readings, to discussions, that allow them to go further than a typical three hour lecture would.

Conclusion

We found that Blackboard™ is a very useful augmentation tool for face-to-face classrooms. Students, particularly younger students are more prepared to engage electronically. They, through their upbringing, understand chat-rooms, discussion boards and message forums far better perhaps than instructors do and are prepared to use these to their benefit. They appreciate the opportunity to engage with other students and instructors off-line, outside of the two/three hour window that they typically attend class in. This is because it provided them with a much more intimate experience within the classroom (e.g. even though they are 1 of a 120 students they do in fact get individual attention through the electronic augmentation, or at least this is what they perceived).

It seems that their individual learning needs could be much better addressed than would have been possible in the lecture itself. Moreover, while office hours are designed to address these needs, they are not very efficient as only a few students can be addressed at a time.

Student comments at end of the module suggested that we should continue to use Blackboard™ in the fashion of the module and should perhaps expand on its offerings. Some of the potentials for expansion could include the development and implementation of the BLOG, for instance in the form of a students' online journal where they record and present their observations of leadership from their day-to-day lives. The BLOG has become a very popular internet phenomenon that allows people to share their thoughts and to reflect upon their experiences in a matter that is open to facilitation and inspection. So perhaps in the future, the idea of running a BLOG might be another useful feature that can be incorporated into a Blackboard™ learning environment.

Secondly, while some student groups used their group forums quite frequently, others did not. Because of the benefits these group forums might have (the most successful student groups used the tool much more often than the less successful groups), it might be worth encouraging students to use this feature. Suboptimal group functioning frequently arises, because students do not meet regularly, and because they hesitate to contact their lecturers when they encounter problems in their groups. We found that the use of group forums allowed students to discuss and meet each other more frequently. It also allowed us to proactively coach and facilitate group interactions consuming only little of our time. Regularly checking what goes on in these groups, and feeding back these observations in a couple of written lines is often sufficient to maintain or improve group functioning. This is not possible in a lecture, and it would be far beyond what can be offered to the groups during office hours.

Thirdly, the use of the helpdesk tool turned out to be very useful. It was highly appreciated by the students because of the timeframe in which their questions could be answered, along with the availability to all other students. Other students replying to our comments allowed us to elaborate much more on some of the questions, which in turn again could be made available to all students deepening their understanding of the answers at hand. The usability of this tool might be further improved and harnessed in the subsequent academic year by expanding the helpdesk, e.g. by breaking it down into categories of questions that people have asked and by capturing these for future students and to build them into a series of frequently asked questions (FAQs).

Editor’s additional note:

Finally, the external examiner also benefited from this use of technology. We gave her access to the Blackboard™ site, and she was able to see, not only the student assignment, but also the interactive feedback, added like post-it-notes. Naturally, she was impressed.

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Example used with final year undergraduate students
BHM3319: Theory and Practice of Leadership.

PREVENTING THE AVALANCHE – HOW TO OFFER EFFECTIVE LEARNING SUPPORT TO A LARGE STUDENT GROUP WITHOUT BECOMING SNOWED UNDER

PATRICK TISSINGTON AND QIN ZHOU

Introduction

Essay writing is a worthwhile educational tool in the development of subject knowledge and critical thinking skills. I am sure you have heard the conversation – "students can't even write essays these days" perhaps developing into the wider "what on earth do they teach them in schools these days". With a depressing trickle of students suspected of plagiarism and some coursework essays in completely the wrong format, there is some evidence to back up this view point. As module leader on the introduction to Organisational Behaviour (OB) module (the assessment for which is coursework with most marks on offer for essays) I was left with two options – either replace the essays with another form of assessment (probably multiple choice tests) or persevere with essays.

The process

By changing the framing of the issue slightly, the solution became clearer; many students arrive at University and do not yet know how to write essays. So I started to develop the concept of tailoring support to students so they could learn how to write essays alongside the core aims of the module (learning about OB). This is easier said than done with a large cohort which in 2006 has risen to over 900. Obviously, the Oxbridge technique of discussing essays with one or two students over toasted crumpets and sherry (no open fire in my office to do the toast, no sherry budget) is not possible. In 2003, I replaced the long-running compulsory group tutorial system with an optional surgery where students could discuss any questions with a tutor on a one, two, or three to one basis. These sessions were initially offered on a pre-booking of 10 minute slots but it became clear very soon that this was not workable and it became a "drop-in". I had thought that students would use this resource to clarify questions about material covered in the lectures or in the associated readings, but it become abundantly obvious that the most frequently asked questions were about essay writing. Initially I thought this was a product of the modular assessment system where students tend to focus only on material that is being assessed. In particular, a trend appeared to be for students to arrive with a draft essay asking, "I just want to know if I'm on the right lines with this". The tutor would quickly read the draft and give immediate feedback. The surgeries were offered for two days per week throughout the module in 2003 and 2004. In 2005, responding to low attendance in the early weeks, the tutorial surgeries were offered from week three. This is clearly quite a resource commitment so it seemed sensible to attempt to measure whether these were effective and to try to address the following questions:

1. **Are some students attending the surgeries more than once?**

   The concern would be that some students are making far more use of the surgeries than others and so resources might be unevenly distributed. Tutors reported frequently, "seeing the same faces".

2. **Do the students who attend the surgeries do better in the module assessment?**
   We were interested to see whether the surgeries had an impact on performance. Whilst it would not be possible to draw a causal link, at least some indication of value added would be useful.

3. **Did overseas students attend?**
   It might be that overseas students – especially from certain cultural backgrounds – would be less likely to seek out additional help of the type on offer.

The student university numbers were taken from the students attending the surgeries and the relevant elements of the student records retrieved later from SITS. Anonymity was preserved because at no stage were any individual students recognisable – only student university numbers were accessed.

Results

Overall summary

145 students attended at least one surgery (17% of cohort) with the busiest surgeries being in the two weeks prior to the coursework submission date (34 and 46 students respectively). Prior to these weeks, between 15 and 29 students attended the sessions.

Question 1 – Are some students attending the surgeries more than once?

Of those who attended, the frequency of visit is shown in ***Table 1:***

Table 1 Frequency of attendance

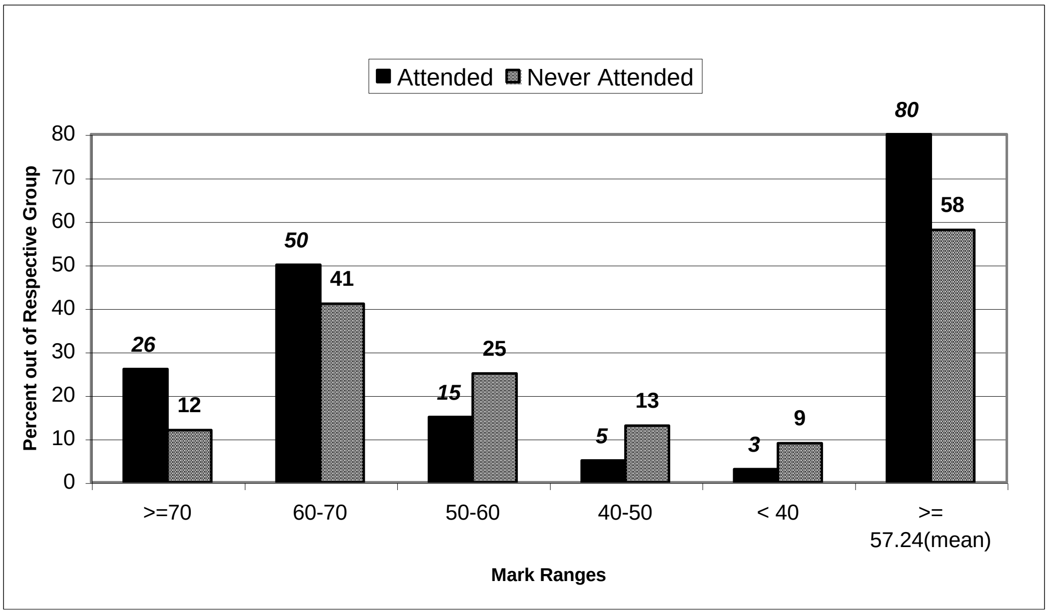
Attendance frequency for those who attended	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Student Number	97	26	9	8	5
Percentage	**67%**	**18%**	**6%**	**6%**	**3%**

There is a clear majority of students attending one surgery although a small number of students did make use of the service more frequently.

Question 2 – Do the students who attend the surgeries do better in the module assessment?

Undergraduates at Aston University are selected on the basis of A level grades or equivalent so there is little differentiation to be made on the basis of entry grade. Analysis was, therefore, carried out on the basis of the percentage attaining the various mark bands with the comparison being between those who attended the tutorials and those who did not. The marks are summarised in ***Figure 1***.

Figure 1: Comparison between Attended and Never Attended



This shows some indication that students who had attended tutorials scored better in the module than those not attending. Clearly there are limits to what conclusion can be drawn from these figures and these will be discussed later.

Question 3 - Did overseas students attend?

The data were analysed by coding for origin of the student from the SITS record. A distinction was made between EU and other overseas students so a broad question of impact of cultural difference on tutorial attendance might be drawn. The results are shown in ***Table 2***.

Table 2 Student geographical origin and attendance

	Home (UK)	Overseas	Europe
Student number on the module	**693** (80%)	**151** (18%)	**16** (2%)
Attended	**107**	**34**	**4**
Attendance rate	**15.44%**	**22.52%**	**25%**
1 time	**81**(75.70%)	**16**(47.06%)	**0**
2 times	**17**(15.89%)	**6**(17.65%)	**3**(75%)
3 times	**3**(2.80%)	**6**(17.65%)	**0**
4 times	**4**(3.74%)	**4**(11.76%)	**0**
5 times	**2**(1.87%)	**2**(5.88%)	**1**(25%)

From this it can be seen that in fact overseas students were slightly more likely to attend the surgery sessions and this was true for both EU and non-EU students.

