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Cover image: University of Chichester

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Keywords

Action Learning, Community, Culture, Writing, Category Mistake, Knowledge

Buildings or people?

Sadly, universities have become obsessed with three- and four-star journals so as to edge above each other in various league tables. These are what count, these win promotions, and in doing so they create corridors of narrow interest. Such attention neglects other forms of writing: do not even think about writing a book. Consequently, written outputs are often increasingly tightly-woven arguments, impenetrable to all but a few. However, those few power brokers are important: they are the reviewers and editors of privileged journals. As I explain to my students, this is a pity, as they exclude diverse voices that often have something very relevant to say. In this edition, we seek to make a small contribution to redressing this problem. We do so by considering the impact on communities, particularly within our own at the University. By paying attention to the stories of how people work together and how they create knowledge and impact, we are drawing on similar themes to those in the literature on communities of practice (Lave & Wenger 1991) and on communities of influence, as articulated by Dr Alison Donaldson, a long-time friend of this journal, and her colleagues (Donaldson et al. 2011). This human dimension is what a university, or any organisation for that matter, is about. Yet this poses a problem for policymakers: how do they express this human dimension in ways that can be taken up to enhance community and impact? I do not seek to answer this challenging question but here, with examples drawn from my colleagues' writing, I hope to shine new light on the question, and to give voice to what is of value, and to what can so easily be lost.

As I am writing this editorial, our Business School is in the process of moving from a lovely Georgian building (see Figure 1) to our new Tech Park home (see Figure 2). In drawing attention to our move, I am reminded of the work of Gilbert Ryle (Ryle 1949, p17), a mid-twentieth century British philosopher, who was influenced by Wittgenstein and interested in language and how we think. Ryle pointed out that it is a mistake to focus on buildings and on what we can touch and see when talking of an institution like a university. Instead, for Ryle, a university is its people, the conversations and a shared spirit of inquiry that we develop together. In fact, Ryle termed this often-unnoticed fixation on rigid form and reification - 'a Category Mistake', an idea I will conclude with.

Figure 1: The Dome - our former home

The contributions in this edition reflect a range of interests we have within the Business School. They illustrate how, over the course of nearly a year, we authors have worked together to share our enthusiasms, to get to know each other better, and to produce this special edition of AMED's journal e-Organisations and People *(e-O&P)*.

This editorial is in two parts. Like a pair of bookends, I begin with some of the insights that this project has revealed to us, and in doing so I draw some wider thoughts on learning, knowledge and community in UK higher education. However, I tread very lightly as to what we actually did. This comes later, in the second part of the editorial, which you will find at the very end of this edition. This is because it felt right to come back to this idea of lightness after showcasing our work. In this second part, **Dr Bob MacKenzie** (MacKenzie 2019) delves into his practice and the theory of facilitating writing and research in a social space.

Our context: small is beautiful

We are a small business school in a small university, and we work with small groups of students of up to twenty. Our focus is on teaching, and we do this very well. By the time they graduate, we get to know each student well - for student and lecturer alike, there is nowhere to hide. The shadow side of this approach is that research has often taken a back seat: we are educators first and foremost. However, now, for the first time, we are entering our department in the Government's Research Excellence Framework (REF) for 2021. So, for us this is a process of development, of understanding what we are good at and where we need to develop. The exercise in writing for publication in *e-O&P* is part of the process that will shape our research environment, and in doing so helps us to share, reflect together and to start to develop our confidence to showcase what we do best. It is an important form of rehearsal.

Figure 2: The Tech Park – our new base

How we worked together: writing as rehearsal

Once a month, on a Wednesday afternoon during the 2018/19, academic year staff and some postgraduate student in the Business School were invited to come along to an action learning set (Revans 1998) *lightly* facilitated on a *pro bono* basis by Bob MacKenzie, who is commissioning editor of AMED's journal *e-Organisations and People*. I am going to dwell on the word 'lightly'. It does not mean omitted. There is a knack that Bob has of not saying much and of encouraging the voice of others with the use of explorative questions and listening. Bob's approach is influenced by principles of critical friendship (MacKenzie 2015) and by writing in a social space. We were creating impact by treading lightly. There were usually between five and eight of us present, typically lecturers, but occasionally PhD students as well as Barbara Hayes and colleagues from the local Quakers community, who had been working with us on a business ethics module.

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Pressures of work, enthusiasm for our project, uncertainty about the relevance of this unusual approach, and/or teaching commitments variously motivated or discouraged participation. A typical session would begin with introductions, where we would share stories and experiences as to what has been happening with our research and writing; what had enabled and supported us, but more often about what had got in the way. Often, we would take seemingly tangential avenues, exploring possibilities for finding relevance in these new areas. More importantly, we would listen and support each other in those moments. We would also just sit and write together (it is surprising how powerful this can be) and then work in twos or threes to share our work. The session would end with some commitment to do some further writing. During the course of our time together, the idea of this special edition formed as a kind of project to lend focus to our respective research and writing interests. Commitments were made, most were met, some fell away.

So, what did people value about writing in a social space? A recent short survey identified that the following were important:

- The time to share experiences and ideas of writing;
- The group conversations, particularly getting into pairs as critical friends (qv);
- Getting to know each other, something as simple as that;
- Time out of a busy week just to write and think;
- And, a safe place to talk about the writing process.

Some lessons learnt

Two thirds into this process, I made a mistake that underlined the benefit of this way of working. Anticipating time pressures from a typical academic routine, I shortened the sessions from three to 1.5 hours: I had not noticed at the time that the balance had been tipped, that people increasingly valued being together and working on their writing despite wider demands on their time. For me, this was a lesson learned.

It is interesting to reflect on what we did *not* do. There was no didactic 'teaching' about how to write or edit, or any subject matter content: these issues were explored between ourselves as they arose. What lessons would I draw? Firstly, allow people time together to talk, share experience and actually write and use this space to build a momentum and a shared understanding of each other. And secondly, draw upon people who are interested, even if they are beyond the strict definition of the intended 'academic' group. And thirdly, tread lightly with explorative questions, and practice the curiosity to listen.

For me the most surprising and rewarding benefit has been getting to know people better, just to have an excuse – and the satisfaction - to work on a project together. It was in this process that I have got to know my colleagues in International English, who are a part of the Business School. That might seem an odd thing to say – even a guilty admission for someone who has been working at the University for six years. It is easy for us to become focused on our own particular interests without appreciating who is around us and what they have to offer. The same goes for my colleagues Mustafa Ali (known to us as Ali) and Will Roberts who are working on an EU funded Interreg project. In this way, the whole exercise of talking about our interests, sharing what was holding us back, and actually doing some writing, was an intensely social experience, a far cry from that of the solitary author in their garret.

The articles you see here were not commissioned or planned by me; instead, we invited people to write about something they were interested in or what they were doing. In this sense, what has emerged says something about us as a Business School and where our interests lie.

Three prominent themes emerge in this writing project

In this project eight people have written the articles that you see, to each of them I say – thank you. For my colleagues, this was beyond what the day job demanded, and demonstrates the strength of interest for their subject and their commitment to learning and the wider community. All the articles reflect at least one of these three themes.

Commitment to learning

Here, learning is explored from a number of perspectives. However, one thing that brings them together is that learning is a social process of exploration and social endeavour. Take **David Goodman**'s article on apprenticeships for example. We hear how David is coming to understand the practical implications of the Government's recent initiatives on the implementation of modern apprenticeships. Policy, funding streams, learning outcomes exist on one level; the experience of learning developed with students and course leader alike is another. It is this dynamic that creates the sense of culture and a learning community, a point that I too am drawn to in the spirit of Gilbert Ryle. Then there is **Heather Trencher**, who is keen to share her learning of Chinese with the Business School faculty as we prepare ourselves for increased number of Asian students. The point is that Heather is not sharing an expert knowledge of the Chinese language as such (her expertise is with other languages) but rather a curiosity that she is willing to share as part of our preparations.

Next, we hear from **Sue Lavender** in relation to developing English language provision. Although I have drawn three themes in this editorial, what comes across is how they blend together. For students to learn, there needs to be a learning community composed of the students, of those providing English support, and also of the wider academic team. Again on the theme of working with international students, there is an article from **Jo Blackwell,** who takes a personal perspective in discussing a form of learning that is often side-lined, that of small group teaching. Here, she explores the use of blended learning approaches with 'mini-groups' of about four students, and here again a sense of community shines through.

Passion for knowledge

Most of us researchers have an inherent curiosity of the world and a particular topic that we keep coming back to. With **Dawn Robins**, this relates to how we come to use our cars, and to what this says about how we view the world. For **Will Roberts**, this curiosity is brought to bear on a project that seeks to bring about practical benefit to the world, that of our work on Channel Payment for Eco Systems (CPES) to improve water quality by deterring pollution and how we work with stakeholders to achieve this.

Strengthening the community

In this section, we have two articles. I cannot quite remember when I met **Barbara Hayes** and her colleagues from the Quakers. I have an interest in conscious business and ethics, and am lucky to teach a module on the subject for final year undergraduates. I am always keen to get visitors to provide a wider perspective, and the long tradition that the Quakers have on business, morality and ethics was perfect. In their session, I sensed that students were experiencing something quite different than that which is possible from a traditionally 'taught' session. And this was not only because, unusually, we started with five minutes of silence. It also related to being part of a wider web of a community, both meeting new people from different traditions and also showing this related over time and history. The second article on this theme is an account of **Lionel Bunting**'s Marketing Forum initiative. In common with Barbara's, at its core this concerns having conversations with different people in a way that would not otherwise happen. In this case, people from the world of business share their practical insights about their wider communities and about how to create impact. The articles of Barbara and Lionel both illustrate how, reciprocally, the students and those from those wider communities come to see their world slightly differently through this interaction.

