Learning and Professional Development Centre

Keele Learning and Teaching Conference 2017

Tuesday 17th January 2017
Keele Sustainability Hub

Sponsored by JADE

The Journal of Academic Development and Education

Introduction

As a complementary event to the Annual Teaching Symposium, the LPDC, in collaboration with PVC (Education and Student Experience) Prof. Fiona Cownie, have created the Keele Learning and Teaching Conference.

The conference is taking place on Tuesday 17th January at Keele Sustainability Hub, between 9.00am – 17.00pm. Refreshments and lunch will be available to attendees throughout the day. All members of staff and students with an interest in learning and teaching are warmly invited to attend.

The Keele Learning and Teaching Conference has no theme and thereby offers all members of the University the opportunity to exchange ideas and share innovative and inspirational practice. The format of the conference will be short (15 minute) presentations with time allowed for questions and discussion as well.

Abstracts plus an event report will be published in the August 2017 edition of the Journal of Academic Development and Education (JADE).

We look forward to seeing you there!

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Placing the learning at the centre of learning analytics
Dr Ed de Quincey

The interaction and interface design of Learning Analytics (LA) systems is often based upon the ability of the developer to extract information from disparate sources and not on the types of data and interpretive needs of the user. Current systems also tend to focus on the educator's view and very rarely involve students in the development process. We have used a User Centred Design (UCD) approach with a group of 82 second year Computer Science students to design LA interfaces (in the form of Dashboards) that will engage and motivate them as learners and personalise their own learning experience. A preliminary thematic analysis has suggested that their understanding of LA and their requirements for it are often formed by the limitations of the technologies and systems that they currently use within and outside of the University. We have found however that learners want to be able to access an overarching view of their previous, current and future learning activity e.g. in a timeline. We propose that the only way of truly creating a personalised, supportive system of education is to place the learner at the centre, giving them control of their own Learner Analytics.

From broad brushstrokes to fine detail: using open badges to recognise learning achievements
Mr Dan Harding & Mr Matthew Street

Rather than discussing a work in progress or completed project this presentation looks forward to the potential of open badges for extending student learning and continuing professional development by visibly endorsing uncredited activities.

Open badges have been used in education since 2011, founded by Mozilla. Used appropriately, they have the potential to open up closed learning environments (both physical and virtual) enabling learners to gain recognition for the wide range of activities they engage with. This might include adding value to the outcomes of learning, digital credentials (i.e. digitising on and offline experiences) and supporting the scaffolding of learning through gamification. For co-curricular activities, badges could be used to recognise HEAR related activities. For example, volunteering, institutional student awards and university employment opportunities such as student ambassadors. Open badges can also bridge the gap between education and employment, providing a digital representation of achievements and improving the authenticity of learner experiences.

Finally, this presentation will explore the difference between a badge and open badge, focusing on the affordances provided by openness for the learner and institution (issuer). For example, an open approach offers greater portability, allowing learners to build a repository of credentials that encourage lifelong learning.

Congratulations! You're Engaged!
Ms Emma Hedges

As student numbers and diversity increases, there is a need to ensure that student retention, progression and completion rates are maintained and improved. The implications of dropping out before completion for students, the institution, families and future employment options are great. Between 33% and 42% of students consider withdrawing from Higher Education prior to completion and students are particularly likely to consider leaving during their first semester and after Christmas. It is clear that student retention is an issue that needs addressing, as much as levels of attainment. The Student's Union believes it has a key part to play in retention as the three key sections- Academic, Social and Services - of the Student Experience must work in harmony in order to create the best environment for student retention and attainment.

At the symposium, the Student's Union would like to present certain case studies and reports to support the idea that the culture of belonging is one of the most important reasons that student's stay at University. We will examine how an individual's engagement with Student's Union can aid with retention, and attainment, through engagement, representation and involvement; with particular reference to combating isolation through its extensive student engagement programme.

Students' conceptions of teaching quality – what is excellent assessment and feedback?
Dr Jackie Potter

This presentation explores what we can know about effective assessment and feedback by studying students' nomination statements for Keele's teaching awards. Published work on student conceptions of teaching excellence (Bradley et al 2015; Moore and Kuol 2007) has not focused on assessment practices. The session explores the themes emerging in the data and compares these to core principles of good assessment and feedback practice (for example, Nicol and MacFarlane-Dick, 2006). It compares the nature of the approach to the initial step of appreciative inquiry and speculates on the real potential value for such data to be part of a virtuous cycle of change and development to assessment and feedback practices. The session explores the nature of trustworthiness, credibility and validity of the data particularly in relation to how nominations are solicited or students are briefed in advance.

