Putting Students in the Lecturers Shoes

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Case Study

'Putting Students in the Lecturers Shoes'

This was a cross faculty project led by Rob Wilson (HWB), Elaine Stinger (HWB) and Anne Nortcliffe (ACES)

Abstract

Placing the students in the Lecturers' shoes aimed to develop and deepen the student learning through students' investigating planning, developing, and delivering supplementary instruction to support theirs and their peers learning, teaching and assessment in a module. The paper highlights the approach adopted and applied at level 4 nursing, 5 engineering, or 6 sports management students with a view to promote student learning autonomy. As previous research indicates that this style of higher educational teaching encourages students to discover and reflect on a subject. Nortcliffe (2005) suggests that when students have been given the opportunity to drive and deliver a module: the module assessment results indicate that a higher level of learning. In addition as indicated in this paper from feedback from staff and students this approach offers the students an opportunity to develop different key skills, autonomous learning and active learning styles. However, it should be noted that not all students are willing to engage and place the effort into such a formative learning exercise despite the evidence clearly shows a deeper level of learning and understanding by the students as result of engagement in supplementary instruction.

Objectives

- To gain a clear understanding of learner autonomy
- To develop a framework for implementing student led teaching
- To establish if students at different academic levels were capable of learner autonomy

Guiding Principles

The basis for autonomous learning is the humanistic theories of education (Rogers 1989) i.e. human beings have a natural potential to learn, the perceived relevance of subject promotes learning, significant learning is acquired through learning. Constructivist theory (Bruner 1973) where learning is active the learner selects and transforms information to construct ideas/solutions beyond the given information. A student who perceive themselves to be in control of their learning have confidence in themselves (McCarthy 1998, Fazey and Fazey 2001). The learner who perceives success or failure to be their responsibility will behave in ways to improve results in the next exam. Therefore learner autonomy will develop within the space the tutor opens up to the learners (Benson 2000). The learner's capacity to learn

autonomously will be nurtured and grown through these opportunities of practice, McGarry (1995), The case studies presented in this paper illustrate examples of such learning autonomy opportunities, that enabled the learners to focus and become involved in the learning and teaching process as active learners. The aim was to motivate students to develop a deeper understanding of the subject material, while at the same time offering them control of their learning. By providing learning opportunities that encouraged the students to act as teachers, learning was demonstrated through the preparation and delivery of e-enabled supplementary instruction materials which have been shown to encourage multi-level student learning (Nortcliffe, 2005). Figure 1 illustrates this process;

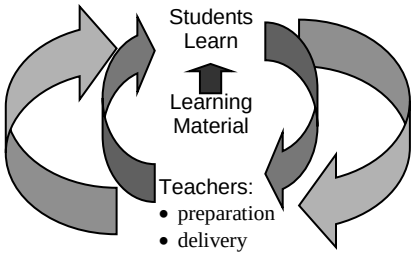

FIGURE. 1; MULTI-LEVEL LEARNING MODEL

In addition students who participate in live delivery of supplementary learning instruction in conjunction with peer assessment achieve an even greater level of learning, figure 2, (Nortcliffe et al 2003).

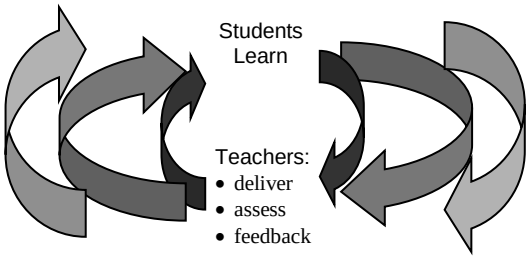

FIGURE. 2; COMPLEX LEVEL LEARNING THROUGH LEARNING TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT MODEL

The skills that we hoped to develop in our students were those of:-

- self appraisal, reflection, strategic choice and application
- ability to place theory into context and into practice
- achievement behaviours i.e. persistence, challenge, interest resilience to failure
- goals setting and strategies to achieve these goals,
- time and resource management
- strategies for managing unforeseen situations

All the above identified skills are transferrable and are of relevance to all students irrespective of their programme. In all three projects the students had to consider their existing knowledge and experience and match this against the demands of the scenario. Collectively they had to set goals, prioritise, decide, justify and demonstrate the option to their peers. The role of the facilitator was to develop the capacity for learner autonomy. Each project took a slightly different approach to achieve the goal of promoting autonomy.

Description of the projects

Level 4 - Sport Business Management

Groups of 3 or 4 students devised and delivered a 20 minute interactive seminar on one of the topics below, they were allocated to a group and question in the third week of teaching. From week six, during seminar sessions two groups delivered a seminar that they had prepared and submitted documentation relating to their seminar within their individual Portfolio. Consultancy slots were made available for each group prior to delivery of their seminar.

Topic	***Question Area One***	***Question Area Two***
Structure of Sport/Events	Lottery - The impact it has had on sport/events	The Sport England Strategy 2008-2011 - what will it mean?
Commercialisation & Technology	The use of new technology to increase participation	Home based leisure and its affect on the sport/events industries
Events - Community to Major	The benefits of sports events to a local community	The use of sports events to aid social inclusion
The Global Market Place	Olympics - The Future	The global market place for sport/events
Total Leisure Product	The Total Leisure Product for Ponds Forge	The Total Leisure Product for London 2012
Managing Change	The formula for successfully managing	The challenge of managing resistance to

	change.	change.