A final thought

Coming back to Ryle's Category Mistake, it is important to ask the question: how do the various forms of measurement (National Student Survey, the Research Excellence Framework, the Teaching Excellence Framework, the Knowledge Excellence Framework, rate of employment of students after six months and so on) describe what is of value in a University? At best, they form a loose agenda that enables great work to happen. At worst, such forms of measurement and subsequent control neuters and stifles that sense of enquiring community, collective knowledge and what adds value to students. In the articles here, we can see that emergent nature of inquiry, a passion for knowledge and pointers to how we care for and develop our communities. So where does this leave our Category Mistake? Clearly creative work and that sense of learning and community are still vibrant. But it seems worryingly at risk. A question for the policymakers: how will you give increased voice to these fertile interactions that build knowledge and community, as a counterpoint to the attention paid to scores, league tables and mapped-out expectations?

Glimpsing the future

Experience is an ongoing process, and where we draw beginnings and ends are just convenient constructs in our minds. Where this experiment will end I am not sure. Perhaps a better question to ask is how it will change and where will our energy take us? As we settle into our new home that we will be sharing with engineers, film-makers, sound-recordists, animators etc, I wonder what surprising new and exciting conversations and opportunities might arise?

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Professor **Bob MacKenzie** on a number of counts. Firstly, it was Bob's idea to have the showcase edition of this Journal. Not only is a thank you due in this regard, but also Bob's energy and enthusiasm for supporting my colleagues in their writing in his capacity as a critical friend. Secondly, I would like to thank Bob for his help, support, humour and advice over the last year in facilitating our Wednesday afternoon writing and research workshops. I would also like to thank **my colleagues at the Business School** who supported this project, many but not all of who contributed. I would also like to thank my colleague **Dawn Robins** for her cajoling and support in this project and for generally being just a great colleague over the last few years. And finally, to **David McAra** of AMED, who expertly assembled the journal that you are now reading.

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The Apprenticeship Experience at university:

an exploration

David Goodman

The last three years has seen a rapid growth in Undergraduate (Level 6) and Masters (Level 7) Degree apprenticeships, creating a type of student arguably different from those on traditional full-time, work-based and distance learning programmes. Here, I discuss an exploratory study of the experience of apprenticeship students at our university, whilst at work and at study, within two cohorts at a UK Higher Education Institution (HEI) on a Chartered Manager Degree Apprenticeship (CMDA) programme.

The exploration uses a broad grounded theory methodology and sought to reveal a deeper understanding of the student experience than those currently discussed in reports such as the 'Apprenticeship Evaluation 2017: Learners (IFF 2017).

A very small (N=2) sample was deliberately chosen in order to constraint the exploration and provide an opportunity for deeper and meaningful responses through a qualitative approach.

Through semi-structured interviews, memo writing, journal writing and visual representation, data was coded, analysed and evaluated to build a theoretical understanding about these student experiences. The main emerging themes related to questions of identity as an apprentice, perceptions of knowledge and skills, and inconsistent understanding of the wider policy intentions.

As growth in degree level apprenticeships continue to expand, policy makers, educators, employers and potential apprentices may need to reflect on their 'mindset'. The idea of apprenticeship, and its perceived value at degree level, seems to differ between the key stakeholders. If this discrepancy continues, in the longer term it will hinder the concept's progress towards becoming an established feature of Higher Education.

Keywords

Apprenticeship, work-based learning, standards, policy, degree apprenticeships, grounded theory, interpretivism, expansive learning, communities of practice, hybridity

Introduction

A little over four years have passed since the launch of Degree Apprenticeships(GOV.UK, 2015), when then Prime Minister Cameron claimed this policy will be "Equipping people with the skills they need to get on in life and backing businesses to create jobs are key parts of our long-term economic plan.". It is now timely to take stock of 'apprenticeship' at degree level, and explore impact these programmes have had on the student-apprentice, and on their workplace.

In the Business School at the University of Chichester (UoC), new programmes have emerged, and apprenticeship numbers increased, replacing previous work-based learning degrees. Since 2009, the Business School has provided learning and teaching in a work-based context, with a Foundation Degree and BA(Hons) Top-Up Management, following a day-release model, in which students spend one day a week at University. This Foundation Degree informed the content of our BA (Hons) Management, a degree written to support the Chartered Management Degree Apprenticeship Degree (CMDA) at Chichester. In the Business School four small cohorts of students, from a wide range of backgrounds, organisations and experiences, are currently underway. With the vanguard group nearing the end of their level 5 studies, it is timely to now critically reflect on the notion of apprenticeship in the context of higher education.

Here, I draw upon the experiences and reflections of two CMDA students from small scale private sector family businesses. They have not directly entered the programme from full time education and were existing employees of their separate family businesses. Taking an interpretivist stance, I explore the phenomenon of 'apprenticeship' within these student's organisational lives through a series of conversations. My aim was to delve deeply into their apprenticeship experience and explore emerging issues through this discourse.

Where we have come from

Policy and numbers

2015 saw major announcements from the UK government on policy, funding and 'The Levy' (see: GOV.UK, 2019), representing a significant intervention following a strange symmetry in the policy cycle. Initiatives in 1964 (Industry Training Boards), 1993 (Modern Apprenticeships), and now 2015, suggest governments return to apprenticeship reviews approximately once in a generation. Earlier initiatives were responses to falling apprenticeship numbers (Fuller & Unwin, 1998) and 2016, (see Figure 1), witnesses another fall in overall numbers.

The general theme of apprenticeship announcements in 2015 was one of alignment between skills policy with industrial strategy. Moreover, they highlighted the benefits of combining higher and vocational education (McEwan, 2019 & GOV.UK, 2015). McEwan (2019) highlights the '**framing**' of the strategy with intentions of **reducing the skills gap**, **increasing productivity** and **boosting social mobility.** He explores these frames and challenges the current provision at a macro level, drawing on a report by Policy Connect: '*Degree Apprenticeships: Up to Standard?*' (Higher Education Commission, 2019).

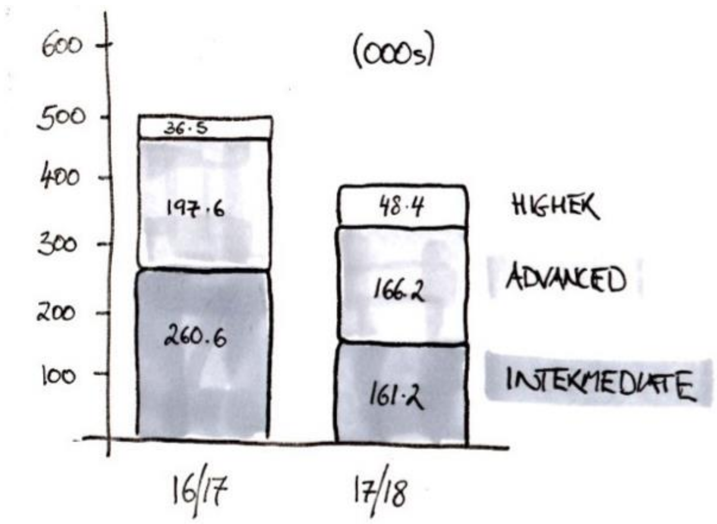

Figure 1: Local detail: apprenticeship starts by level comparison, 16/17 and 17/18 (after Powell, 2019, drawn by David Goodman.)

Recommendations, immediate and long term, stressed the need to improve Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) access to degree apprenticeships, and to investigate the barriers and incentives to participation for SMEs and 'non-levy' payers. Whilst the emphasis is on apprentices, I return to the three 'frames' noted above, and to the relationship between these, the students and their organisations.

Arguably a critical catalyst for creating apprenticeship momentum, 'The Levy' contributed a significant budget(Johnston, 2015) to fund apprenticeships. Alison Wolf (2015), reporting on the UK apprenticeship system following the 2015 election campaign, provided seminal thinking in support of this initiative. She makes the case for a funding framework that would allow the then government to deliver on its pledge of '…three million new apprenticeships in the next five years.' (Wolf, 2015, pg.2). (Based on Figure 1 it is hard to see how this target is achievable but that issue is not the focus of this paper).

However, Wolf (2015, pgs. 8-9) highlights an important aspect for me and crucial for part of the sample in my research, namely the expansion of apprenticeship 'starts' in age groups 25+. Recent government statistics(Powell, 2019) present a mixed and complex picture for the continued development of apprenticeship programmes. As the overall number of apprenticeships decline, the number starting at degree level grows nationally: in 2016/17, 7% of starts were at a higher, level rising to 13% in 2017/18.

Work based Learning

Work-based learning (WBL) is not a new phenomenon, but it could be argued shifting policies have moved the focus towards larger-scale systems such as degree level apprenticeships, and that support for businesses to participate in more local WBL has decreased.