Discussion

This small study was intended to investigate some aspects of the effectiveness of the system of tutor support for a very large number of students. The main concern was that the system of self-diagnosis for support might not reach the students most in need of assistance. There was no evidence that this had indeed happened and it was particularly notable that overseas students were attending and this may be accounted for by these students being concerned that their written language skills were not up to the standard required. Students who attended the surgeries tended to score better on the assessment than those who did not. The causality is difficult to assess – was it the diligent student who decided to come to the surgery or did the input from the tutor enable students to do better? It would have been interesting to use entry qualifications to work out whether the more able students (as assessed on entry to university) were more likely to avail themselves of support of the type offered, but this proved problematic because the A level scores being so closely clustered. In addition, there were practical difficulties in retrieving these data from the records system. A further attempt may be made to carry out this analysis using resources developed for use for projects under the "widening participation" agenda.

Perhaps the clearest finding was that the majority of students attended only one session. The concern was that perhaps a number of students were over-using the surgery resource but this appears not to have been the case.

Conclusions

The surgeries are having a positive impact and so they will continue. The conclusion was, however, that many questions students had were about essay writing in general rather than specific to this module. This type of question can be most easily answered through the Learning and Skills Centre in the Library. In addition, most students attended only one session so this year the essay surgery will be offered only in week 6 and week 11 (the two most popular times for surgeries last year). In addition, each lecture from week two this year contains a section on essay writing, so all students will have knowledge of what essay writing involves. This makes the system of support more efficient, whilst delivering support most effectively. Data are being recorded again this year and further analysis is planned.

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Example used with first year undergraduate students
BHM1107: Introduction to Organisational Behaviour.

USE OF WORKBOOKS

ROGER MCDERMOTT

Background

This was a simple idea picked up from attending a commercial management course when working in the public sector. This particular course was about Total Quality Management (TQM) and was an all day event presented by an American who had worked with the quality author, Tom Peters. He provided the delegates with a set of 'workbooks' that contained the main structure of his presentation so that the audience was not constantly writing notes. On each page where he wanted to emphasize a particular point or points, there would be spaces or gaps for the delegates to write in their own notes.

I found this very useful as I could write important points in my own handwriting within the overall structure of the lecture but was not having constantly to write the 'padding' that goes with it.

Method

For my lectures I provide the students with similar styled handouts containing the structure of the subject matter and gaps where they can fill in the detail as we go through the content e.g. bullet points or particularly the facts and details of cases we discuss (***see example below***). Thus, they have the name and date of the case but not necessarily the facts (unless they are very complicated when it might be simpler to provide them with the whole case).

Advantages

The advantages are that they still need to attend the lectures, which they might not do if I gave them the entire handout. In addition, if they do miss something they can go to the Library or electronic sources, look up the case and find the details themselves (or borrow a friend’s notes). Thus, they do not need to bring any additional writing material because they simply follow the progress of the workbook. At the end of the module they should have a complete set of notes covering everything we have dealt with in the lecture.

Dyslexic and/or international students they can come to see me and I am able to provide them with the gaps they have missed due to e.g. translation problems (which can be particularly difficult in terms of law and legal language)

Feedback

Students seem to like the format given their many positive comments from the annual student feedback survey, for example:

- ‘Instead of powerpoint slides we were given handouts to fill in as the lectures progressed making it easy to revise from’

- 'Workbook allows enough room for notes'
- 'Liked the format of notes with gaps to fill in'
- 'Workbook meant that the lecture is easy to follow'
- 'The workbook that the students have to fill in keeps you involved and paying attention'………etc

Example extracted from Workbook for BL1104: English Legal Method and Contract Law – Part 5: Consideration

8. Payment of smaller sums

e.g. Can the payment of a lesser amount be regarded as full discharge of a debt? This also falls under the general heading of an existing contractual duty but requires separate treatment and the law is confusing:-

a) The old Common Law rule

The general common law rule is that all debts are payable in full and a creditor is not bound to accept part payment of a debt in satisfaction of the whole amount owed.

Pinnels Case (1602)

Pinnel sued Cole in debt for £8.10s due on November 11th. Coles defence was that at Pinnels request he had paid £5.2s.6d. on October 1st and Pinnel had accepted this in full settlement
Held: Payment of a lesser sum on the day in satisfaction of a greater cannot be any satisfaction for the whole, because it appears to the Judges that by no possibility a lesser sum can be a satisfaction to the plaintiff for a greater sum. But the gift of a horse, hawk or robe etc., in satisfaction is good. For it shall be intended that a horse, hawk or robe etc., might be more beneficial to the plaintiff than the money in respect of some circumstances , or otherwise the plaintiff would not have accepted it in satisfaction…. The payment and acceptance of a parcel (part) before the day in satisfaction of the whole would be a good satisfaction in regard to circumstances of time, for peradventure parcel (part) of it before the day would be more beneficial to him than the whole at the day, and the value of satisfaction is not material..

Thus whilst part payment is not sufficient consideration, such part payment would be enough if some new element is included such as a different time, place of payment or some change in the nature of the consideration in satisfaction of the whole debt.

n.b. the new element must be at the instigation of the creditor.

Also, the claimant in Pinnels case won on technical point of pleading otherwise the earlier payment at the claimant' request would have resulted in judgement for the defendant

Foakes v Beer (1884)

Cumber v Wane (1721)

D & C Builders Ltd v Rees (1966)

b). Exceptions to the Common Law rule

i) The doctrine of 'Equitable Estoppel'
This would appear to supply a remedy for the decision in ***Foakes v Beer*** and rests on equity and was approved by Denning in:-

High Trees Case (1947)

Denning J based his decision on:-

Hughes v Metropolitan Railway (1877)
A Landlord gave a Tennant 6 months notice to carry out certain repairs. Before the expiry of the term negotiations began between the two regarding the purchase and sale of the freehold. Negotiations broke down and immediately after the 6 months expired, the Landlord sought to eject the Tennant who had not undertaken the repairs on the basis of the Landlords promise not to take any action during negotiations.
Held: the 6 months notice ran from the time negotiations broke down. Lord Cairnes stated the principle of 'equitable estoppel'

The Doctrine of **'Equitable Estoppel'**
A promise intending to create legal relations and intended to be acted upon by the person to whom it is addressed, if so acted upon, must be honoured even though made without consideration

The Doctrine received modification in:-

Roger McDermott,
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Example used with first and final year undergraduate students
BL1104: English Legal Method and Contract Law
BL3316: Employment Law
BL3379: Employment Law 2

INTEGRATING GUEST SPEAKERS' SEMINARS AND ONLINE DISCUSSION FORUMS AS FORMATIVE LEARNING METHODS

CELINE CHEW

Introduction

This article focuses on my experiences in combining two different teaching methods in an integrated approach to support students' formative learning in two modules for undergraduate students on the subject of marketing for public services and non-profit organisations.

They were part of the portfolio of teaching and learning activities (TLAs) that I had developed in the process of attaining my Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching and Learning qualification in 2005-06, and which I have continued to use in my teaching in these modules since then.

Background

Since the academic year 2004-05, the subject of marketing and communications for public and non-profit organisations was offered to undergraduate students in the form of a single module BP2288 for second year public management students and a double module BP3356 for final year marketing management students. Besides these two main groups of students, combined honours students sitting for a range of degrees can also elect to sit for this module. There has also been an increasing number of international and exchange students opting for this module as well. About 90 students attended each of these modules over the past two years.

This subject considers the application of marketing theory and approaches in organisational contexts other than commercial ones. Two key learning objectives of these modules are to:

- provide students with opportunities to critique marketing approaches for use in the public services and non-profit organisational contexts via a range of TLAs.
- enable students to apply their understanding of theoretical knowledge in marketing and communications in real-life non-profit organisations.

The large class size and diverse mix of students in these two modules have prompted me to develop a portfolio of TLAs to encourage learning in students in non-traditional ways, and to stimulate interaction between them in their learning (peer-directed learning).

Two of these TLAs that support the learning objectives stated above are: incorporating practitioners' experiences in group seminars and the use of online discussion forums to extend learning beyond the classroom lectures. The next section discusses each of these methods and critiques them in terms of their strengths and weaknesses.

The Group Seminar Method (incorporating experience sharing by industry practitioners)

There is some confusion in the education literature regarding the definition of a seminar. Macdonald (1997) suggests that the terms 'seminar', 'tutorials', 'workshops' and 'practical classes' are widely used, often interchangeably in higher education, to mean essentially the same thing. Brown (1996 cited in Macdonald 1997, p. 14) defines a seminar as "a student-centred occasion, which provides a forum for discussion between a tutor or facilitator and a group of students." The seminar discussions are often associated with a lecture programme. Unlike a lecture, the seminar aims to provide an opportunity for students to identify key issues in the topic(s) by discussing or working through related tasks (Macdonald 1997). Biggs (2003, p. 89) categorises the group seminar as a teacher-directed TLA, but suggests that it can be also be a student-centred or peer-directed approach to learning, if conducted properly.

Macdonald's and Brown's definitions offer a clearer distinction between the group seminar and other forms of small group teaching methods. The group seminars for my modules are each organised around a particular weekly theme/topic taught in the lecture, e.g. social marketing and de-marketing by the police services, resource attraction for donations/volunteers by charities, or relationship marketing in a public hospital. Industry practitioners from different non-profit organisations are invited to share their experiences with students around these pre-selected themes. The experiences shared by industry practitioners aim to reinforce key learning points derived from the lecture on a particular theme/topic, whilst extending students' learning into real-life non-profit marketing situations.