Evaluating the impact of a journal club to enhance Masters student research literacy and decision making
Dr Tom Laws

The literature supports and prescribes the establishment of a journal club to increase the research literacy of post graduate students. There is burgeoning literature on the effect of journal clubs for nursing students even though Evidence Based Practice is the corner stone of their learning and quality control practices. The lecturers at Keele-Nursing established regular journal club meetings using an electronic interface using a framework where by student explored a range of methodologies prior to selecting a research approach for their research project. A content analysis of the student postings / discussions across five research methods was undertaken (Cohort studies, case control studies, RCTs, Survey design and Qualitative interview). We triangulated the research methodology literature with the lecurers understanding of the requisite knowledge base and the student's on-line comments. We found that students displayed enthusiastic and informed interactions beyond lecturer expectations. There was a strong association between students' ability to offer informed critique on a range of studies and what the research methodology literature recommended in design and evaluation of research quality. This outcome situated most students with an adequate knowledge base to justify why they had chosen a specific research methodology and reduced tutoring needed to design the research.

Throwing caution to the wind: using drones to teach undergraduate students
Dr Alexandre Nobajas

Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs), also known as drones, have become increasingly popular and feature regularly on the news, both for positive and negative reasons. However controversial, their use has proven to be successful in a myriad of applications which go from disaster management to agricultural surveying. Nonetheless, due to a lack of courses offering UAV training there is a current shortage of professionals capable of performing missions with UAVs satisfactorily, something this project aims to mitigate by introducing UAV training as part of the university offering. By designing and deploying a variety of activities, including letting them fly a drone independently, a cohort of year 3 Geography students were introduced to drone technology, in what it is likely to be the first experience of its kind in the UK.

What's a digital experience? Student perceptions at Keele
Mr Matthew Street, Mr Dan Harding and Mr Tim Hinchcliffe

This presentation will provide an insight into information collected during Keele's involvement with the JISC Student Digital Experience Tracker. During April 2016, Keele's application to become a pilot institution was accepted, requiring the collection of feedback from students about their experience of the digital environment. In total, 20 higher and further education institutions took part, giving participants access to anonymised benchmarking data.

Nine questions were set by JISC, linked to their work on digital capability (https://www.jisc.ac.uk/rd/projects/building-digital-capability) with a further 3 left open for institutions to define. Inclusion in the tracker was offered to all areas of the University, with programmes from each Faculty represented in the final survey.

Despite only 2 weeks of data collection, 312 responses were returned. Initial reaction was that the University performs well against the benchmark data, with analysis focused on free text responses as the richest source of information. Headline findings will be discussed during the presentation, however, clear trends in the data relate to consistency within the KLE, increasing engagement during lectures and other areas of the University's digital environment.

This session will begin the process of disseminating these findings with the University, including those who took part, with a report to follow.

Progress with PlayBack
Mr Matthew Street

This presentation covers two strands, the first will focus on the evaluation of the PlayBack pilot in 2015/16. The second on the development of PlayBack as one tool in a growing suite of capture technologies available at Keele.

A range of methods were used to collect evaluation data, these will be explored and the lessons learned discussed alongside trends from the qualitative data captured. The evaluation highlighted the student perception of benefit from using PlayBack and showed how students use the service.

When looking across the published literature on lecture capture conflicting evidence is offered about the benefit of captured lectures to learning. Leadbeater et al (2013) discuss the high use of captured lectures by non-native speakers of English and students who have dyslexia. Describing the benefits to these students in the context of being able to revisit material, but also highlighting that in some cases high use can lead to surface approaches to learning. This demonstrates the need for students to be supported to use the generated resources appropriately, work completed by Cornock provides examples of this support. If lecture capture is considered a tool that creates supplementary resources for these resources to be educationally beneficial students need support in learning how to use them appropriately.

Thinking and practising like a lawyer
Mr Mark Davys

It has been suggested that learning is something that takes place within the practices of a particular community rather than an activity that is contextually neutral. The aim of this project is to:

- consider what it means to think and practice like a lawyer;
- discern and deploy activities to help students become members of (and participants in) the legal academic community, rather than acquirers of expertise in discrete subjects and discrete transferable skills; and
- (in the longer term) assess whether this aids learning and improves employability, whether in the legal academy, legal practice or elsewhere.

This project is at an early stage. The aim of the presentation is to share ideas and thinking, rather than conclusions; to test the reasoning behind the project, start conversations and gain insight from other disciplines.