Fuller & Unwin (1998) discussed relationships between work, learning and apprenticeship in detail and it seems the learning landscape of the UK seems has moved little. They paint a picture of frustration with skills training and apprenticeship learning reflecting themes within Richard (2012) and Wolf (2015). Echoing ideas from Sennett, (2008), they argued that, historically, apprenticeship is a transformational process, in which apprentices learn their 'trade', and in parallel develop into an independent adult.

Proposing a 'reconceptualisation' of this transformation forms one of three dimensions that constitute apprenticeship:

> '…the cultural and social aspects of going to, and being at, work which help socialize apprentices into workplace (and adult) roles.' (pg. 154).

As both apprentices in my sample were in existing jobs and had socialised into their roles and adult lives, this raises questions of the scope for transformation within an apprenticeship for an existing worker, and how this will impact them.

Contradictions between sites of work and study

Fuller & Unwin, (1998) suggest a third dimension relating to formal and informal learning experiences, including those on- and off-the-job. I argue this dimension surfaces contradictions between places of work and learning. In 'industry', the emphasis on efficiency, productivity and profit drives priorities and creates cultures where learning is a secondary consideration. The current apprenticeship contract requires employers to provide twenty percent of contracted time as off-the-job training, and this creates potential tensions. Moreover, this places pressure for the University to demonstrate clear and measurable added value, which can be challenging to evidence in the short and medium term other than through their direct contribution of the apprentice to their workplace.

Expansive learning: the university as a site of physical and intellectual 'space'

A WBL context provides more opportunity than didactic teaching and learning (Lave , 1977). Indeed Fuller & Unwin (1998) propose the fostering of 'Communities of Practice' (Lave & Wenger, 1991) in relationship to all stakeholders, but primarily in the workplace. However, I argue the place of learning – or, in this context, the University - has an important role to play by providing physical and intellectual 'space'. Engestrom (1995) values links and input from the 'teacher', contrasting with Lave & Wenger, (1991). His idea of expansive learning relates very closely with the notion of WBL in the UoC context. Here a crucial facet involves '…criticism of the given…' in addition to innovative thinking and new ideas illustrated through teaching practice where a student can participate, lead or instigate change, having identified some form of problematic situation.

While this adds to the notion of a workplace community of practice (CoP), it is within the one situated in the University, where students can experiment, challenge and criticize more openly. Collectively, this is shared by each of the apprentices who participates in this University CoP, which then supports and informs the other workplace CoP to which they individually contribute (see Figure 2).

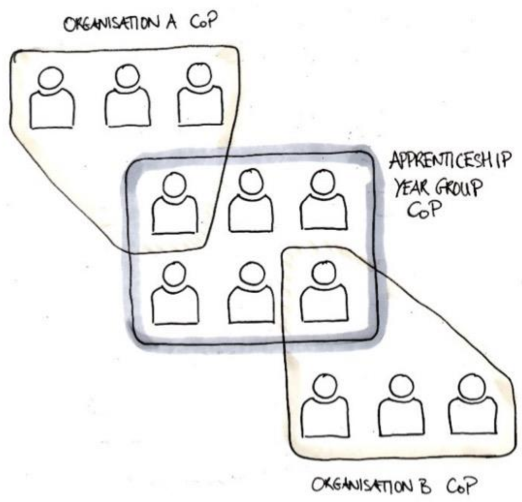

Figure 2: Possible range of Apprentice Communities of Practice (sketch by David Goodman)

Some may view the work-centric community of practice as the priority for aligning two of the apprenticeship **frames – those of reducing the skills gap** and **increasing productivity** - with the interests of the employer. However as discussed below, this perception is not shared by the two apprentices in my sample.

Apprenticeship programme design at the University of Chichester

Programme design at UoC evolved from an existing WBL course. McIver (2017) re-evaluated WBL as a field of study, suggesting pedagogy is being modified, and corresponding changes to curriculum design are leading to a greater 'hybridity' (pg.138) in programme design. Opportunities may exist to reinforce the multi-layered communities of practice within the programme. However, as discussed below, within an apprenticeship programme 'hybridity' is not necessarily straightforward, engagement from employers is low and the programme has to meet the overall apprenticeship 'standard'.

Standards

Apprenticeships have a long tradition in the United Kingdom, (Gospel, 1994, and Steedman, Gospel, & Ryan, 1998), although historically the focus has been on 'manual skills' (Gospel, 1994) rather than on higher level education. The current listing of apprenticeship standard reflects a shift away from 'manual skills' towards higher level skills and the apprentice educator of the 1960s and 1990s would probably not recognise recent standards.

Specifically for the CMDA, the standard sets out a range of criteria which students will have to meet(Institute for Apprenticeships, 2019). This illustrates a high level of specificity, in marked contrast to the 'QAA Benchmark Statement for Business and Management' (QAA, 2015), which presents a more generalised picture of knowledge and understanding under a different set of sub headings (pg.7-8). The creators of the CMDA standard appear to have, at best, ingored the benchmark statement.

Questioning the CMDA standards

There is one immediate challenge here: organisational life is not 'standard', change is a constant and seemingly growing phenomenon (e.g. Grey, 2017), how flexible will these new standards prove to be? The CMDA standard presents a rather binary view of organisational life. Does training someone to do a limited number of things repeatedly over their working lives make a contribution to their lifelong learning, and consequently help them to cope with constant organisational development (The Economist 2017)? Warwick (2018, pg.45) argues against a teaching approach which has '…a pre-determined trail of breadcrumbs…', suggesting instead that we adopt a 'foraging' approach within our classrooms. I think an argument needs to be made for developing this 'skill' rather than ensuring apprentices can, for example, complete a budget spreadsheet.

Three core strands: policy, WBL and standards

This section has very briefly drawn together three strands; policy, WBL and the idea of 'standards', creating a 'space' within which the interviews could take place.

The research approach

Paradigm

I set out with a loose grounded theory methodology, because I did not have a specific hypothesis or ‘know what I was looking for’ (e.g. O'Connor, Carpenter, & Coughlan, 2018), to make sense of a shifting apprenticeship landscape. Given the relative ‘youth’ of degree apprenticeships, there is little existing specific literature. This approach was also partially a response to Government reports (Thornton, et al. 2018 and IFF Research Report, 2017), consisting of broadly quantitative evaluations to specific questions, which I argue do not produce real meaning. Asking if students are ‘satisfied’ does not reveal the detail and depth of impact a degree level qualification is having or could have.

Although grounded theory was the basis, my interviews reflected a phenomenological perspective (Goulding, 2005) They sought to get below surface responses, and consider the symbolism or codes used in responses. Figure 3 sets out the framework, where ‘scrolls’ refer to the visual record taken during the interview.

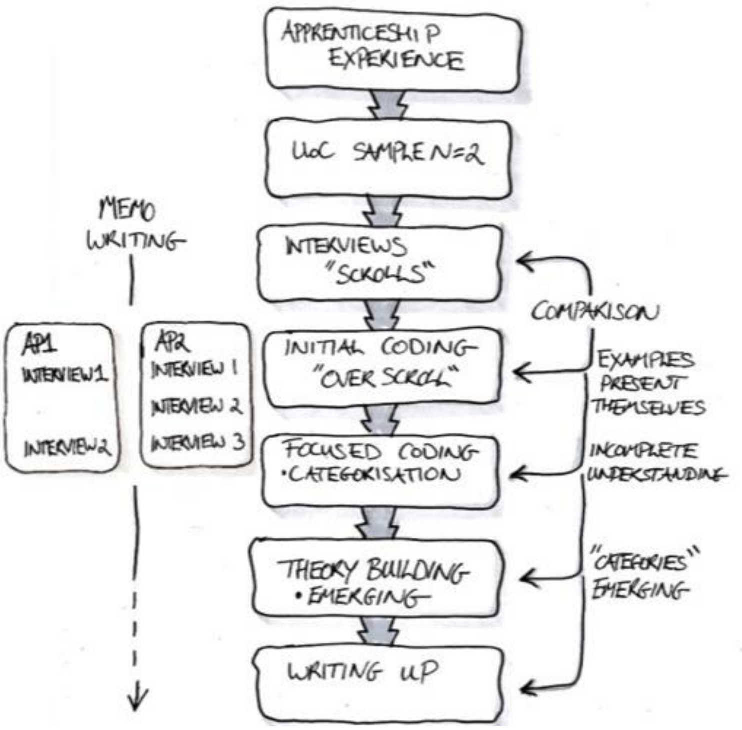

Figure 3: The Research Framework after Charmaz (2014), Goulding (2005), and Locke (2005); sketch by David Goodman

Locke (2005) discusses a plurality in grounded theory and within this project, I acknowledge the looseness of my approach. However, I argue this was situationally appropriate for the context. A limited timeframe and very small sample suggested flexibility rather than a strictly ‘classic’ framework. The classic work (Glaser & Strauss1967) initiated the grounded theory trajectory, but this research adopted Charmaz’s (2014) constructivist grounded theory, because I wanted to acknowledge my subjectiviy resulting from a personal involvement in apprenticeship delivery while constructing and interpreting data.

Sampling, access and ethics

The sample was purposive, information rich, and access was based on convenience within the cohort of UoC apprentices, although small Charmaz, (2014, pg. 108) argues this can contribute to a '…study of lasting significance.'

Specific characteristics of employment within a family business and 'maturity', provided a degree of homogeneity in the sample, enabling me to explore the phenomenon of degree apprenticeship starting from some common ground. These characteristics were chosen because I initially speculated on the importance and likelihood of support from their business', and secondly responding to apprenticeship growth in the 25+ age group as noted above. Research was conducted in line with the [University Research Policy 2018] and ethical approval was obtained on the 19th February 2019.