Presentations were thoroughly researched and academic information was transposed into an accessible language. All presentations were satisfactory but those which demonstrated excellent qualities were based on the following;

- a presentation using PowerPoint, that included: an introduction to the topic, facts and background information, an activity for the group they were delivering to and a conclusion.
- They also provided a handout at the seminar for the audience.

Level 5 Engineering students in groups designed and delivered standalone PowerPoint on Case Study Human Computer Interaction (HCI) of electronic device

There were a total of six groups of students. The assessment was formative. The students were required to introduce the theory of good practice HCI with reference to the literature. They had to apply theory to practice, by reviewing an existing electronic device and highlighting where the device heeded or failed to adhere to good HCI practices/principles again citing the literature. The students were finally required to demonstrate the application of the theory in practice by redesigning the electronic device adhering to good HCI practices.

Standalone PowerPoint presentations were placed on the VLE for each group to review each others work and learn from one another. The academic provides feedback against each assessment criteria and learning outcomes.

Level 6 The student groups used scenarios based on real instances in child, mental health and adult learning.

There were a total of 70 students who were allocated to 4, 6 hour sessions.

Where possible we mirrored practice i.e. random selection of group members, time management, equipment, writing a care plan.

We asked them to produce 2 power point slides. Slide 1 detailed their initial thoughts of how to solve this problem, for slide 2 they documented the care plan, giving the rational for why they had chosen a particular move.

Each group of 5 students was allocated a facilitator who worked with the group.

The students took responsibility for the choice of moving and handling technique.

The students then demonstrated the technique to their peer group.

All groups received a peer evaluation.

All projects were supported by information and activities on the Blackboard site.

Academic Learning

We increased our understanding of learner autonomy-as our role as facilitator oppose to delivery as academics enable Feedback from the academic team facilitating the level 6 nursing exercise;

'Felt the students ended up knowing a lot about a narrow area of Moving and Handling'.

'More detail needed in the scenario for the students to 'get their teeth into''

'Liked the detailed back up for the Facilitator'

'Found it benifical for the students to look at what they initially thought was an easy manoeuvre and they could spend time breaking the move down'

'It made the students 'think a lot''

' good way to learn'

'hard to stand back'

Demonstrating that staff were acting as facilitator oppose to deliver of knowledge and practice.

Students were able to demonstrate learner autonomy at all levels, as shown by the quality of the assessment submission/presentations. Some students apply themselves more than others- just as comparable with other previous assessment experiences with the students, for example for the Engineering case study the student formative assessment submissions ranged from 35 to 68% in comparison to formative learner autonomy assessment submission varied from 33 to 80%.

Some students engaged and valued in the learning opportunity than others- demonstrated by the student submissions and in comparison to other assessment submissions, particularly observed in engineering level 5 students as one group's formative student submission was observed to be considerably less (bare pass) standard to their usual summative assessment submissions (2(i)) standard.

Feedback from the level 6 nursing students on their learning, demonstrated that they found the approach beneficial as widened their methods of learning;

'Being made to show your methods to the group and physically put literature onto the laptop I felt this helped two styles of learning'

'Exploring different scenarios and teamwork. It was good to look at different techniques within each case study''

'Having to think about a task, instead of just doing the easiest thing that you always do'

'Directing our scenario, helpful to discuss different techniques, refreshes your memory after than being hold''

Rob we need some quotes or survey results on the sport here please or your personal reflections on the quality submission, what was the range and class avaerage of the submissions in comparison to summative submissions!

Challenges to the implementation of learning autonomy

Externally imposed quality assurance regimes may paradoxically hinder the development of learner autonomy. (Smith 2000) For example:-

The current trend for the Government to emphasise skills based, work focused, competency based learning, coupled with concerns such as falling standards, has promoted a target driven philosophy, to demonstrate achievement to know the theory, but lack the ability to apply the theory into practice.

Employers' demands to provide more relevant, tailor made education in a shorter time frame.

Professional bodies stipulate prescribed competences for a programme while expecting autonomous practitioners.

Internally imposed restrictions i.e. larger classes, lower student staff contact hours, large groups and there is a need for uniformity of delivery of content reduces the opportunity for autonomous learning.

Consequently there is a tension between these philosophies and we need to consider how learner autonomy can be managed within this framework. However, we agree with McGarry 1995 who writes ''it is clear that learner autonomy is a capacity ...it will grow with practice, or be lost through inactivity'.

Recommendations/further development

Introduce the concept of learning autonomy from the start of the programme

Give clear, staged information as to what is to be achieved/worked towards

Provide a sound rationale for the use of learner autonomy, i.e. there are learning opportunities away from classroom and from one another.

Motivate the students to engage in learner autonomy exercises through demonstrating the value in their personal development and increased employability

Promote a uniform strategy of implementation throughout the programme

Identify and disseminate an effective monitoring system across the program

Build learner autonomy into assessments.

Ensure that there is an effective and efficient feedback and support system in place.

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