The challenge of remote CV guidance; does audio feedback help?
Ms Keren Coney

CV writing is a component of employability development and allows students to effectively present themselves to employers. The aim of this project was to investigate the use of audio feedback as a tool to aid students with improving their CVs; in particular, to determine if this form of feedback could enhance the depth of feedback, level of understanding gained by students and the extent to which the feedback could be perceived as more personal. Responses were sought from 40 students using a questionnaire. Participants were incredibly positive about the format of feedback: it was unanimously agreed that the audio format aided their understanding and provided greater depth and a majority stated that this form was more tailored and personal. As a result of this project, I have incorporated the use of audio feedback into my practice and have even started using this format when providing remote guidance on other career-related activities, such as personal statements for postgraduate applications. Some students stated that they would prefer written and audio feedback; in response to this, a colleague and I are currently investigating the use of screen capture software to provide feedback and have been awarded HECSU funding to carry out this research.

Pilot evaluation of medical student perception of a novel pharmacology-based game
Dr Russell Crawford and Dr Sarah Aynsley

Gamification in higher education has been gaining traction as a plausible and useful addition to the diversity of learning resources available to both teachers and students. We have invented a card-based, role-playing team game to help aid pharmacology learning in medical students. Feedback from teaching staff was overwhelmingly positive and most felt it had a place within the curriculum as a pharmacological learning aid. The aim of the current study is to determine whether a range of medical students who played the game perceived any benefit to pharmacology learning supported in this way. Here we present pilot data based on questionnaire data and theme analysis of free-text comments collected from students who played the game. We found that students perceived a wide range of positive benefits to learning pharmacology in this manner and in our discussion, we consider how best to capitalise on these perceived benefits.

Active learning: using interactive tools to enhance learning
Dr Chris Stiff

This talk examines the use of active learning tools to enhance students' engagement and learning of delivered materials. Traditional lectures involve students being passive recipients of learning. However, teaching research has shown that students retain more information and are more motivated when they are actively involved in the lecture. I will demonstrate two teaching tools - Poll Everywhere and Mentimeter - that can be used to enhance content and draw students into the lecture. These tools differ from others that are available in that they require very little set up and no special apparatus – responses are made via PC or mobile phone. I will also outline preliminary data that shows using these tools does increase student engagement and overall satisfaction with the teaching they receive.

Swipe in: electronic student attendance
Mr Alex Goffe, Mr Neil Herbert, Mr Nick Vaughan and Mr Dan Daw

The purpose of this project is to utilise the student Keele Card to take electronic student attendance within the Faculty of Medicine & Health Sciences using bespoke, in-house designed and built card readers using open source technology.

So you've got big data?
Mr Tim Smale

Over the last 10 years it has increasingly become commonplace to evaluate every aspect of a student's course. "How happy are the students?", "how are students doing on their course?", "how are students doing on placements" and "are the placement areas suitable" are all common types of evaluations undertaken throughout the academic year. This data is then held separately and manually reviewed and reported on. This separation and manual processing has hampered professional courses such as Physiotherapy, Nursing and Midwifery which are required by their respective professional bodies to collect this data and report the results within short timeframes.

Over the last three years Tim Smale and Pete Lonsdale have been developing a solution that helps to collect this information from staff and students, import data from the student record system and external regulatory bodies. This then presents this data to staff in reports that can be easily digested and shared securely.
This presentation will give a high level overview of the system's capabilities around data associated with clinical placements (Audits carried out on the placement locations, logs of serious / safeguarding issues, student placement evaluations and debriefing records between tutor and student) and potential to develop further.

Learning together, evaluating together: an enhanced evaluation of inter-professional postgraduate learning
Dr Chris Little and Ms Jane Jervis

This paper will detail an investigation taking place with post-registration, postgraduate learners in the School of Nursing and Midwifery. The project sought to investigate the impact of interprofessional learning with students of an Advanced Clinical Practice module. This module recruited 47 learners, from 6 professions, including nurses, pharmacists, physiotherapists, podiatrists, optometrists, and paramedics.

The project utilised the student response system Mentimeter to gather 22 responses utilising an in-class evaluative survey consisting of both qualitative and quantitative questions. These responses equate to 47% of the cohort. Students were left, unattended, to complete the in-class evaluation using their own devices or iPads provided by the School. All students in the room completed this evaluation. This paper will present a discussion about the benefits and disadvantages of presenting students with in-class evaluations and what it may mean for the data gathered.

The data gathered points to an extremely positive evaluation of interprofessional learning. Students noted that new perspectives this learning had added to their academic and clinical practices. This short paper will also prompt colleagues to consider the place of in-class evaluations in their own practices and the implications of this upon the traditional end of year module evaluation.