Data collection, coding and analysis

Individual semi-structured interviews were conducted, conversation was recorded and a visual mind map ('scroll') created (e.g. Figure 4). Buckley & Waring, (2013) suggest diagrams are an underused tool in grounded theory, and this was an attempt to utilise visual thinking to identify themes, connections and build some form of theory. Coding was also undertaken using a visual method (Figure 5), using a colour coding for comments which were either similar, contrasting and/or interesting.

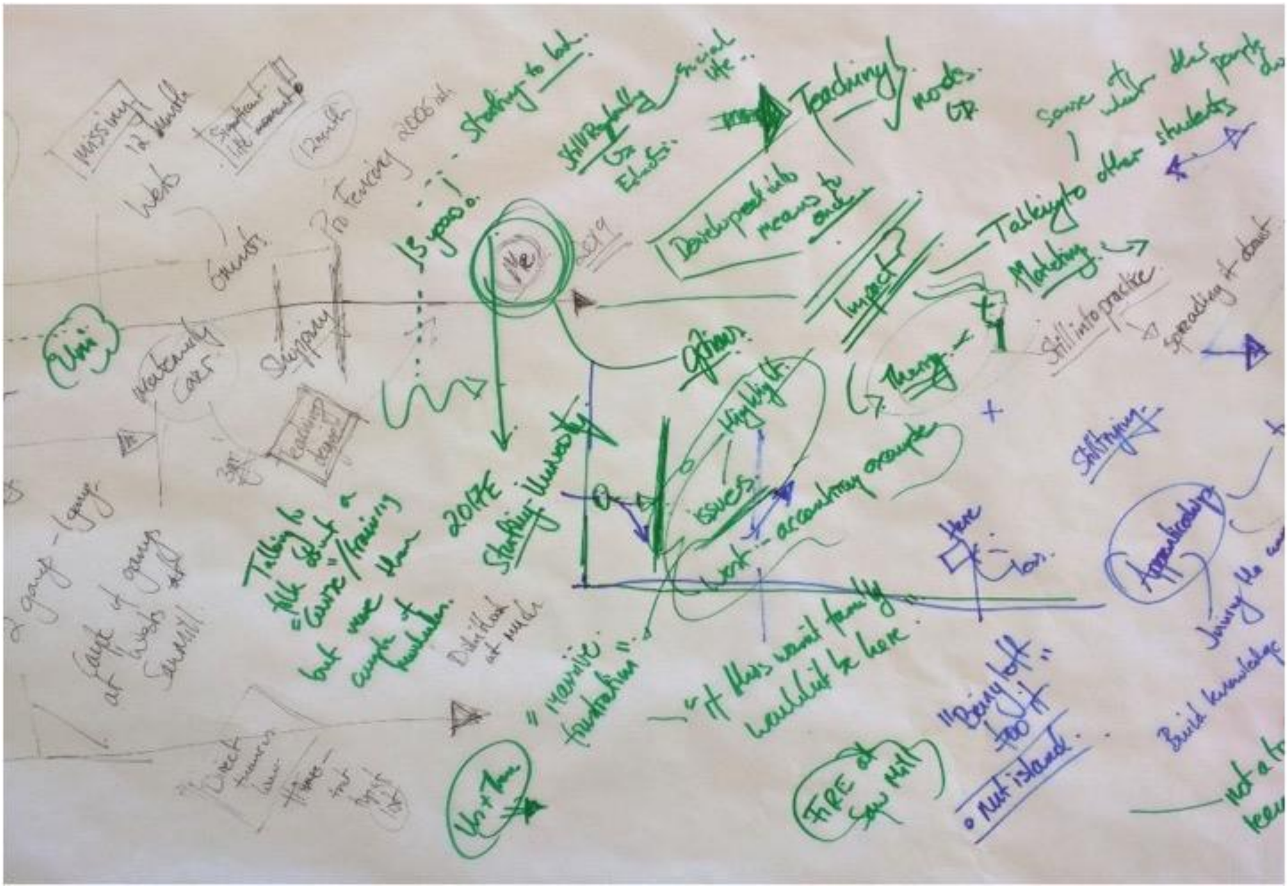

Figure 4: Extract of an Interview Record 'Scroll'

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Apprentice 1 (AP1) was interviewed twice, and Apprentice 2 (AP2) three times. The additional discussion with AP2 was an attempt to clarify some first interview comments which were limited by the workplace location. Following the interviews, researcher memos (Glaser & Strauss, 1967 and Locke, 2005) were written, and open research journal maintained throughout the whole process...

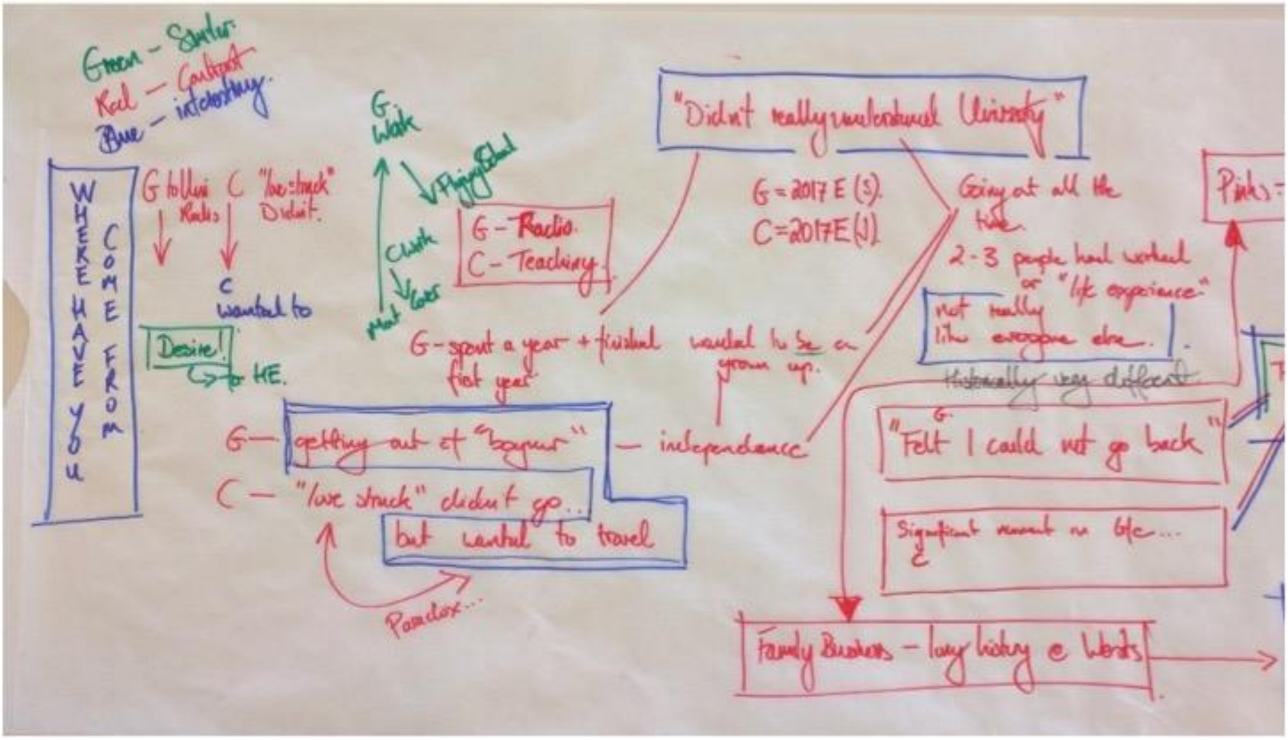

Figure 5: Extract of a Coding 'Over-Scroll'

Limitations of the study

The sample was small and the research restricted itself to specific student context allowing results to focus specifically on a 'type' of student and this restricted generalisability of the research. Locke, (2005) argues Glaser and Strauss did not intend for the researcher to effectively wipe minds, and suggest it is impossible to explore a field of study without some orientation suggesting using 'bracketing' to remove pre-existing theoretical positions and biases. This was attempted here, and generally worked. For example, I am concerned about the terminology associated with the label of 'apprentice', and so I consciously avoided using that term until the interviewees did.

Initial results

Interviews were semi-structured, the first interviews used a time-line discussion starting with getting a sense of 'where they came from', including some discussion about the catalyst for starting a degree, the 'impact' of their current study, and an exploration of what 'the future' might look like.

Where the respondents came from

Their situational history was important to understand if earlier formative experience influenced the decision to undertake the programme and impacted their study. AP1 had started a degree course and studied for one year, but AP2 had no Higher Education experience.

There was little relationship between decisions taken after leaving school and each person's different family business. In AP1's case, it was not yet in existence and AP2 had shown no interest, their initial choice of work after school was a public sector temporary role (six months). Throughout the discussion with AP2, there was a sense of frustration with their work, not uncommon in the workplace, but I was struck by the limited work experience they had with which to contrast the experience.

Having been at University for a year, AP1's starting point was different. But there was a critical issue in the new family business, AP1 stepped into the business and has now worked there ever since.

From these different starting points, the question was now why start a part-time degree?