Students are given the opportunity to identify key issues in the lecture for clarification within a particular public or non-profit marketing context during the seminar discussion with the industry practitioner. Students are required to complete a learning pro-forma at the end of the seminar, where they list the key learning points they have learned from the seminar discussion. These are summarized by the teacher/tutor and posted on Blackboard™ after the seminar for review by all students. The teacher/tutor facilitates the seminar session, with the industry practitioner acting as a resource person.

This method combines the benefits of smaller group teaching with the opportunities for students to link theory to practice in real-life non-profit organisational contexts. I find this structured approach very useful in achieving the two key learning objectives of the modules. It was intended to overcome an apparent weakness of using guest speakers as a way to 'fill up' the sessions in a module. However, it can take up more teaching and co-ordination time, especially when several seminars are required for a large class. Moreover, the skill of the tutor/seminar leader to facilitate students' learning at Level 2 of Biggs's (2003) three-levels of TLAs,[1] using this method is an important requirement.

Table 1 identifies the main strengths and weaknesses of the group seminar, which incorporates practitioners' experiences sharing, as a TLA. Feedback from students over the past two years was very positive. They considered this TLA an appropriate way for them to understand more intimately the relevance and limitations of marketing in a number of real-life non-profit organisations. The guest speakers have also benefitted by communicating their non-profit causes to external audiences and generating keener interest in young people about managing organisations other than commercial ones.

Table 1: Evaluation of the Group Seminar incorporating practitioners' experiences as a Teaching and Learning Activity

[1] For a fuller discussion on Level 1, 2 and 3 TLA, please refer to Biggs (2003, p. 81).

Strengths	**Weaknesses**
• **Offers a degree of Level 2 TLA (Biggs 2003), i.e. student-centred approach to teaching and learning** • Clarifies key issues in the topic via discussions among the industry expert and students • Provides in-depth understanding of a topic(s) in the subject by students finding out for themselves • Imparts expert knowledge about a specific topic • Promotes group interaction and communication skills in students • Develops presentation and questioning skills in students • Ability to complement the lecture or other teaching methods for increased overall effectiveness in achieving learning outcomes.	• **Can become a Level 1 TLA i.e. a surface approach to learning if not organised properly** • Can still suffer from teacher-directed conception of teaching and learning. • Seminar topics/practitioners' experiences must be seen by students to be relevant to the course to be of real educational value • Less effective way to teach behavioural skills • Less effective way to teach values associated with the subject other than clarify issues • There remains the danger that not all students in the group will take active part in the seminar discussions • Can cause timetabling problems if large class has to be split up • Takes up more teaching time to coordinate for several small groups

Online Problem-based Discussion forums

Students increasingly expect computer and information technology to be used in the classroom as part of the overall student learning experience in higher education. Various forms of computer technology are now developed to support teaching in higher education, such as communication and assessment tools. In Aston Business School, Blackboard™ provides an alternative channel for interaction between teacher and student, and amongst students. It offers several tools to facilitate teaching and learning in a virtual environment.

For e-learning[2] purposes, virtual learning technology enables students to access learning resources in different ways and at different times, including communication between the teacher and one or more students, two-way discussion boards, live chat rooms, content delivering of lecture support notes, and assessment.

Figure 1 shows an adaptation of Coomey and Stephen's (2002, pp. 41-48) model to guide the design and structure of web-based or e-learning approaches. They (ibid) argue that the quality of e-learning approaches is affected by four key variables: ability to promote dialogue, to secure active involvement of the learner, to provide personal/other support and feedback, and to provide a degree of control over

[2] E-learning is the practice of learning and teaching that is delivered using virtual or web-based tools (Chin 2004).

the learning process. Their model has two dimensions: degree of teacher control over the process of learning/learning outcomes, and the specification of learning tasks or activities.

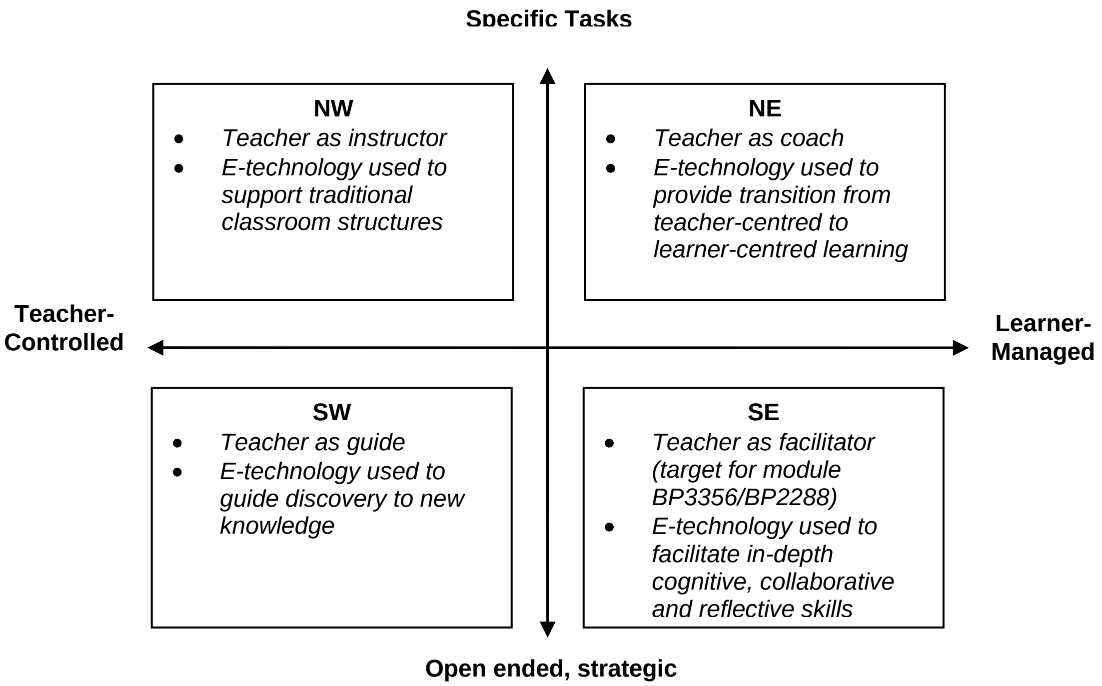

Figure 1: Degree of Flexibility of Online Learning Approaches
Comparison of Locus of Control and Task Specifications
Adapted: Coomey and Stephenson (2002)

I have adapted their model to explore the use of e-learning as a formative approach in teaching the subject of marketing for non-profit organisations. Each quadrant in the model suggests a particular learning environment (and consequently TLAs) based on the four key variables.

As shown in ***Figure 1***, Quadrant SE suggests an appropriate e-learning environment that could be created to teach problem-based or case studies in the subject of marketing for non-profit organisations outside the traditional classroom setting.

A case study of a non-profit organisation and a number of discussion questions are posted on the discussion board in Blackboard™. Each question leads to a discussion thread, where participants are able to input their comments and also view those submitted by other participants. As a facilitator, I provide general guidelines on responsibilities and procedures for interaction, but students have the freedom to participate and decide on content and learning outcomes. For example, students are encouraged to suggest possible marketing problems that the case organisation is facing. They can suggest/critique marketing strategies adopted to address those problems. I also provide support to students via email.

The main strengths and weaknesses of this TLA are summarized in ***Table 2***. Overall, students have the opportunity to develop collaborative links with other students, enhance their problem-solving skills, and have control in shaping learning outcomes. The main benefit for the teacher/tutor is that it offers an alternative method to teach case studies that is orientated towards student-led learning beyond the traditional classroom setting.

Table 2: Evaluation of the Online Discussion Forum as a Teaching and Learning Activity	
Strengths	**Weaknesses**
• **Provides opportunities for Levels 2 and 3 TLAs (Biggs 2003)** • Offers a high degree of student-centred approach to teaching if prepared and conducted properly • Raises alternative approaches or different interpretations for comparison with those presented • Promotes high level cognitive and problem solving skills in students • Promotes written communication skills in an interactive medium in students • Opportunities for deep approach to learning • Ideal for cross-disciplinary work • Ability to complement the lecture or other teacher-led methods for increased overall effectiveness	• **Requires skilful preparation in the case or problem and administration guidelines for students in order to achieve Levels 2 and 3 TLAs** • Must be seen to be relevant to the module to be of real educational value • Time consuming in preparation and post-discussion follow-up • Quality of discussions/inputs depends on students leading the discussions • Overall success depends on student participation • Potential for low participation because students lack confidence in using this mode of learning • Useful as a supportive or illustrative role rather than a main method of teaching basic facts and principles

This TLA is arguably a relatively novel approach to teaching and learning in Aston Business School. Therefore, I had expected major challenges when using this method for the first time last year. Students were initially not comfortable using this method of learning. Many experienced discomfort making the transition from teacher-led to learner-centred learning (Coomey and Stephenson 2002). The overall success of this method of formative learning would depend on the participation rate of students and the quality of their inputs. Informal feedback from students suggests that some of them liked the alternative approach to learning, while others preferred the traditional face-to-face teaching methods, such as lectures and tutorials.

This experience/feedback has prompted me to combine the two TLAs, i.e. the online discussion forums and the group seminars with industry practitioners, in order improve overall effectiveness in achieving the module outcomes. The next section outlines this integrated approach.

Rationale for combining TLAs

The main purpose of integrating the group seminars, which incorporated practitioners' experiences, with the online discussion forums was to instil greater participation among students in the online discussion forums, while maintaining their positive interest in the group seminars. Students would also learn to be more reflective, for example, by thinking through the various key learning points gained from the experiences presented by the guest speakers at the seminars, and then sharing their reflections in a less obtrusive way in the discussion forums in Blackboard™. Small incentives in kind are awarded to the students who initiate each discussion thread and who provide the greatest number of inputs at the end of the module. ***Appendix 1*** shows an example of the online discussion forum topics, which were extensions of the themes/questions that emerged from the industry practitioners' presentations at the group seminars.