Learning in public? Assessing with blogs
Dr Matthew Wyman

This will be a quick overview of my experiences using blogs as an assessment tool on my second year module on Russian politics. It will review technical issues, the on-line off-line question, assessment briefs and evidence from outcomes and evaluation about the effectiveness of the approach. I'll argue that the technical issues presented are worth it in terms of the added authenticity of the exercise and the extra levels of creativity that the blogs release. I think this is an approach which may be of wide interest, as just about every subject we teach is faced with the challenge of effective public communication of its value.

Applying interdisciplinary approaches in the liberal arts through 'living labs'
Ms Ella Tennant and Dr Andy Zieleniec

The new Liberal Arts Programme has been designed to be both interdisciplinary and innovative in teaching and learning. This is reflected in the first year core module Understanding the World Through the Liberal Arts, which provides an introduction to perspectives and approaches from various disciplines in HUMSS. True to the liberal arts' origins in classical antiquity, this also allows students to engage with theories and perspectives outside the classroom, in 'living labs'. These 'field trips' to specific locations encourage exploration and application of knowledge and methodologies, through thinking and doing, in real living communities and physical and social landscapes. With specific examples of the 'living labs' approach, this presentation will argue that learning outside the classroom can generate creative interactive activity, which in turn leads to new thinking through engaged and participatory, interdisciplinary teaching and learning. The linking of classroom and field activities also provides the opportunity for students to develop critical-thinking and problem-solving skills. Integration of learning activities and problem-solving reflects the educational theories of Dewey, Vygotsky, and Piaget, which have informed the field of outdoor learning and pedagogy. 'Living labs' and interaction with the surrounding environment is a reflection of the innovative nature of liberal arts at Keele.

Embedding the Keele journey and reflective practice within the mathematics programme
Dr Martyn Parker

Recent reports note the 'skills challenge' facing the UK both from employers perspective [High Fliers, London, 2016] and the university sector [Universities UK and UKCES, 2014, Universities UK, 2015]. In particular, universities must consider 'how effective universities are at describing the skills of their graduates?' [Universities UK, 2015] We argue further that a fundamental axiom for universities is: how effective they are at providing students with the means to articulate their skills? In the wider context, the Teaching Excellence Framework [Department for Business and Skills, 2016] explicitly notes employability and destinations as a metric. Thus, student 'added-value' and its implications for their employment has never been more important.

We present a model used within the mathematics programme to develop student reflective practice, their self-awareness and their ability to recognise and articulate their `skills'. We also summarise preliminary results on the effectiveness of this model.

Project Ponder: using clicker technology to make students think
Dr Russell Pearson

Project Ponder was conceived in 2014 with the aim of encouraging students to think more deeply and debate core chemistry topics as and when they are introduced during teaching sessions to improve student engagement, understanding, performance and retention. Phase 1 of the project involved 144 first year students receiving a clicker handset as part of their welcome pack for regular use during lectures, workshops and problem classes. Phase 2 dealt with the same cohort of students in their second year of study using more sophisticated clicker handsets for team based tasks and discussions that were strategically positioned at regular intervals during a range of formal teaching sessions.

This two-pronged approach involving the use of two different clicker handsets for large group teaching sessions has resulted in 96% of students wanting even greater clicker usage on their course, with 90% preferring clicker handsets to using mobile phone technology and over three-quarters of the class preferring clicker-based teaching sessions to the flipped classroom approach. The pros and cons of clicker handsets when compared against other available voting technologies will be addressed and the additional instructor benefits of the work, alongside tips for optimum impact, will also be described.

From flash fiction to flash reflection

Ms Karen Taylor and Ms Helen Machin

This paper reports the initial findings of an exploratory study into the effectiveness of "flash reflection" to encourage social work students to develop critical reflection skills. "Flash reflection", inspired by flash fiction, is a brief writing activity of no more than 250 words structured around a model of reflection. Critical reflection is a core requirement of the UK's Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF) for social workers and it is believed to lead to positive social change in social work interventions (Morley, 2014). However, there is a paucity of empirical evidence about how social work educators can support students to develop critical reflection skills (Burr et al, 2016). To explore the effectiveness of flash reflection, a group of 20 social work students were asked to complete flash reflections after each day of a short, intensive module. A second phase will invite the students and educators involved in the flash reflection experiment to discuss their experiences during interviews and focus groups. Initial findings suggest that flash reflection encourages students to analyse their assumptions whilst also providing rich and immediate evaluations of taught sessions. Based on these exploratory findings, we argue that flash reflection may be added to other techniques to encourage social work students to develop critical reflection skills.