AP1 wanted '…some sort of ceremony…' and there was a sense that '…status…' was important. AP2 emphasized a sense of '…regret…'. There was little obvious connection to the workplace in terms of needing skills, developing knowledge or in terms of the **frames**, **reducing the skills gap** or **increasing productivity**. Potentially the idea of recognition could be related to **boosting social mobility**, but it was not overtly discussed in the first interview.

Impact of the current study

Both respondents gave a sense of their personal development. In interview 1 I noted the use of the word 'knowledge' and explored this in interview 3 asking about the level of 'skill'. AP2 replied this had 'stayed the same' but stated their level of knowledge had increased. They specifically mentioned a motivational theory which had resonated with them in the context of their team, and this had provided a greater understanding of why individuals behaved in particular ways. They did not make a direct connection to 'skills', and in interview 3, I probed further. AP2 believed this was a consequence of not having the '…freedom to do stuff…' and partially '…not putting myself out there…'. I think this illustrates a sense of having knowledge, but lacking space to apply or implement creates a sense of '…frustration…'.

Both respondents observed interactions between students were important, discussing what each other does and how different organisations work has been useful, both in and outside of the seminar room. This experience highlights the notion that learning can be applied straightway, and critically illustrates the ways in which the student community of practice can inform workplace practice.

Thirty minutes into the first interview with AP1 was the first time the term '…apprentice…' was used, when questioned they saw themselves as on a '…part time degree course…' rather than an apprentice. As the joint business owner (Co-Director), this self-identity is understandable, but also in terms of identity inside and outside of the organization, where they are increasingly the figurehead. This was similar for AP2, they did not perceive themselves as being an apprentice, suggesting the theme of 'status'. When discussing further with AP2, in interview 3, they were critical of lower level apprenticeships, citing their staff undertaking level 2 apprenticeships, '…not learning anything…' implying that they have a lower level of esteem for lower level apprentices.

The future

AP1 was focused on immediate business issues and we did not initially discuss medium- and long-term prospects but their comments contained striking contrasts. One aspect was very 'materialistic', another was an ambition of owning multiple sites where employment opportunities were given to those furthest from employment, a combination of private and social enterprise. At a personal level, they used the word 'recognition' as a part of their motivation to continue and talked about the potential to be a 'Chartered Manager'. The ideas of recognition and status seem connected for AP1 developing the idea that being an 'apprentice' is not in itself important for them.

For AP2 the future was very complex picture full of paradox and tension. Firstly, they '…don't want to feel like this [at work] …' and in contrast '…things are OK, and I stay where I am…'. At the time of the interview, it appeared frustrations recorded earlier were being mitigated by factors outside of the workplace, such as family responsibility. It became clear the degree is not about their workplace, they mentioned teaching, or accountancy and they were '…flirting with being a Special [policeman]…'. The degree is something to '…open up further doors…'. Reflecting traditional professions, I suggested an association with a sense of identity. AP2 partially agreed and although I wondered why being a company director was not considered, AP2 rejected the idea despite the prospect of being able to influence things more directly.

Developing a theoretical position

I wanted to reflect on university apprenticeship within a context of the three **frames** presented earlier. Each **frame** was the focus of subsequent discussions with AP1 (interview 2) and AP2 (interview 3).

Frame 1: Reducing the skills gap

AP1 thought the programme provided skills, however at the start they did not think they needed new skills, saying '…I didn't know what I didn't know…'. AP2 does not see the programme as contributing to reducing their skills gap directly. This could also reflect the idea of '…I didn't know what I didn't know…', but I think this raises questions of different perceptions of knowledge, skills and practice.

Frame 2: Increasing productivity

Prompting a negative reaction from AP1, '…terminology really annoys me…', they suggested some data were simply '…empty figures…'. A shifting policy landscape, changing priorities of using new technology to getting people into work and now productivity seem to cause frustration rather than assist businesses. The frustration was clear, but ironically this policy frame does seem to apply to a business improving productivity through expansion. At an individual level AP2 initially said they '…don't see it…', and added that some of their team doing lower level apprenticeships were '…not learning anything…' suggesting some apprenticeships were having little business impact.

Frame 3: Boosting social mobility

AP1 responded 'What does that actually mean…?' but they referred to an apprentice they had taken on at a lower level which they would not have considered had they not been involved in their own apprenticeship. Here the sense of social mobility is indirectly related to AP1 because of their own experience they are making decisions directly impacting the social mobility of others. AP2 reacted similarly and could not see how it was relevant to them, they would always be able to move up the organisation because '…of my surname…'. However, they undertook the apprenticeship programme to '…do it properly…'.

A provisional theoretical position, and some initial recommendations

Within the limitations of this article, I cannot argue for a distinct generalizable theoretical position on current degree apprenticeship programmes. However, the small sample illuminated some themes within the discussion which begin to 'paint a picture', which I argue is useful for planning further investigation and inquiry.

The first theme is about identity. AP1 and AP2 do not readily see a clear connection between the idea of the 'apprentice' and their university programme. This is in significant contrast with those messages from the policy organisations, the Institute for Apprenticeships and Education and the Skills Funding Agency, where recent communications insisted the term 'student' is not used, and providers are only to talk about 'apprentices'.

Growth in apprenticeships is not coming from age groups under twenty-five years old. I argue the term 'apprentice' is not one that clearly resonates with older people. As Fuller & Unwin (1998) observed, an apprenticeship provides a form of socialisation, but this does not apply in this study. Although challenges exist, AP1 and AP2 are socialised in work and in life. At UoC seventy five percent of the small CMDA apprentice cohort are over twenty five years old and we should reflect on identity within the programme and workplace. I cannot directly state this is a barrier for participation from SMEs, but for some existing employees in this age bracket, this may prevent them from undertaking the programme. McEwan (2019) highlights challenges in this area, and further data needs to be collected at a more granular level to explore issues of SME participation.

Secondly, I think there are **questions about the perceived impact the programme is having for both the individual and their employer**. As noted, data collected so far focus on 'satisfaction'. As programmes start to send candidates to End Point Assessment (EPA), success rates will be added. But what about the short, medium- and long-term impact apprentices have in organisations? I think this can be partially related to the discussions about knowledge and skill, as it is difficult to measure explicitly how increasing either has influenced or impacted an organisation. As AP2 articulated, there may be problems arising from a lack of opportunity or the space to apply learning in their situation. But currently, it is not clear whether AP1 and AP2 see or understand the differences between knowledge and skill, or how to demonstrate that they meet the criteria of the standard. Simply recording success rates will not sufficiently add to the body of knowledge of the impact that degree apprenticeships have on individuals. Further longitudinal work is required to understand these programmes.

Finally, at a wider policy level, there are **issues with the overall objectives of an apprenticeship**. Neither respondent really accepted the three '**frames**'. There were criticisms of their language and intentions. It could be argued that both AP1 and AP2 reflected these objectives in a tangential sense. They were gaining knowledge (or skills); AP1's business is becoming more productive, and while their own social mobility was not directly increasing, others in their organisations was. From an organisational point of view, I have not asked their sponsors to provide a view, but the views of AP1 and AP2 do strike me as important, because of their relative seniority in their organisations. If this leads them to reinforce a less positive view of the programme, where does work-based learning go next? Wolf (2015, pg.19) notes a decrease in employees attending training outside their workplace. However, while her proposal for a levy funded apprenticeship scheme may have been intended to halt this trend, data from Figures 1 & 2 suggest that it may not be successful. I have a sense that talk of 'apprenticeship' has 'bracketed out' other forms of work-based learning, and that further research on programme levels and WBL student numbers is urgently required.

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About David Goodman

I am Programme Coordinator for the Chartered Manager Degree Apprenticeship Programme (BA (Hons) Management). I teach a wide spectrum of Leadership and Management topics but in particular: leadership, team and group working, organisational behaviour, change management, creativity and innovation. I use problem-based approaches with students and try to use 'live' projects within teaching. These projects provide students an educational challenge in a 'real' context reflecting my personal experience and research interest in work-based learning.

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Introducing university staff to the language and culture of Chinese students

Heather Trencher

Introduction

When the university was faced with the prospect of a larger intake of Chinese students for the next academic year, I was asked in May 2019 to prepare a CPD session for staff to introduce them to Mandarin, which is the most widely-spoken official language in a large, multilingual and populous country. The following is an outline of how I prepared and conducted the session. This session would also be useful for anyone going to China for the first time for business or pleasure.

Keywords: linguistic awareness, pinyin, characters, grammar

Designing the Session

As a linguist, I am fascinated by the differences between the English and Chinese languages. But soon I realised that merely describing the differences would be neither engaging nor particularly relevant. For example, when considering syntactic features. Wang et al (2013) cited the following:-

> "Wang Yin, the famous professor, once said that some linguists …. compare English structure as "grape structure", for the trunk of the grape is very short with many fruit attached on it to form very long sentences. Different from that, the Chinese sentences are shorter with phrases in sequential order by themselves just like the bamboo joints. So Chinese is called "bamboo structure". "(Hu Wenzhong, 1999)

Although Chinese and English have the same SVO (Subject-Verb-Object) word order. Chinese sentences go from a general concept to the most specific.

I reflected on my own experience as a student of Mandarin, and decided to focus on some of the aspects I had found most interesting. The aspects I had found rewarding on my own personal journey were when I was able to communicate with others in Mandarin Chinese and also when I started to understand how Chinese characters were formed and how the written language related to the spoken language. As a result of this I decided on four objectives arising from these observations.