The integrated approach has helped to overcome some of the weaknesses of each of these TLAs when used on its own compared to the traditional classroom lecture. This comparison along six criteria is illustrated in ***Table 3***.

Table 3: Comparison of Group Seminar and Online Discussion Forum with Classroom Lecture

Teaching/Learning Methods / Selection Criteria	Classroom Lecture Method	Group Seminar involving Practitioner's Experience Sharing	Online Learning (Discussion Forum)
Economies of Scale	H	M	H
Control of teacher/tutor	H	M	L
Flexibility of session programme during delivery	L	M	H
Potential for student involvement in influencing learning outcomes	L	M	H
Potential for student-to-student interaction and learning	L	H	H
Potential for deep learning	L	M	M
Key: H = High M = Medium L = Low			

The participation rate from students in the discussion forums improved after the integrated approach was introduced, albeit still modest at about 8%-10% of the class size.

Conclusions

In a truly student-orientated learning environment, the desired learning outcomes should guide the selection of teaching method/activities (Race 2001; Ramsden 2003). Other factors, however, have also influenced their adoption, such as my past industry experience in management and marketing management, and the research networks established with public and non-profit organisations.

From the above discussion, the classroom lecture should still play its part in conventional higher education teaching and learning. It needs, however, to be combined or complemented with other methods beyond Level 1 TLAs, in order to fulfil the desired learning objectives/outcomes when teaching the subject of public and non-profit marketing. The two TLAs highlighted in this article have their relative strengths and weaknesses compared to the classroom lecture. I have found them useful as formative learning approaches when used in an integrated way. Despite this, I plan to conduct empirical research to explore the factors that could encourage or inhibit students' participation in e-learning approaches in order to support the use of online discussion forums and other interactive TLAs.

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BP2288: Marketing and Communications for Public Services

APPENDIX 1: EXAMPLES OF TOPICS IN ONLINE DISCUSSION FORUMS 2005-06

Add Forum

BP2288 - Customer Orientation in NPOs

Modify
Remove

Number of Messages: 8
All read

Application and Limitations of 'Customer' Orientation to improve customer services in Non-Profit Organisations

This discussion forum picks up from the practical experiences shared by the Guest Speaker of KEMP HOSPICE in Week 5 of this module.

Click on the title above to access the discussion question thread and enter your inputs.

You will find two questions that I would invite you to contribute. Please post your thoughts on one or both of the questions to share with your peers and to get feedback from them.

QUESTION 1

How do non-profit organisations, such as KEMP HOSPICE, a charitable organisation, benefit from a 'customer-orientated' marketing culture? Do you think these benefits differ for other non-profit organisations, such as those in the public sector? and why?

QUESTION 2

What do you think are the limitations of the 'customer' orientation concept when applied to non-profit organisations, such as KEMP HOSPICE? Are these limitations different or similar for other non-profit organisations, such as those in the public sector?

BP3356 - External and Internal Communications for Public Services

Modify
Remove

Number of Messages: 4
[3 New]

Application and Challenge for External and Internal Communications for public services in Non-Profit Organisations

This discussion forum picks up from the practical experiences shared by the Guest Speaker of BIRMINGHAM CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL in Week 9 of this module.

Click on the title above to access the discussion question thread and enter your inputs.

You will find two questions that I would invite you to contribute. Please post your thoughts on one or both of the questions to share with your peers and to get feedback from them.

Q.1 Should marketing and communications be used by public service organisations, like BCH, to help them become more 'profitable'? If so, why? If not, why not?

Q.2 In what ways could BCH use communication methods and channels to reach out to increasingly diverse target audiences (where patients come not only from the West Midlands, but nationally and sometimes internationally)?

Celine Chew

CULTURAL COMPETENCE OF FIRST-YEAR UNDERGRADUATES

REGINA HERZFELDT

Introduction

Laughton and Ottewill (2000) note that a major concern of educators in higher education today is to prepare students for the dynamics of their future professional environment, in which the demands of international business will dominate their experience. Cultural competence is a growing factor to ensure students' employability and provide a basis for their professional career after university. Therefore, it is important for higher education institutions to develop students' cultural competence. Especially institutions with a diverse student population have the responsibility to educate their students to become culturally knowledgeable and competent to deal with cultural differences on an every-day level.

The Undergraduate Programme in Aston Business School has 24% international students from all over the world. ABS is proud of its multicultural environment, which was recognised in the EQUIS[1] accreditation. However, the multicultural environment at ABS also implies that cultural competence of students is not simply a desirable outcome of undergraduate education, but much more a necessity for successful study at Aston Business School. Students have to communicate, cooperate and collaborate with colleagues from other cultures on an everyday basis. Little is known, however, about the level of cultural competence students have when joining ABS, and which factors might enhance cultural competence.

In the present study I provide a rough screening of cultural competence in entry-level ABS students. I report the results of a survey of first-year, first-term ABS undergraduates, which assessed their current level of cultural competence. Specifically, I investigated if there were any differences in cultural competence between British home students and international students. Further, I looked at two factors that might be important influences for the development of cultural competence: Prior cultural experience and personality.

Research questions

In the literature on professional expatriates, much research has investigated competencies necessary for successful cultural adjustment and job performance abroad. While a multitude of cultural competencies has been proposed in this context, varying according to whether they should be used for training (Caligiuri, Lazarova, & Tarique, 2005) or selection (Graf & Harland, 2005), the question as to how these competencies are acquired has experienced less attention. Yamazaki and Kayes (2004) provided a theoretical model of cultural learning that addresses the development of cultural competence. Based on Kolb's (1984) experiential learning theory, they pointed out that *developmental learning* is the central component for cross-cultural learning.

Developmental learning describes the relatively stable changes in cognition, effect and behaviour that occur as people learn to adapt to changing circumstances over time. Thus, developmental learning

[1] European Quality Improvement System

emerges from personal experience and growth over time, it describes how an individual learns to deal with complexity arising from internal and external influences and the interaction between the person and his/her environment (Yamazaki & Kayes, 2004).

People learn to understand the mindset of other cultures, interpret different behaviours, get used to new values, norms and customs as they are confronted with other cultures. In this learning process, direct contact with other cultures is the biggest opportunity for cross-cultural developmental learning. Evidence about the positive influence of prior cultural experience for adjustment in new cultures exists both for professional expatriates (Takeuchi, Tesluk, Yun, & Lepak, 2005) and students. For example, in a study with British students on teaching assignments in Spain, prior cultural contact was a central predictor for cultural adjustment (Masgoret, 2006).

The relationship, however, between prior cultural experience and cultural competence in general, not bound to specific cross-cultural sojourns, has rarely been addressed. Yet this is an important questions for the undergraduate population at ABS. Therefore, my first research question in the present study was:

> *Is there a positive relationship between cultural experience and cultural competence in students starting at ABS?*

Besides cultural experience, a second individual characteristic potentially important for cultural competence is personality. The Multicultural Personality Questionnaire (MPQ) (Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2000) measures the personality characteristics of social initiative, open-mindedness, cultural empathy, flexibility, and emotional stability. These have been related to cultural adjustment in professional expatriates (Van Oudenhoven, Mol, & Van der Zee, 2003) and students studying abroad (Van Oudenhoven & Van der Zee, 2002). In these studies, the facets of open-mindedness and social initiative have been related to psychological well-being and mental health. Further, they are also positively related to a general learning orientation (Leone, Van der Zee, Van Oudenhoven, Perugini, & Ercolani, 2005), highlighting their relevance in academic contexts.

In sum, this research suggests that multicultural personality, specifically the facets of open-mindedness and social initiative, might be positively related to cultural competence. Therefore my second research question in the present study was:

> *Is there a positive relationship between personality characteristics and cultural competence in students starting at ABS?*

Method

Participants and procedure.
The study was conducted as part of a tutorial about intercultural awareness in the modules BS1101 and BS1131, taken by first year undergraduate business students. As part of this tutorial, students completed a test of cultural competence and measures of their prior cultural contact and relevant personality characteristics. This test was done as a warm-up exercise before students were put into a simulation game of cross-cultural differences. Students received feedback about their cultural competence scores and all test answers approximately 2 weeks after they filled in the test. They were encouraged to contact me for any further questions about the interpretation of their scores, or what to do to improve their cultural competence. In the test, students were asked to volunteer their test data for the purpose of this study.

All in all, 307 students completed the test and received personal feedback. 263 agreed that their data were used for this study, 193 of them from Britain, 63 from other countries. The analyses reported here include only data from students who agreed to participate in the study. Data from seven participants had to be excluded[2].

Measures.
Cultural competence was assessed with fictive scenarios of cross-cultural encounters taken from the ITIP training offered to placement students going abroad. Each student received three randomly selected scenarios, for which he/she should rate the appropriateness of four possible explanations or behavioural strategies. The scenarios were designed such that only one of the four answers was culturally correct. Cultural competence was computed as the average correctness of students' answers across the scenarios they received. In order to control for the diversity of scenarios, cultural competence indices were standardised for each scenario before each student's score was computed. This ensured comparability of scores across all students.

Cultural experience was assessed in an open format. Students should list all the cultures they had been in contact with, the duration of this culture contact, and the type of contact. Duration was measured categorically (< 6 months, 6-12 months, 12-24 months, 24-48 months, > 48 months). I coded type of contact according to its intensity, with a scale from 1= school exchange/travel to 7= born there/grew up.

Multicultural personality was measured with two scales from the MPQ, open-mindedness and social initiative, on 5-point scales. The scale for open-mindedness comprised 9 items, such as "Gets involved in other cultures" and "Has a broad range of interests". It showed acceptable psychometric properties (M= 3.50, SD = .52; α = .77). Similarly, social initiative was measured with 9 items such as "Makes contact easily" and "Is timid" (recoded) and showed good reliability (M = 2.97, SD = .30; α = .83).

