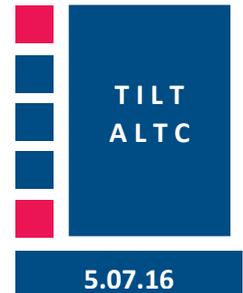


## Transforming learning through Scholarship Session Abstract



The theory and practice of developing guidance skills via blended learning

*Jo McFadden, Anne Owen, School of Social Sciences*

This workshop sought to share the experiences of Jo and Anne in designing a blended learning module - located within the Postgraduate Diploma in Career Guidance/Qualification course at Nottingham Trent University - that incorporates the teaching and learning of professional one-to-one guidance skills and allied theoretical perspectives. The design of the module is underpinned by Gilly Salmon's five-stage model (2002), providing a framework for scaffolding the teaching and learning as well as fostering an online community of practice.

This development responded to the increasing need for guidance practitioners and students to develop practice approaches which deliver flexibility in terms of time, space and pace. The project has harnessed the potential of technology to provide solutions to the challenge of developing professional skills at a 'distance'. The methods developed are underpinned by principles of best practice, and are designed to inspire person centred values and collaboration within the learning group. The methods encourage individuals to reflect upon: values; behavioural responses to others and their situations; and their success at achieving required outcomes including meeting others' expectations and prescribed standards of behaviour (including those set out by the professional body, the Career Development Institute). Providing a safe environment for this potentially exposing activity has been a vital consideration in the design of activities, as has been the need to develop confidence in sharing work and utilising technology. This has been achieved by deploying carefully staged activities, to facilitate progressively ambitious learning reflecting learner needs and supported by empathetic and detailed instruction.

Skill development – even enhanced by the innovative use of technology – is inadequate without students and practitioners developing, maintaining, and applying, a comprehensive understanding of key theoretical insights and contemporary research and policy debates. And, of course, best practice would require that skills, even when underpinned by an established understanding of theory and ethics need to be continually reflected upon. As such, the workshop explores a range of activities that supports the scholarship associated with the application of theoretical concepts to practice situations.

The aim of the workshop was to share practice of designing online teaching and learning for professional skill development in guidance practice, with reference to Salmon's five-stage framework. This included a demonstration of the learning room experience in the NTU Online Workspace, navigating through examples of activities and students' work. The session offered the opportunity to:

- Develop insights of teaching and learning approaches used in a blended learning module

- Reflect upon the principles and practice of designing and delivering a blended learning module that fosters an online community of practice and inquiry
- Engage in discussion relating to the pedagogy of online professional skill development via blended learning

The workshop leaders, Jo and Anne, were previously invited to facilitate a workshop on this development at a school-wide meeting for the School of Social Sciences.

**Jo McFadden** is a Senior Lecturer in Guidance and Youth Studies in the School of Social Sciences, Course Leader for the PgDCG/QCG and along with Anne is co-tutor for the One-to-one Guidance Interactions and Allied Theoretical.

**Anne Owen** is a Senior Lecturer in Guidance and Youth Studies in the School of Social Sciences and leads on One-to-one Guidance Interactions and Allied Theoretical.

Both Jo and Anne have been involved in pioneering innovative developments in blended learning for distance learners of this qualification, which has received national recognition by the Career Development Institute. Anne has also been involved in adapting these approaches to embedding professional and employability skills within the BA Youth Studies course.