Four design objectives

1. Adopt an interactive approach
   The first observation was that it is far better to use an interactive approach which allows the audience to feel what it is like working in the two languages, so objective one was to make the session interactive.

2. Encourage active participation
   The second observation was that by the end of the session it is necessary to feel you have learnt something and are able to hold a short conversation, so objective two was that the participants should have a short conversation.

3. Focus on relevant content
   The third observation is to make the content relevant to the audience, so objective three was to introduce language that would be useful in an everyday context if meeting a business contact in China or booking into a hotel.

4. Evaluate the effects of this linguistic awareness on staff-student relationships
   The fourth observation was how this awareness might impact interaction with Chinese students, so objective four was to evaluate how this renewed awareness might impact the relationships staff are able to develop with their Chinese students.

Image 1: Chinese students at the University of Chichester celebrating the end of their Business English Course

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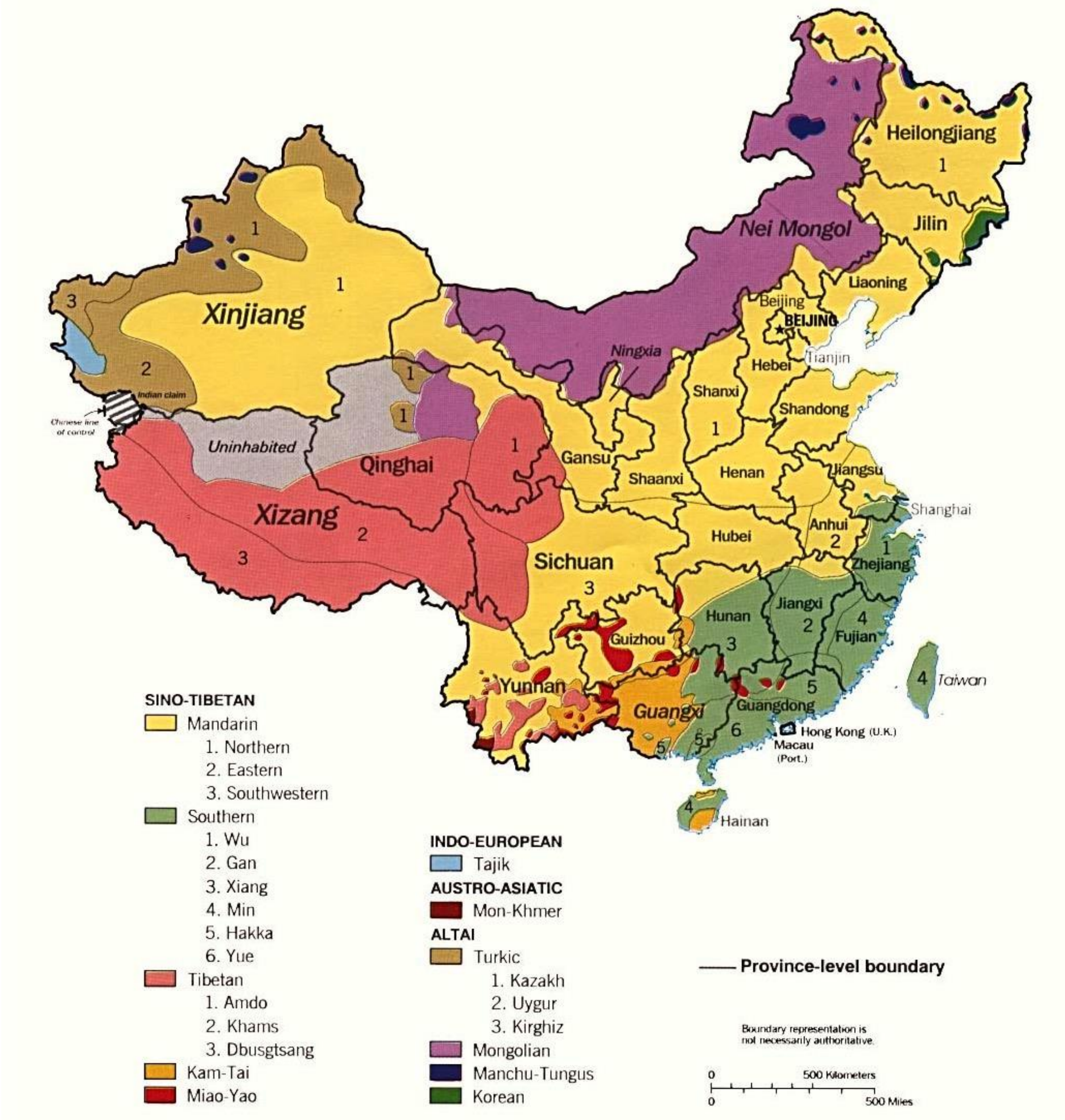
With these four objectives in mind the session was designed around the following eight aspects of the Mandarin language,

- Facts and Figures
- Tones
- Characters and Pinyin
- Grammar
- Greetings
- Numbers
- Months
- Days of the week

In the following pages, I illustrate briefly how I introduced each of those aspects.

Facts and Figures

Fig. 1: Map Showing Chinese Linguistic Groups



U.S. Central Intelligence Agency - From the Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection: http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/middle_east_and_asia/china_ling_90.jpg Additional source - Library of Congress collection: https://www.loc.gov/item/90686002/

In the first part, the objective was to create an awareness that not all Chinese students may understand each other in their first language. In fact many schools in China still give classes in the local language and Mandarin is studied like a foreign language (Greenwood, E., 2007). There are three main languages in China: Mandarin, Shanghaiese and Cantonese. The population of China is approximately 1.6 billion people. The majority speak Mandarin as a first language, but 91 million people speak Shanghaiese and 55 million people speak Cantonese (Greenwood, E., 2007). China also has over 80 different dialects, so although the characters used to write Mandarin are the same, they may be pronounced differently in different parts of China.

Mandarin is a tonal language. There are four tones in Mandarin.

- 1st Tone – high level as in mā - *mother*
- 2nd tone – rising as in má - *hemp*
- 3rd tone – falling then rising as in mă - *horse*
- 4th tone – falling as in mà - *scold*

There are more tonal languages in the world than non-tonal languages. Cantonese has eight tones.

Having introduced these facts and figures, I encouraged participants to practise saying the tones by repetition.

Characters and Pinyin

A character is a series of mini-pictures that tell you the meaning of the word. Here are two examples. The first is the character for 'cat' and the second is the pinyin version of the word for 'cat' in Chinese Māo.

Source: trainchinese.com

Image: Paxabay.com

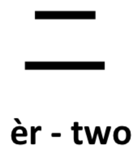
Pinyin is a phonetic system in roman letters to aid pronunciation. It has been used in China since 1958.

There are four character types: pictographs, ideographs, phonographs and combinations of characters.

1. Pictographs look like the object they describe, e.g.:

Source: trainchinese.com

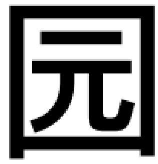
2. Ideographs represent an idea, e.g.:



Source: trainchinese.com

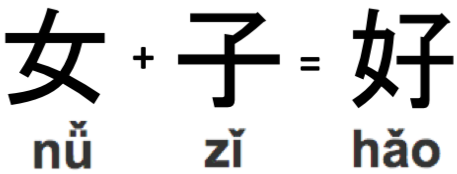
3. Phonographs - Part of the character gives the sound/pronunciation whilst another part gives the meaning.

For example in the character **yuán** – meaning garden, the central part of the character gives the pronunciation and when enclosed by four sides the character means garden.



Source: trainchinese.com

4. Putting characters together to make a new character, e.g.: Woman - nǔ - and child - zǐ - together make good - hǎo.



Source: trainchinese.com

Participants in the class then practised writing the character for ‘good’ - hǎo

Grammar

Two interesting facts about Chinese are that:

1. There are no different tenses
2. There are no plural endings

Here are some examples:-

The verb does not change

- shi – to be
- Wǒ shi – I am
- Nǐ shi – You are
- Tā shi – He/She is

There are no verb tenses

- Wǒ míingtiaān qu - I will go tomorrow
- Wǒ zuotiān qu le - I went yesterday

Chinese uses a combination of adverbials, context and word order to express time.

This can lead to confusion amongst learners (Jung Chang, 2001)

No singular and plural – Ma xihuan chi pingguo - Horse like eat apple

Greetings

- Nǐ hǎo - Hello
- Nǐ hǎo – Hello
- Nǐ hǎo ma? – How are you
- Wǒ hěn hǎo.- I'm very well.

Participants practised their conversation in pairs.

Hello Kitty – Drawing by Daniel Howard
dannyman.toldme.com Creative Commons

The picture of 'Hello Kitty' was used so that participants could see the character for 'hao' – good and the character for 'māo' – cat, which had been introduced previously. They were then able to identify the character for 'nǐ' – you and 'mǐ' – the diminutive marker.

They then added to the conversation by asking each other's names.

- Nǐ jiào shénme? - What's your name?
- Wǒ jiào ………… - I'm called
- Finally they said goodbye to each other.
- Zàijiàn! – Goodbye
- Zàijiàn! - Goodbye

Numbers

Next, participants were introduced to the numbers and quickly realised how logical they were and how easy it was to combine them with other words to make the days of the week and the months of the year.