Additionally, data were gathered for participants' age, gender (1=male, 2=female), and nationality (1=British, 2=other).

Results

The relationships (correlations) between all measures are displayed in the table below.

Table 1. Correlations of all variables.

Variables	Mean	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Age	18.65								
2. Cultural competence	0.00	.01							
3. Duration culture contact	18.71	.05	.15						
4. Intensity culture contact	1.66	.18	.18**	.66***					
5. Number culture contacts	1.86	.06	.18**	.77***	.71***				
6. Social initiative	2.97	.14*	-.06	.21***	.10	.13*			
7. Open-mindedness	3.50	.21**	.13*	.23***	.21**	.24***	.16**		
8. Nationality	n/a	.22***	.19**	.51***	.45***	.64***	.10	.13*	
9. Gender	n/a	-.02	-.03	.03	-.2	.02	-.07	.04	-.05

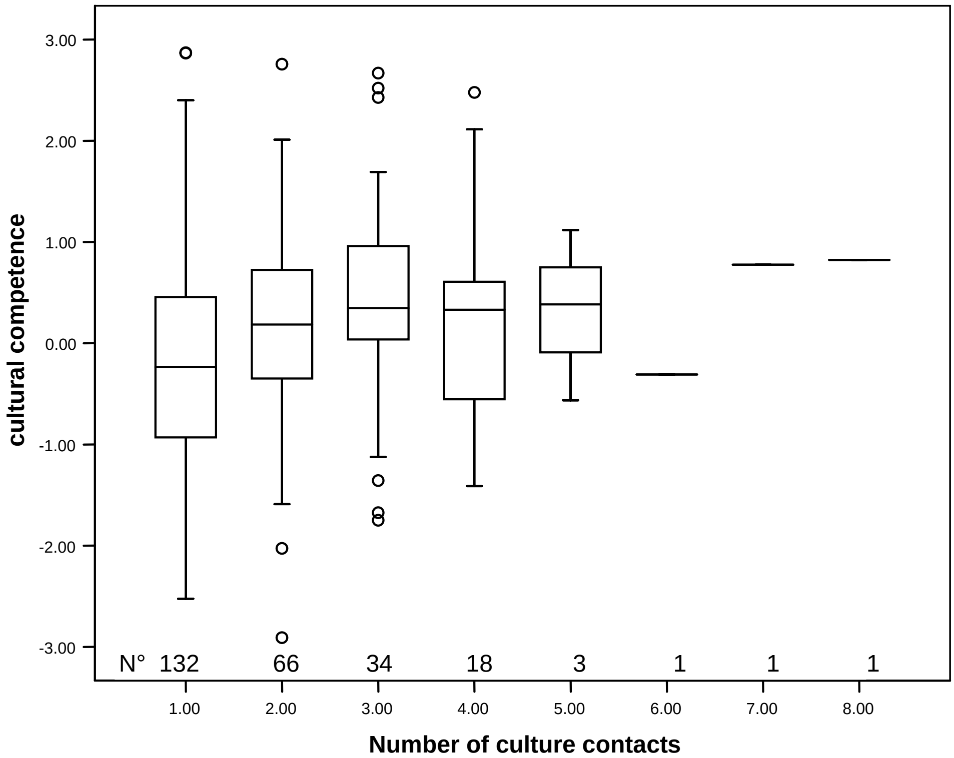
Notes.
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
*** Correlation is significant at the 0.001 level (2-taled).
Correlations for nationality and gender are non-parametric (Spearman's ρ)

[2] The assessment of cultural competence featured on cultural differences between Britain and France and Germany. Due to their natural familiarity with French and German cultures, the test might over-estimate cultural competence of students who came from these countries. Thus their data were excluded.

This table shows that significant relationships exist between cultural competence and prior cultural contact. Specifically, the number of cultures students had contact with, and the intensity of this contact, were positively related to cultural competence. Also, both open-mindedness and social initiative were positively correlated with cultural competence. These results are in line with suggestions in prior literature about the positive role of culture contact and multicultural personality.

The chart below displays the relationship between cultural competence and the number of cultures one had contact with. It shows that, on average, cultural competence rises linearly with each additional cultural experience (though this interpretation should take into account that only few students had contact with more than four cultures).

Figure 1. Boxplot of cultural competence by number of culture contacts.



An interesting finding emerged for nationality. It was related to cultural competence in such a way that students with a British nationality showed lower cultural competence than students with international background. This was confirmed in a comparison test of cultural competence between British and international students. Cultural competence of British students (mean = - .11) was significantly lower than that of international students (mean = .34) (t=3.06, p< .01).

Though this finding was startling, it could be explained by the different amount of cultural experience British and international students had. While all international students had cultural experience with at least one other culture (because they were studying at Aston), two thirds of the British students (132) had had no contact with other cultures than their own. Only 61 had had contact with at least one other culture. Taking the number of cultural contacts into account, the relationship between nationality and cultural competence did not hold up (r= .08, n.s.). Thus, it seems the main factor for low cultural competence in British students is their lack of cultural experience.

Another interesting finding were the positive relationships between personality characteristics and all facets of culture contact. Students with much cultural contact have higher social initiative and open-mindedness. These relationships suggest two conclusions: Either, people with more social initiative and open-mindedness actively seek out experiences of cultural contact. This conclusion is in line with attitudes found in Dutch undergraduates (Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2000), but seems a less plausible explanation in this case. Much of students' contact with other cultures was likely not sought out deliberately as it happened during students' childhood and adolescence. These types of contact were initiated by others, e.g. by family moves, a multicultural family background, or a multicultural educational environment such as international schools or nannies.

Therefore, the alternative explanation seems more likely: The experience of cultural contact (number of cultures, duration, and intensity) changes and forms students' personality such that they become more open-minded and show more social initiative. This conclusion is supported by the theory of intergroup contact (Dovidio, Gaertner, & Kawakami, 2003) which states that, under many circumstances, intergroup contact can lead to changes in the people's attitudes and behaviours towards the other group. Applying this theory to cultural contact, the rise in social initiative and open-mindedness could be interpreted as signs of positive behaviour and attitude towards other cultures that resulted from students' cultural experiences.

Due to the cross-sectional nature of the present data, however, this study cannot verify any of these explanations with certainty. Longitudinal research would be needed to investigate the direction of influences between cultural contact and multicultural personality.

Practical implications for educators

Overall, the results of this study show that cultural competence, one of the important transferable skills of university graduates today, cannot be taken for granted. It develops in contact with other cultures and is related to certain personality characteristics. This study also shows that British students show a lower level of cultural competence compared with international students, mostly because they lack the necessary cultural experience. Thus, ABS educators should make all efforts to raise cultural competence of students, especially of home students. In this, Aston's multicultural environment can be used in many ways.

1. Foster ethnic diversity in coursework groups

Much of the assessment in Aston Business School is group-based. Therefore, students are forced to collaborate, as they are mutually accountable for their results. The contact developing in such study groups can be deep, as can be the tensions and problems arising from differences in cultural values, norms and customs, and individual learning styles, motivation, and social skills. Yet, even though cultural diversity represents an extra challenge for students, it should be deliberately sought out. Group-based working at university can be used as an opportunity for cultural contact of British home students with international students and vice versa. For home students, this contact can be an opportunity for cross-cultural learning which ultimately increases their cultural competence. For international students, this contact can facilitate cultural adjustment (Ward, 2004).

Besides these positive effects on cultural competence and adjustment, Brodbeck, Guillaume and Lee (under review) have recently shown that ethnic diversity in student work groups affects individual learning. Specifically, students of ethnic majorities (most frequently, British students) profit from the diversity of cognitive resources brought into the group by ethnic minorities (in most cases, international students) to increase their academic grades. Further, the average academic grades of group members were best in groups of medium diversity where the imbalance between ethnic minorities and majorities was not too big (e.g., in groups with a 3-2-2 ethnic composition). This is another argument for deliberately inducing cultural diversity in coursework groups.

Despite all these advantages, both educators and students should be aware that this diversity carries the risk of conflict and misunderstanding. Recognising cultural differences as a source of conflict can help manage this conflict constructively. If all parties understand that conflict is natural and needs to be dealt with, cultural conflict can even become a catalyst of cultural learning.

2. Encourage international work placements

While cultural contact in coursework groups can provide a starting point to develop cultural competence, it is only one step of many. The results above show that intensity and duration of cultural contact are related to cultural competence. This calls for further initiatives to familiarise home students with other cultures. A core initiative is international work and study placements, which are already a requirement of various degrees at ABS (e.g., IBAM, IBML). While students in these programmes are eager to gain cross-cultural experience, interest in international placements from students in other programmes is still rare. This problem is not particular to ABS: In the EU ERASMUS programme, the number of outgoing students has fallen by almost a third since the mid-nineties (Sussex Centre for Migration Research & Dundee Centre for Applied Population Research, 2004). Further, students voluntarily seeking out international placements are frequently young white females from higher social class family backgrounds. Currently, more than twice as many students are coming into the UK for study compared to UK students going abroad (European Union, 2005).

Even though the number of students actively seeking out international placements is increasing at ABS (thanks to initiatives from the Undergraduate Placement Office), compared with domestic placements it is still very small. Thus, educators should contribute to elicit students' interest in international placements, actively addressing students of both genders and all ethnic groups. Pointing out the enormous opportunities such placements provide for the development of students' career, their understanding of global complexity, and their personal development could increase the numbers and diversity of students committing to an international placement.