Teaching the limits of technology through iPad usage in seminars

Dr Rachel Bright

This paper will draw on recent pedagogical developments relating to using tablets in classroom learning environments as an integrated part of seminar interaction. It will demonstrate how iPad activities can encourage active and collaborative learning, both of which have been shown to improve academic performance (Kuh 2005, Prince 2004). This paper will specifically focus on sessions within History at Keele in 2014 and 2016, demonstrating how the technologies were used to improve student interaction, especially through group work and presentations, as well as how the iPads improved the class participation of students with a range of disabilities. As Rice (2011, para.3-4) has shown, 'iPads increase engagement and collaboration, acting as a facilitator for more easily sharing information.' However, this paper will also reflect on the limitations of using such technologies, which unexpectedly became evident during group work in these classes. A comparison was made between groups with iPads and those without; and occasionally the iPads proved a distraction, with worse outcomes. Rather than demonstrating that iPad use should be discontinued, however, the results subverted student expectations about using new technologies in a learning environment, constructively enabling them to reappraise how they approach research at university-level.

Sustainability education at Keele; what do you think?
Dr Zoe Robinson

This talk will present material from a staff (2013) and student (2015) university-wide survey looking at staff and student attitudes towards sustainability. It considers how staff and students conceptualize sustainability at Keele, how relevant they see it to their discipline, how they would like to see it implemented, and the impact that sustainability education work at Keele has had on the sustainability attributes of students from different disciplines. This data can inform future directions of education for sustainability work within the institution, and in particular highlights the importance of considering different approaches for different disciplines.

Scrolling' to map texts, cross academic conceptual thresholds and access the 'critical' reading portal
Ms Angela Rhead

Interested in increasing students' active and critical engagement with texts, I have been frustrated by attempts to move beyond the "scan the abstract" technique for the initial stages of reading, where criticality can be said to begin.

Inspired by Middlebrook's (1994) discussions on the benefits of creating scrolls from selected sources to explore reading processes collaboratively, and beginning with Y2 Music students, I experimented with scrolls to 'map' texts to precede (or circumvent) narrative reading. Twelve feet of a journal article, ten students and several marker pens later, scrolling appeared to increase students', "dialogic engagement with the text "(Abbott, 2013, p.198) and uncover the easily recognisable but difficult to explain intuitive practices of confident academic readers (Moore, 2013); imperfect but profoundly improved, this year I have extended the experiment to a range of disciplines at undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

One key finding is students' widespread lack of understanding of the purpose of academic reading, a 'conceptual threshold' (Wisker and Robinson, 2009) that, unlike discipline-specific 'threshold concepts', describes epistemological cross-disciplinary concepts that require criticality on the part of the reader. A discussion of the emerging findings of this experiment provides the potential to focus on a significant aspect of higher learning that frustrates both students and academic staff.

Developing critical writing skills; a patchwork tour de force
Ms Sara Morris

Aim: To develop confidence and a requisite academic skill set for level 7 in a disparate graduate cohort

The 'patchwork text' assignment commences at the start of the MSc Nursing programme and is gradually assembled during the course of an eight month module to meets all the learning outcomes. Winter (2003) suggests a Patchwork text approach as useful to creatively explore concepts. The assessment consists of a variety of formative short 'patches', using a range of written approaches (e.g. reflective account, annotated biography, report) each of which is complete in itself. These patches are developed around a theme (e.g. frailty) to ensure the overall unity of these component sections. Although the theme is planned in advance the work is finalised retrospectively, drawing on formative feedback, feed forward, discussion and peer review. The final assessment is complete when the revised 'patches' are 'stitched' together' with a critical reflective commentary.
So why this approach? The MSc Nursing is a fast track programme that recruits from a wide range of graduate disciplines, all of whom are new to the Nursing profession. The use of formative patches and a range of feedback mechanisms have been instrumental in supporting and upskilling the cohort to construct new knowledge that builds on previous learning (Matt, 2000) and introduces and the required academic skills in an accelerated manner to Masters Level. The opportunity for critical reflection in both the discussions and the 'stitching' has demonstrated a deeper level of understanding of complex and multi-dimensional areas of nursing practice.

Strategies for Enhancing Learning and Teaching through Publication
Professor Tom Ward
DVC for Student Education at Leeds University

Professor Ward leads on the education strategy at the University of Leeds and will be leading a TEF-focused talk at the event as part of a series of seminars hosted by The Higher education Network at Keele (THiNK).