1 – yī	6 – liù	12 – shièr
2 –èr	7 – qī	20 – èrshi
3 – sān	8 – bā	22 – èrshièr
4 – sì	9 – jiǔ	100 – yībāi
5 - wǔ	10 -shí	1000 - qiān

Participants were given a list of numbers and had to work out from the above how to say them in Mandarin. This was a paired task. Numbers could then be practised interactively using dice.

With a little more information they were able to work out the days of the week and the months of the year themselves.

- Xīngqīyī – Monday
- Yīyuè – January
- One exception xīngqitiān – Sunday

This work was again undertaken in pairs. It was a sociable activity and the participants supported each other when working out the answers and encouraged each other to say the words.

Image 2: Paired speaking activity.

With additional information some participants were then able to write down and say their date of birth.

- Jiuyǜè sihào - September 4th (days)
- èrlínglinqinián – 2007 (years)

This task clearly demonstrated how just a little knowledge of Mandarin can be very powerful and a useful asset.

Impact of awareness on staff interaction with Chinese students

The following points linked to the aspects of Mandarin learnt during the session.

Common errors Chinese students make

- Plurals – There are often frequent errors of agreement between nouns and verbs.
- Tenses – as discussed verbs in Mandarin do not change so tense is inferred from context, adverbials and word order.

- Pronunciation - /v/ is absent from most Chinese dialects. There is no distinction between the sounds /p/and /b/, /t/ and /d/, /k/ and /g/. People from the south of China find it difficult to distinguish /l/ and /r/. According to Jung Chang (2001). There are many vowel sounds in English which have no equivalent in Chinese. He also states that many Chinese dialects do not have the sound /n/.

Suggestions

- Be clear with times – use the words 'tomorrow', 'yesterday', 'next week', 'last week'.
- Alphabetical order – many Chinese names begin with W, X, Y and Z. They are all at the end of the alphabet so be mindful when organising activities.Students' reading speed in English may be slower than home students, so it is useful to allow students access to reading passages before the class so that they can prepare.
- If a video or long listening passage is to be used in class allow student access on MOODLE before the class so that students can listen to it in advance.
- Allow time for students to answer. They need time to process the information.

After completing the tasks and learning a little about Mandarin, it was easier for participants to appreciate some of the language difficulties Chinese students are faced with.

The session was well received and the four objectives were met. Everyone had a short conversation, the session was interactive, the content was relevant both in terms of the teaching context and the participants own lives and the session ended with some practical suggestions to use when planning lectures and seminars for mixed groups with Chinese students.

Acknowledgements

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Three language challenges for Chinese-speaking students at a UK University

Sue Lavender

Language use is both the most obvious and most fundamental challenge facing many non-first English language students in UK Higher Education. As Internationalisation of Higher Education is increasingly core to university business (Egron-Polak, 2015) so the challenge is shared by growing numbers of students and those who work with them. This article uses student self-report and classroom observations to examine three interrelated language perspectives: UK English, academic English and English language-based conceptualism for students from China at a UK university. The paper concludes with students' reflections on partnership strategies to support both themselves and those who work with them.

Key words

International students, language, English-speaking, non first language user, UK higher education, university

Introduction: the importance of language in Higher Education

Human societies and institutions are underpinned by language. Universities, in particular, are all about language. Knowledge is conveyed, acquired, discussed and assessed principally via language which is often used in specialised ways. Thus, to thrive in the university environment, most students need to acquire new language and become aware of themselves as *freshers*, members of *cohorts* who need to produce *dissertations* while avoiding *plagiarism* and *collusion.*

The challenge is particularly acute for students entering UK HE with English as their second or subsequent language. A recent study (Hartshorne: 2018) suggests the average monolingual user takes 30 years to achieve their highest level of proficiency in one language. This means the university journey for non-first language students, who need to undertake their studies with significantly less exposure, can be especially challenging.

Brown (2009) and Hawkes (2012) both report on the language journey of international students at UK universities and point to the significance of the initial settling-in point. Hawkes (ibid.) studies (as in diagram 1 below) how initial linguistic inadequacy can easily lead to short-term coping strategies and thus lack of ongoing adjustment to the new environment.

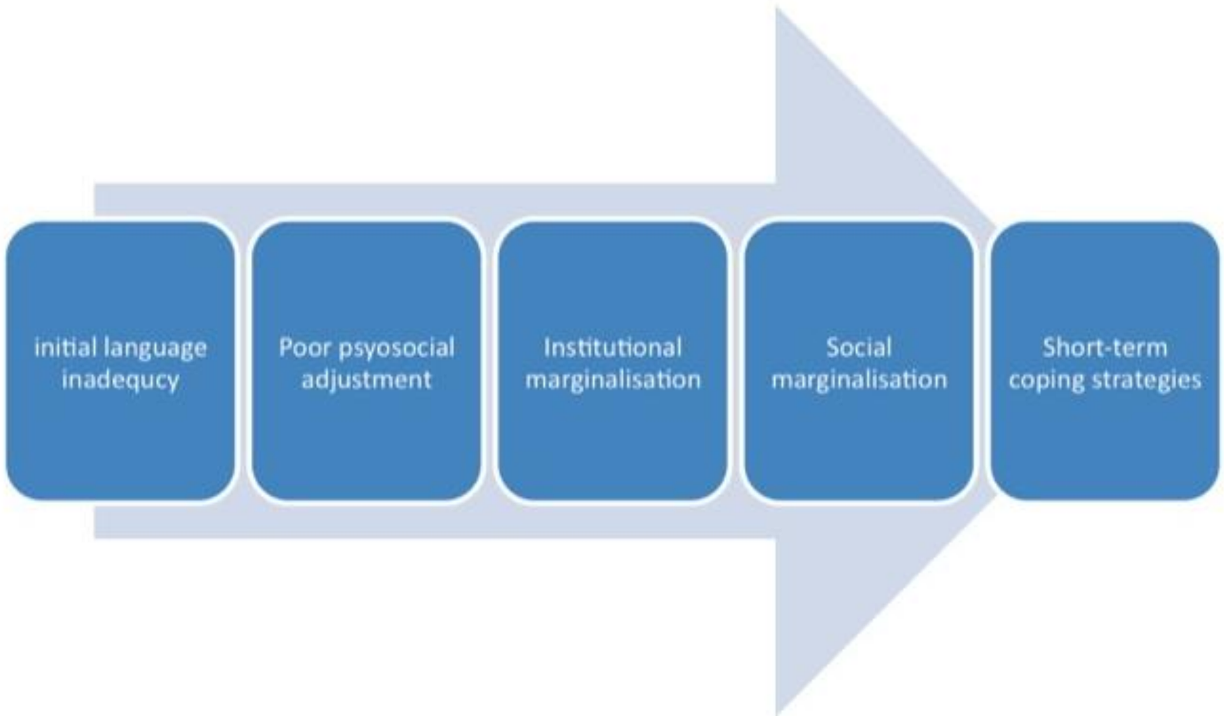

Diagram 1: impacts of initial language inadequacies on international students in UK universities: after Hawkes: 2012)

This article adopts a similar view that adequate language use underpins success at university and that the initial stage of the journey is crucial. The initial stage is the point when students' language skills are at their weakest and when there is, ironically, most to take on board. Everything, including diet, climate, time zone, culture and routines can be new. Students may also be feeling shocked and unsettled, perhaps emotionally insecure, as well as tired and missing those they usually rely on.

Method

This study explores the language experiences of 19 students from China studying on final year undergraduate 'Top-up' programmes at the University of Chichester. The students are selected, because challenges are intense: they have only eight months from arrival in the UK to accustom themselves and complete their undergraduate studies in business subjects. In China, they have typically studied English as a subject at secondary school and as a minor component of a two or three-year undergraduate programme, but at Chichester, this is usually the first time they have undertaken English medium studies. Data were collected over an eight-month period and are based on semi-structured interviews, short in-class experiments, classroom observations as well as student journals and written reflections.

The paper begins by establishing the initial 'operational' level of their English and explores their language journey as they move through three interrelated aspects of language challenge. These are set out in the model below.

Model of three language challenges

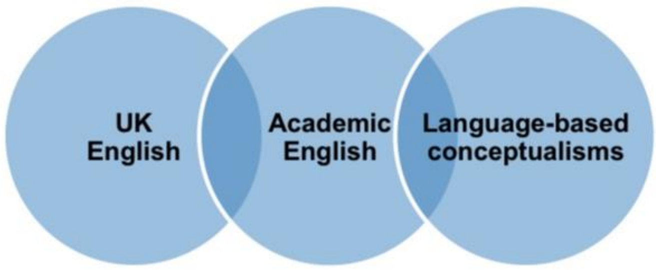

Diagram 2: three interrelated aspects of language challenge

The research indicates that students need and develop awareness of each aspect, with a sense they progress from awareness of local UK English to conceptualisms during the period studied. The data are therefore presented and discussed in terms of the three aspects. Each section begins with a sample text (adapted from a student programme handbook) to simulate, for a fluent user of UK English, both the students' likely overall comprehension level along with specific processing difficulties relating to each aspect. The challenges are then explored through the data with examples chosen to illuminate each aspect.

The descriptor below (Council of Europe framework B2 level) indicates the minimum language threshold competence level for these students at the beginning of their programme.

> Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.

UK English: 'I'm not chuffed about Brexit!'

> Text A: UK English
>
> "In the unlikely case of a 911 please locate immediately to the 'Big-Box' and report to docents."