Besides these two specific implications, educators can engage in a multitude of other initiatives to integrate cultural aspects into the normal curriculum. The cultural heterogeneity at Aston, both among students and educators, constitutes an invaluable resource for to foster cultural understanding and develop cultural competence. Many educators already draw on this resource and teach in a way which encourages students to recognise the relevance of multicultural issues on an academic as well as personal level. Continuing and extending this practice is a promising way to educate students to become culturally competent graduates with excellent career prospects in the UK and abroad.

Acknowledgements

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Example used with first year undergraduate students
BS1101: Specialist Business Skills for International Students
and BS1131: Foundations of Management

THE USE OF ACTIVITIES IN LECTURES

STUART COOPER AND MATT DAVIES

"I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand".
(Confucius, a long time ago!).

We have been asked to provide a best practice guide on the use of 'activities in lectures'. We appreciate the guidance contained below is for many of you second-nature and common sense and therefore please forgive us if you feel we are attempting to 'tell your grandmother how to suck eggs'. Nevertheless, we are happy to describe our approach and experiences.

Why activities?

Activities are helpful in terms of breaking the lecture time down into more manageable chunks for both the lecturer and the student. It can be difficult to lecture for the full one, two or three hour lecture time. Therefore, the lecturer gets some time to recover their voice and think again about the next section of the lecture. From the student's perspective it can be difficult to maintain concentration for the full lecture. By interspersing activities within the lecture the student is required to change from listening (and taking notes) to actually doing the activity. This change of behaviour, we find, helps energise the students and aids their concentration for the remainder of the lecture.

Activities are also helpful, especially in subjects that have a practical application, because by actually attempting an activity the students can develop their understanding, skills and confidence. Sometimes, irrespective of the clarity of the lecturer, it is only when a student attempts the activity that they can see whether the lecture material makes sense and whether they can actually apply the material. By carefully selecting the activities, key learning points can be reinforced.

The time provided for the students to attempt the activity provides an opportunity for the students to clarify issues and resolve queries, either through discussion amongst themselves or through asking the lecturer. At the same time, by being available to the students the lecturer is provided with instant feedback on students' understanding of concepts covered in the lecture. This opportunity also enables students to feel more comfortable about asking the lecturer questions.

What types of question should be asked in activities?

The questions asked as part of an activity can take a variety of different formats. Students can be required to answer either open or closed style questions. Both multiple choice and true or false questions enable the lecturer to provide alternative solutions that the students can work towards. One advantage of this is that students can be asked to vote on which option they think is correct. This voting process enables the lecturer to get a sense of how well the students comprehend the lecture material. Such a vote is, with any luck, a non-threatening way of obtaining such feedback, as a student is not individually selected to explain their answer, but is rather one of a number voting.

More open numerical and discussion questions can also be used. There are a number of ways that this can be fed back to the students. The lecturer can personally work through an answer or discussion for the whole class to see. This enables students to reconsider their answer and incorporate any new insights or corrections identified as a result of the lecturer's answer. Alternatively, a student could work through their answer for the whole class. This may be on a voluntary basis or a student selected by the lecturer. Where a lecturer selects a student this may well provide extra motivation for the students to try the activity, but some students may find this approach very stressful. Finally, the answer could be made available at a later time to the students, for example electronically after the lecture. In so doing there is a possibility that the students could potentially forget to access the answer, but when they do access the answer the students are required to revisit the material and think about the activity again.

Perhaps even more challenging is to get students to develop their own questions for each other. This provides the students with a real challenge, as it requires a good level of understanding to ask an appropriate question and such questions will be different, and often more challenging, than those a lecturer might ask.

Individual or group activities?

There are arguments for using both individual and group activities. An individual exercise ensures that each student attempts the question and does not rely on their group to provide them with the answer. When students work individually they can, on completion of the activity, review their answers with a fellow student or group of students.

Group activities provide a fantastic opportunity for students to learn from each other. It may well be that a student can explain lecture material to the members of their group in a way that is more understandable to them. Learning from fellow students is an incredibly valuable tool and group activities provide an opportunity for this to take place.

Some final considerations

It is really important that the guidance given to the students at the start of the activity is as clear as possible. This is both in terms of what the students are trying to achieve and how they are to achieve it. It is often best not to tell the students whether they are working in groups or individually until the activity has been set. This is one way to ensure that students do not switch off and leave it to the rest of their group.

The timing of the activities is very important. Activities should be spread out throughout the lecture so that the benefits to the students' concentration are maximised. Also clear time deadlines should be set at the start of the activity. This provides the students with a guide as to how quickly they should be able to complete the activity and is also helpful to the lecturer in terms of planning the lecture. We have noticed that activities often take longer than the lecturer envisages and so some flexibility is required. Students not having sufficient time to complete an activity will considerably reduce the value of the activity itself. Some students or groups of students will probably work faster than others and so supplementary questions for those students may be helpful. If the activity is to be reviewed within the lecture then it is important that sufficient time is available to do this fully. If time constraints mean that this is not possible then this is an appropriate time for the activity answer to be made available at a later date.

Finally, it is important that the solutions to numerical problems are as clear and informative as possible. Preferably, all workings and steps taken to reach the answer should be shown so that the students can follow the process clearly. If steps are missed out then students will struggle to follow the answer and will not be able to apply it themselves to other similar problems at a later time.

Conclusions

This article provides our thoughts on the value of using activities within lectures. Activities are not necessarily appropriate for all subjects, but with thought can often be introduced. The success of an activity depends not only on a lecturer's ability to set appropriate activities, but also on the students' willingness to undertake the activity. On occasion some students see the activity time as an opportunity to talk to their friends or check their mobile phones. The propensity for students to do this may be reduced by moving amongst them during the time of the activity, but can probably never be completely avoided in a large lecture.

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Example used with various undergraduate and postgraduate students

WHAT'S ON YOUR iPOD?: USING PODCASTS AS A LEARNING AID

PAVEL ALBORES

Introduction

This report describes the use of podcasts as a learning aid in the Simulation module (BN3324). This project intends to provide an alternative way of learning for those students which have preference for aural learning. The idea was to provide an alternative way of learning while in the university or at home, but also to provide the mobile capability that MP3 players provide, taking advantage of those dead periods when walking, riding on a bus or a train in order to study.

Origins of the idea.

This idea springs from reading the technology section of the Guardian, where the concept of podcasts was discussed (for example, see Young, 2005). At the time, the BBC had also started experimenting with podcasts in order to provide listen-again capabilities for their radio output. A condensed version of the Today programme, including the daily interview was made available for users to download. Podcasting has since become a normal feature in the BBC website and a popular feature in many other outlets (e.g. the most downloaded podcast in 2006 was the Ricky Gervais Series in the Guardian Unlimited website).

The potential for its use in learning was also starting to be explored (for an example see Leach, 2005) and the idea of using podcasts as a substitute for presentations was formed.

What is a podcast?

A podcast is a digital recording of a radio programme, which is normally downloadable to a portable mp3 player. Initially it was seen as the audio equivalent of blogging, however, its use has extended to cover interviews, opinion pieces, comedy, news and other areas.

Using podcasts in education

The flexibility of the format makes an ideal vehicle to use in education. Podcasts can be used in many ways in education. Some are outlined next:

For Students:
- As an alternative to presentations (as in the case reported here)
- To keep a learning/working log
- To make notes and observations
- To communicate with group members when dispersed across different locations.

For lecturers:
- To provide records of lessons/tutorials
- To provide feedback to students
- To describe case studies
- To bring "guest" lecturers" to the students by recording a conversation or a speech by an academic or industry expert.

For administrative personnel:
- In the marketing of the organisation
- As a communication tool to disseminate information through the organisation
- As a way of recording important lectures and talks and making them available online
- To keep records of meetings.

Using podcasts in Simulation

The students in the simulation class were tasked with the creation of a podcast for a topic assigned to them randomly. Groups of 3-4 people were formed. The students had the freedom of choosing their team members and most teams had the same composition for the podcast creation and for the coursework element of the class. An important point to make here is that students had worked on the coursework assignment before the creation of the podcasts. This is relevant because the teams were already well integrated and knew each other and had developed trust between them.

The task given to the students was:

> "You will create a podcast (a downloadable radio programme) in which you will discuss the particular topic assigned to you. You can use any format for the podcast (interview, documentary, song, phone-in, sketch, etc.)
>
> The podcast should not be longer than 8 minutes and preferably keep it song-size (3-5 minutes).
>
> A guide on how to create a podcast is available on Blackboard or at the sites:
>
> http://www.windowsdevcenter.com/pub/a/windows/2005/04/05/create_podcasts_with_pc.html
> http://radio.about.com/od/podcastin1/a/aa030805a_p.htm
> http://education.guardian.co.uk/appleeducation/story/0,16926,1682639,00.html
>
> I have equipment to use when creating the podcasts. You may borrow the equipment by signing for it. The equipment will not be lent for more than 4 hours. The equipment available includes:
>
> Three headsets with microphone included.
> One external Microphone
> One digital voice recorder.
> One mp3 player with recording capabilities.


> You can also use the recording facilities of your mp3 players (Creative players have this feature built-in, check for other manufacturers).
>
> In addition to your podcast, you need to submit the script used for the production of the podcast and a list of references for the information in your podcast and for 'further information' (Four references as a minimum)".

Once the instructions were given to the students, a demonstration of how to use the software to record voice and music was provided during one of the tutorials. The students worked on the creation of the podcasts over a period of three weeks towards the end of term.

The topics were assigned randomly during the lecture, using a random generator created in MS Excel. This step had two purposes: transparency in the distribution of topics and demonstration of how to create and use a random generator (in itself a topic needed for simulation).

Results

The resulting podcasts varied in style, length and sophistication. Some of the styles and typical quotes are presented in ***Table***

Table 1: Examples of formats, topics and dialog used in the podcasts.

