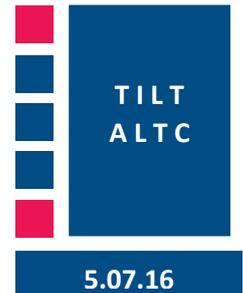


Transforming learning through Scholarship Session Abstract



Enhancing learning using authentic artefacts

Michael McCann, Nottingham Business School; Louise Taylor, Nottingham Law School

A common problem in education is that many students fail to see the real-world application of the concepts they are learning and lose motivation (Chulkov and Nizovtsev, 2015). This experience deters their engagement, limiting their scholarship and attainment levels. A solution to this is the use of problem-based learning. Students are presented with problems and use their knowledge and skills to solve the problems. However, in many instances, we present sanitised cases of reality to draw clear learning outcomes for students. In practice things are rarely so neat and tidy! Life is messy! Individuals don't have full information / too much information. Decision-making involves agents having to interpret or judge using their knowledge and skills based on incomplete information. Authentic learning is about providing these experiences to students. Artefacts used across disciplines are different, but students build their scholarship around specific artefacts in order to make sense of what they are observing.

In their show and tell session, Louise Taylor (Law) and Michael McCann (Economics) reviewed their work, conducted as part of their TILT sabbaticals, using authentic learning and assessment experiences to encourage engagement and scholarship in their respective fields. Research offers significant support for the use of authentic learning and assessment strategies in order to better prepare students for their future professional lives (McMullen et al., 2003; Kazemi, 2013).

Louise has developed the use of portfolios for learning and assessment in order to encourage engagement and scholarship in an undergraduate law module. This will involve the use of authentic learning and assessment experiences for students by providing them with seminar materials in the form of a case file containing witness statements, scenes of crime photographs, transcription or audio recordings of 999 calls etc. She demonstrated an example case file during the presentation. Students will then need to scaffold their scholarship around these artefacts in order to make sense of them and to draw conclusions in relation to the task set.

Michael has developed the use of finance software in teaching, learning and assessment to stimulate interest and scholarship in an undergraduate economics module. The software enables the use of real-time data to demonstrate the interaction of news and financial markets live. He demonstrated the type of 'active' analysis which can be conducted by students in class. By being able to see and then practice the application of models using such contemporary data, they are drawn into the learning process, and so develop skills in the research and analysis of economic and financial data.

Discussion in the session centred on the importance of such 'active' hands-on learning for engaging students and the shared experience across a number of disciplines. Other questions related to the nature of assessment suitable for such learning. On-going 'active' assessment is necessary. The literature points to the use of portfolios to heighten engagement, scholarship (Driessen & Van Der Vleuten, 2000) and attainment (Hammer,

1999), which is the approach Louise is using. In Economics, Michael uses a slight variant with a structured data-based project.

Several considerations should be taken on board before adopting authentic learning and assessment strategies, and these include: the time needed to create new materials (Hammerness et al., 2005; Trevitt, Macduff & Steed, 2014), the tensions involved in using portfolios to facilitate learning as well as assessment (Snyder, Lippincott & Bower, 1998; Van Tartwijk & Driessen, 2009; McMullen et al., 2003), and the resources needed to manage student and staff anxiety associated with the adoption of new modes of learning and assessment (Van Tartwijk & Driessen, 2009; Mason, Pegler & Weller (2004).

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