Topic	**Style**	**Typical quote**
Advantages and disadvantages of simulation	Gladiators	"This week we have a new gladiator, 'The simulator'; taking on our contestant 'Real Life'"
Identifying data requirements	Conversation between student and "lecturer"	*"Data requirement identification Is so important for simulation First we must draw the process flow This isn't easy, oh no! Then we identify the categories of data As defined by the model's creator Don't forget to consider the experiments And that is identifying data requirements!"*
Simulation in the health sector	Little Britain	"Simulation, Simulation, simulation… Invented by me on July 3rd. But just who are simulation"
Three-phase rule	Lost	**Locke (Shaun):** "We could use the three-phase rule. I used this for simulation projects I worked on when I worked for that box company I was telling you about."
Simulation in the military	Current events radio programme with field interviews	<Military noises in the background> Professor: Yes, simulation provides a safe environment where student pilots, for example, can make mistakes which don't actually matter.
Comparing Multiple Scenarios	Radio discussion programme	Today were joined by two final year students Zara (Guest A) and Zoe (Guest B) from Aston University who will participate in our discussion of experimentation when comparing multiple scenarios.

In total 21 podcasts were created by the students, covering the range of topics studied in class and some additional topics needed for the exam. Most of the podcasts were produced in MP3 format, although around 20% were .wav format. This variation in format did not affect the ability of the students to listen to the podcasts.

The podcasts and scripts were then screened for inappropriate content and sound quality. Only one minor cut (less than 5 sec.) had to be made to one podcast and about three podcasts had to be "re-mastered" to improve sound quality. The main problem found was the different volumes at which different podcasts were recorded. This caused the listener to have to turn up the volume for some podcasts and start the next podcast at very high volume. A standardisation of volume was carried out before uploading the podcasts.

The podcasts and the scripts were uploaded to Blackboard™ and students were asked to listen to the podcasts and evaluate them. MP3 players were available for those students that did not have a player of their own. Acquiring these resources proved relatively inexpensive. The results of the evaluation are presented in the next section.

Examples of the podcast created can be found on **http://tinyurl.com/y47r58**

Evaluation

The students were asked to evaluate the podcasts. A questionnaire was created for Blackboard™ using Respondus 3.0. The questionnaire included:

- **Pre-podcast questions:** General questions about the familiarity of the students with the concept of podcasts, whether they have MP3 players, whether they have used/produced podcasts before.
- **Podcast creation questions:** Questions about what equipment and software was used; how many times did they have to record the podcasts, how long did they spend researching and recording the podcast.
- **Specific podcast questions:** For each podcast, students were asked to evaluate whether the podcast was easy to listen to, entertaining, added to their learning, useful for revision. In addition, they were asked to "mark" the podcast in a scale of 1 to 10. (NOTE: The student evaluation did not influence the final mark given to each podcast). At the end of the section, students were asked to select the best three and the worst three podcasts and to provide reasons for their selection.
- **Generic post-podcast questions:** These included behavioural questions such as where did you listen to the podcasts (in terms both of the equipment used, and the place where they listened to them), how many times did you listen to the podcasts. They also included evaluation questions such as describing five characteristics of a good and a bad podcast. A five-point Likert scale was used to assess the perceived benefit of using the podcasts to revise. Typical questions included whether podcast were an efficient way to revise, whether podcasts shortened or lengthened the revision time and whether they can be used as replacement for lectures, tutorial or as a complement to them. Finally, two questions about whether they would have liked to have podcast for other classes and whether they would recommend the use of podcast to other students were asked.

In general, 52% of the students were not familiar with the concept of podcasts, and 92% did not have previous experience of using podcasts. The majority used a headset (43%) or Laptop/Desktop Built-in Microphone (38%) to record their podcasts. The free software Audacity was used by 92 % of the students to create the podcast and they spent on average 8 hours per student researching the topic and 5 hours per student creating the podcast. On average they recorded the podcast four times before arriving to the final version.

When faced with the option of being given the podcasts by the lecturer or producing them themselves, 92% favoured producing the podcasts themselves. The main reasons cited were the experience of using a new technology and the learning achieved by investigating the topic. Example quotes from the justification is: *"Because learning come through doing. And if I retook this module I would prefer to do it all over again". "If the lecturer had given me the podcasts, I don't think I would have learnt as much as I had from first hand research"*

Seventy-two percent of the students own an MP3 player. Eighty-five percent listened to the podcasts on their personal computers, 34% on their MP3 players, and 15% in a computer lab in the University. (Note that this means that students used more than one method of listening to the podcasts). The use of MP3 players is lower than originally expected, although this does not seem to affect the overall experience. 69% of student listened to the podcasts in more than one session and around 45% listened to the podcasts while on the move.

When asked whether they agreed with the statement that the podcasts were useful for revision, 88.4% strongly agreed or agreed. 85% agreed that podcasts provide flexibility in the revision, while 88.4% said that the podcasts provided information that they did not have.

Positive aspects

The students were asked to provide what in their perception were the positive aspects of using podcasts. The main themes were the innovative nature of the podcasts, the complete freedom to create the podcasts, the use of different learning methods. Some of the answers provided are provided below:

> "When compared to other methods of assessment it was a more 'fun' way to do it. I learnt a lot about not just the Simulation topic we recorded but also about a new piece of software (Audacity) and Podcasts (how they can be used, how to make them etc)"
>
> "It enables you to think more concisely about what your saying, it can sometimes be easy to write lots of information down in report format but when you come to actually saying it out aloud it makes you think a little more about what your saying!"
>
> "Podcasts are also not as restrictive as other learning mechanisms. With the rising popularity of MP3 players it is quite easy to essentially be learning while not restricted to a desk or computer screen. I would have thought that one of the biggest benefits is the cost reductions associated with learning in this way and the fact that mobility is increased, meaning it may not be necessary for people to convene in one location in order to learn."
>
> "…podcasts are a *different method of learning*, which is *interesting* and *interactive"*
>
> "The positive aspects of creating a podcast, I think are:
>
> - Educational - As the task to be completed was fun, it made the learning aspect of the podcast assignment fun also. I found I learnt more about the topic of my particular podcast from completing the assignment than I did from listening in the lectures. I feel this is because I was genuinely interested in creating a podcast.
> - Technology - A podcast is a relatively new concept, and makes use of some technology that I would otherwise never have come across."

Negative aspects:

The students were also asked to provide what in their perception were the negative aspects of the podcasts. Most criticisms are related to the length of time to produce the podcasts and on the quality of the information provided. Another common topic is the balance between entertainment and content. Some typical quotes are:

> "The negative aspect to this, is the quality of information provided. Since some students got a bit carried away with the entertainment side of sound effects the content was lacking"
>
> "The negative aspects include the clarity of the voice, or the quality of the recordings by amateurs."
>
> "When describing a complex topic, such as mathematical calculations or the significance of the shape of a graph for example, it is *useful to have visual representations"*

"Although listening to a podcast has benefits over lectures or tutorials as detailed in the previous answer, you are *unable to ask questions* straight away. Any questions have to be noted and asked at a later date. This *interaction is lost* with podcasts and asking questions is often the best form of learning."

"I think creating a real good podcast takes time and needs better materials, which we did not have. It takes time as well to use some tools from Audacity. For example, in our group, we had to record 14 different parts from the background sound to the content/the subject of the podcast, then put them altogether, use some tools like "fade in or out", making sure the volume was alright, etc. But at the same time, this was the most interesting part in creating the podcast. So I would not say it is a negative aspect but rather that it is a difficult aspect in creating the podcast."

"The only negative aspect I can think of is that the quality of some of the other podcasts was poor, meaning that certain topics were not covered very well for revision purposes. This is not a big problem as I would have done wide revision myself anyway, and not relied purely on the podcasts!"

These comments imply that care must be taken to select the topics that are going to be presented in the podcasts. There must also be a mechanism in place to allow interaction and feedback after the learners have listened to the podcasts. Potential mechanisms can be a session in a tutorial, a discussion forum in Blackboard™ or an online chat using an instant messaging service.

What makes a good podcast?

The students were also asked to provide five characteristics that they think make a good podcast. Structure, length, clarity of recording and entertaining were some of the characteristics that the students value in a good podcast. An example answer is given below

1. An interesting theme or format throughout the podcast.
2. A clear and interesting voice which shows a bit of interest in the topic- not a monotonous voice that is obviously just reading off a script!
3. Sound effects or little breaks throughout the podcast to keep the user interested and to prevent attention from wandering!
4. Useful information or content organised in a useful manner, i.e. clearly illustrating points using simple language, etc
5. Duration of the podcast - the content needs to be concise and the duration kept to a reasonable length in order to keep listeners attention."

When asked about what makes a bad podcast the main concerns expresses were: too much focus on the delivery style at the expense of content; poor sound quality; dull, monotonous voice; too many "gimmicks"; long podcasts.

Finally, students were asked whether they would have liked to have podcasts in other classes, with 71% agreeing or strongly agreeing and whether they would recommend podcasts to other students (82% of respondents agree or strongly agree).

An unintended benefit of the podcasts was articulated by one student as *"we now have a 'souvenir' of our classmates voices. Maybe we will not see many of them in the future, but a podcast is a good way of remembering them".*

Retrospective analysis

From a lecturer's perspective, the use of podcasts as an evaluation tool was very enjoyable. It brought a lot of creativity and enthusiasm from the students and it was an entertaining way to assess them.

In terms of the effort required, the time to listen to the podcasts was the biggest investment. I listened to the podcasts at least four times, first in order to control the quality of the information and then to actually assess the podcast. I found that it was useful to have a checklist of the issues to be covered in each topic. As mentioned by the students, it is sometimes easy to get sidetracked by the effects and neglect the content. On the other hand, I think that it is fair that a small percentage of the mark is assigned to the creativity demonstrated. Striking a good balance is not straightforward and care must be taken to ensure that this balance is achieved.

Future work

As far as the simulation module is concerned, in the next session (2006-2007), the podcasts will be carried out before the coursework and be used as the "ice-breaker" between groups. The evaluation of perceptions will be carried out again to see if the order of the podcast/coursework has any influence in the perceived value of the activity.

Potential ideas to experiment with is the use of "news feeds" (RSS: Really Simple Syndication) in which students are alerted when a new podcast or announcement is posted and the use of the video capabilities of more recent MP3 players (e.g. iPod 5th generation) and mobile phones.

Acknowledgements

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Simulation Class podcasts (examples): http://tinyurl.com/y47r58

Audacity Software: http://audacity.sourceforge.net/

Podcast creating guides:
http://www.windowsdevcenter.com/pub/a/windows/2005/04/05/create_podcasts_with_pc.html
http://radio.about.com/od/podcastin1/a/aa030805a_p.htm

Podcasts from the BBC: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/4977678.stm

Guardian Podcasts: http://www.guardian.co.uk/podcasts/

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Example used with final year undergraduate students
BN3324: Simulation

APPENDIX 1: HELM SEMINAR SERIES 2006/2007

Friday 10th November 2006 - Henry Miller & Chris Bolsmann *(Aston University)*

'Attitudes and Policy Towards International Students: Competing Rationales'

Wednesday 6th December 2006 - Dr Jane Andrews *(Aston University)*

'Wheeling Up Mountains: Reflections On A Study Of Disabled Volunteers'

Wednesday 17th January 2007 - Sushmita Jha *(Aston University)*

'Views and experience of Aston undergraduate students in connection with student finance, debt and employment'

Friday 2nd February 2007 - Dr Mike Prosser *(Higher Education Academy)*

'The National Student Survey and the Student Learning Experience'

Wednesday 7th March 2007 – Helen Shipton *(Aston University)*

'The future of business schools in the UK: Finding a path to success'

Thursday 24th May 2007 - Prof Margaret Harris & Dr Jane Andrews *(Aston University)*

'Graduate Study and Managers' Subsequent Work Experience: Findings from a study of ABS alumni'

Dates to be confirmed

Prof Carole Roberts - Salford University

Prof Alan Jenkins - Higher Education Academy

APPENDIX 2: HELM TARGET JOURNALS

HELM Target Journals

Business and Management discipline-related journals

Journal	Ranking	Comments				
American Statistician	**3**	Target ESG				
Business Process Management Journal	**4**	Target for TOM Group				
European Business Review	**3**	Target for ESG				
Human Resources Management	**3**	Target for WOP Group				
International Journal of Public Sector Management	**3**	Target for Possem				
Journal of Knowledge Management	**3**	Target for KM				
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				
Training and Development	**4**	Impact 0.102				

Education-related journals

Title	Rank	Impact Factor	Comment	Issues per year	Type	Re fereed	Re viewed
Academy of Management: Learning and Education			USA	4	Journal academic/ scholarly	Yes	yes
Active Learning					Academic / scholarly	yes	
Active Learning in Higher Education			UK	3	Journal academic/ scholarly	yes	
Applied Measures of Education		0.419					
Assessment and Evaluation in HE							
Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy and Practice							
British Educational Research Journal		0.526	UK	Bi monthly	Journal academic/ scholarly	Yes	yes
British Journal of Education Studies		0.263	UK	Quarterly	Journal academic/ scholarly	Yes	yes
British Journal of Education Technology		0.593	UK	Bi monthly	Journal academic/ scholarly	Yes	yes
British Journal of Educational Psychology		0.810	UK	Quarterly	Journal academic/ scholarly	yes	
British Journal of Sociology of Education		0.476	UK	5x	Journal academic/ scholarly	Yes	yes
Cambridge Journal of Education			UK	Quarterly	Journal academic/ scholarly	yes	
Canadian Journal of Higher Education			Canada	3x	Journal academic/ scholarly	yes	
Chronicle of Higher Education		No	USA based	weekly	Newspaper / trade		yes
Comparative Education		0.593	UK	Quarterly	Journal academic/ scholarly	Yes	yes
Comparative Education Review		0.562	USA		Journal academic/ scholarly	Yes	yes
Economics of Education Review		0.495	UK	6x	academic/ scholarly	Yes	yes
Educational Action Research			UK	Quarterly	Journal academic/ scholarly	yes	
Educational Admin Quarterly		0.388					
Educational Evaluation Policy Analysis		0.703	US	Quarterly	academic/ scholarly	Yes	yes
Educational Leadership		0.283	US	Semi annual	Journal academic/ scholarly		
Educational Policy		0.509	Based in USA				
Educational Psychology		2.892	UK	Bi monthly	Journal academic/ scholarly	yes	
Educational & Psychology Measurement		0.773					
Educational Psychology Review		1.333	US	Quarterly	Journal academic/ scholarly	Yes	Yes
Educational Research – UK		0.140	UK	3x	Journal academic/ scholarly	Yes	yes
Educational Review		0.390	UK	Quarterly	Journal academic/ scholarly		
Educational Studies		0.339					
Education and Training			UK	9x	Journal academic/ scholarly	yes	
Education Research			Cant find				

Higher Education		0.495	Highly rated journal (based in Netherlands)	8x	Journal academic/ scholarly	Yes	yes
Higher Education in Europe			Based in Romania	Quarterly	Journal academic/ scholarly		
Higher Education Management &Policy			France	3x	Magazine / trade		
Higher Education Quarterly			UK based	Quarterly	Journal academic/ scholarly	yes	
Higher Education Research and Development			Uk	Quarterly	Journal academic/ scholarly	yes	
Higher Education Review			UK based	3x	academic/ scholarly	yes	
Innov Education							
Innovation and Learning in Education							
Innovations in Education and Teaching International		0.200	Uk	Quarterly	Journal academic/ scholarly		
Innovative Higher Education			Netherlands	5x	Journal academic/ scholarly		
Interact Learning Environment		0.435	UK	3x	Journal academic/ scholarly	yes	
International Journal for Academic Development			UK	Semi annually	Journal academic/ scholarly		
International Journal of Education Development		0.233	UK	6X	Journal academic/ scholarly	yes	
International Journal of Innovation and Learning			UK	Bi -Monthly	Journal academic/ scholarly	yes	
International Journal of Management Education			UK. Journal of BEST, not highly rated	3x	Print		
International Journal of Management in Education			UK Forthcoming 2007	Quarterly	Journal academic/ scholarly	yes	
Issues in Educational Research			Australia	2x	Journal academic/ scholarly	yes	
Journal of Education Behaviour Statistics		0.659					
Journal of Education Policy		0.671	UK	3x	Journal academic/ scholarly	yes	
Journal of Educational Research		0.377	US	Bi monthly	Journal academic/ scholarly	Yes	yes
Journal of Excellence in College Teaching			Chapters in Good Practice Guide?				
Journal of Exp Education							
Journal of Further and Higher Education			Paper by Ann Davis				
Journal of Higher Education		0.333	Based in USA	Bi monthly	Journal academic/ scholarly	Yes	yes
Journal of Learning Science		2.792	US	Quarterly	Journal academic/ scholarly	yes	
Journal of Marketing in HE			Mentioned by Colleen				
Journal of Planning Education Research		0.536					
Journal of Workplace Learning			UK	8x	Journal academic/ scholarly	yes	

Learn Instr		1.548					
New Academic			UK	3x	academic/ scholarly		
New directions in Higher Education			Based in USA				
Oxford Review of Education		0.300					
Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education			AUA journal, not highly rated				
Reflections on Higher Education			UK	Annual	academic/ scholarly	Yes	
Reflective Practice			UK	Quarterly	Journal academic/ scholarly	yes	
Research Higher Education		0.521	Based in USA Netherlands	8x	Journal academic/ scholarly	Yes	yes
Research into HE Abstracts							
Review of Education Research		1.760					
Review of Higher Education		0.292	Based in USA	Quarterly	Journal academic/ scholarly	Yes	yes
Sociology Education		1.222	USA	Quarterly	Journal academic/ scholarly	Yes	yes
Studies in HE		0.662	Highly rated journal				
Teacher Development			UK	3x	Journal academic/ scholarly		
Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice			UK	Bi monthly	Journal academic/ scholarly	yes	
Teaching in Higher Education			UK	Quarterly	Journal academic/ scholarly	yes	
The National Teaching and Learning Forum			No				
ultiBASE Journal	Ceased Publishing		Australia	monthly	Journal academic/ scholarly		
Westminster Studies in Education			Renamed				

Educational Technology, Open and Distance Learning

Association for Learning Techology Journal			
Austrialian Journal of Educational Technology			
Educational Technology Abstracts			
Journal of Educational Technology and Society		0.267	
Journal of Instructional Science and Technology			
Journal of Interactive Media in Education			
New Chalk			Bi-weekly newsletter
The Technology Source			

Policy, Management, Quality

Educational Management, Administration & Leadership			
Higher Education Abstracts			
Higher Education in Europe			Duplicated in Educ Related j
Higher Education Management			Practitioners & applied France (OECD Prog Link) Also in Educ rel j
Higher Education Policy			General Trends
International Journal of Educational Management			
International Journal of Institutional Management in Higher Education			France
International Journal of Leadership in Education			
International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education			
International Studies in Education Administration			
Journal of Educational Administration			
Journal of Excellence in Education			
Journal of Higher Education Management			USA
Journal of Higher Education Policy			See below
Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management			Good journal internationally recognised
Managing HE			
Policy Studies			
Quality Assurance in Education			
Quality in Higher Education			
Technology Analysis and Strategic Management	1*	0.446	
Tertiary Education and Management			
Total Quality Management	1*		

Good Practice Guide in
Learning and Teaching

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