Text A illustrates 'localisms', in this case uses of American English such as *911* (an emergency), *Big-Box* (a type of shop) *docents* (support teachers) which may be unfamiliar to UK users of English, but upon which full comprehension of the text depends. Comprehension of 'localisms' is often essential, and they are one of the first features noted by students in interviews and journals where they express particular initial challenges around items specific to UK English. Many report having previously learned American or more generalised ELF (English as a Lingua Franca: Seidlhofer: 2011). Examples of particular 'localised' challenges cited are *rubber* for eraser, *lift* for elevator, *mobile* for cell (phone) and *loo* for toilet. They report issues with comprehending other items particular to UK English such as *mate, dodgy* and *chuffed* (also cited by Clark: 2017), along with the recent coinage *Brexit*. They also indicate confusion around extended (polysemic) UK usages of words such as the use of *cheers* for 'thanks' and *hiya* for 'hi'.

Academic English: 'How many Moodles do I have this seminar?'

> Text B: Academic English
>
> "The comb of business is relt upon the yiation and creativeness of its employees. Our BA (Hons) Business Studies Programme is about tiabling you to requike the skills and experience necessary to whelm in a lauking business nest. A business studies graduing anka might typically expect to work hupin a commert place."

Journals indicate all students soon become aware of particular challenges of academic English. Text B exemplifies some of these demands. They consist of unfamiliar words such as *yiation* and *anka* along with unfamiliar uses of seemingly familiar lexical items such as *commert* and *graduing*. There are also familiar lexical items which initially seem out of place in the text such as *comb* and *nest.* The reader probably concludes their meanings are related to their already-known meanings, but are likely (polysemic) extensions of them (i.e. they display a related meaning which can normally only be interpreted in the context of use). Such polysemic extensions are particularly common in academic texts (Hudson 1984).

Polysemic use within academic English is potentially confusing for all new students, but poses specific challenges for those for whom English is not a first language because, as students point out, if searched in generalist dictionaries, the non-academic meaning appears first. For example, in the Oxford English-Chinese dictionary (2011) *field* is 'a piece of land used for animals or crops'. Students need to recognise, for instance, that subjects are *fields* or *disciplines*; courses have *modules*; *populations* can be people in studies as well as geographical areas; *programmes* are not only on televisions; *extensions* are not always on buildings; *credit* can relate as much to assessments as to payment cards and an *appendix* is not always a human body part.

In addition, not only are terms new, but they are also very easily confused. Student journals highlight similar sounding pairs such as *semester* and *seminar*, *module* and *Moodle*, *assessment* and *assignment*. One student remembers writing an email to ask '*How many Moodles do I have this seminar?'*

Universities often use a large number of alphabetisms, acronyms and other abbreviations. Several students mention confusion with unfamiliar alphabetisms such as *BA, MA, HE, NHS* and *PTO* along with acronyms relating to their particular university such as MAF (Module Assessment Feedback) and SIZ (Student Information Zone). Also reported of concern are unfamiliar symbols such as Roman numerals, which some assume to have meanings distinct from other numerals, along with (ampersand) *&,* as well as the use of XXX at the end of emails.

Academic discourse also often uses different terms to refer to the same concept. Papers can be *distributed* or *handed out*, tutors set *tasks* or *assignments,* problems can be *encountered* or *come across,* research can be *conducted* or *carried out*. In each pair, one of the terms tends to have less formality, whilst the other is more formal and often Latinate in its origins. This means that one term is more often used in writing and the other in speech. Hence a Handbook can include '*programme submission dates*' whilst the tutor talks about '*course hand-in dates*'. It can be difficult for students to know that these referents are the same and some report trying to work out non-existent differences; *'I asked tutor about time for submission and time for hand-in and tutor seemed not understand my meaning.'*

The ordering and presentation of concepts at sentence level is also crucial. For example, commonly used concessives such as '*although*' and '*unless*' present particular challenges. In Text B above the concessive '*anka*' is crucial to understanding as it could be interpreted in context as 'therefore' or 'however'. Ten students participated in an experimental check of comprehension of concessives. All showed better understanding of A below than B. This is likely to be because salient information is fronted, resulting in lower memory load. Notably, all the students understood the more efficient version C without problems.

A. You don't need a tutorial unless you have problems.

B. Unless you have problems you don't need a tutorial.

C. You need a tutorial if you have problems.

In the same comprehension experiment, students were also given three items selected from tutor assessment feedback and asked to select the most likely intended interpretation for each item. The sentences appear below with bracketed numbers indicating the number of respondents choosing each interpretation. The examples illustrate the importance of the starting point of a phrase, as this tends to establish the direction of comprehension.

A. Should you need help understanding the task instructions please contact me.

B. Contact your tutor only if or when you need help (5)

C. You must contact your tutor (5)

A. Since you have read only Baidu your understanding here is a little limited.

B. Your understanding is limited because you only refer to Baidu (you need to read more) (6)

C. Your understanding has been limited from the time you read Baidu (it has given you a wrong idea) (4)

A. It is interesting to note that your references are all from Baidu …

B. Your marker feels positively about Baidu (4)

C. Your marker feels negatively about Baidu (6)

Students also report the structuring and presentation of information as having considerable impact on their comprehension. Texts with overt 'external' structures, e.g. those with titles, headings and numbered or bulleted lists etc. are reported as easier to navigate and understand than text blocks. Students also note that flowcharts, diagrams and other visual supports aid their comprehension. Thus A below is reported as much more accessible than B.

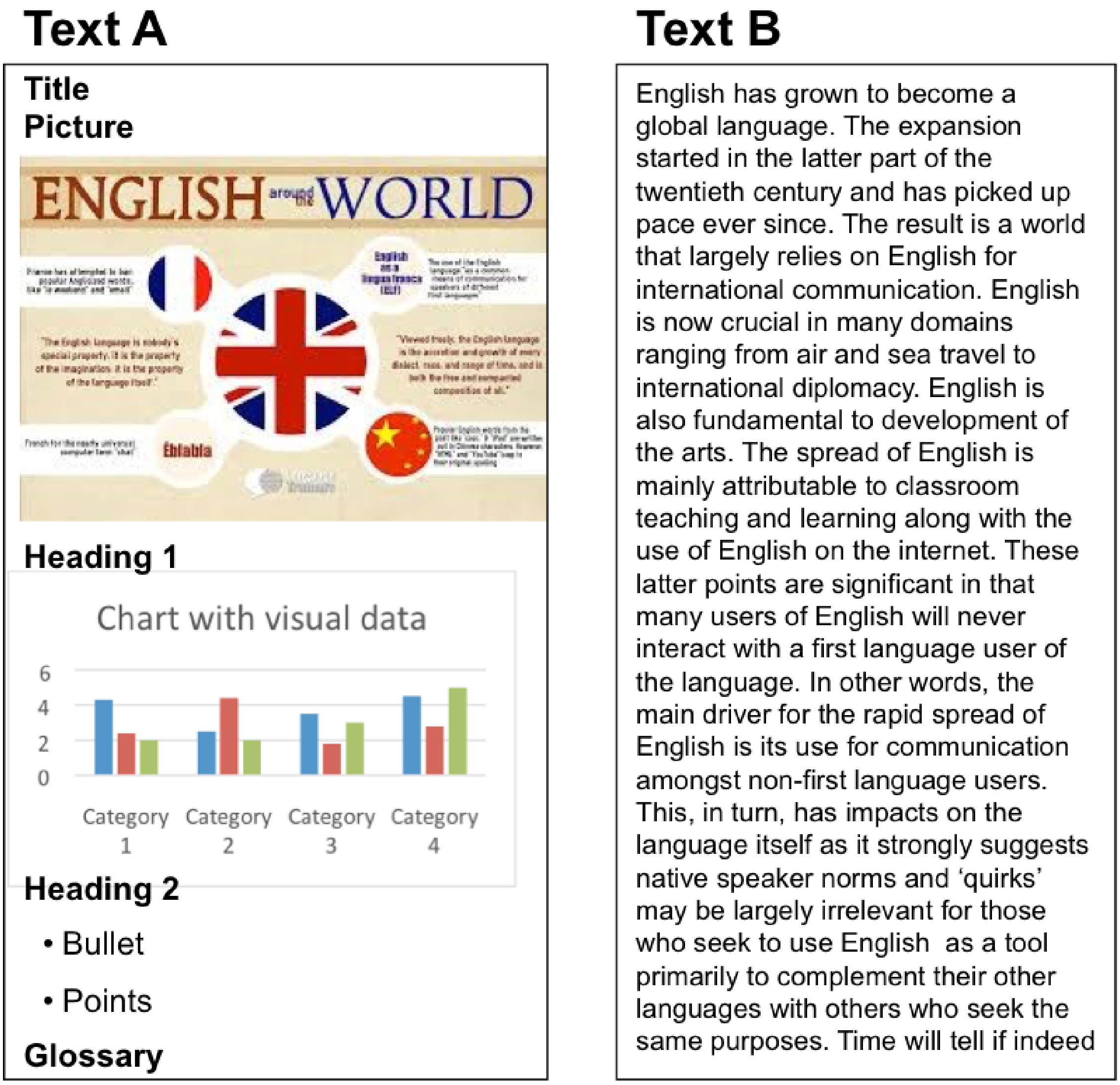

Diagram 3: two ways of presenting written information

Language-based conceptualisms: 'Your route to the top?'

Text C: language-based conceptualisms

"On this Programme you will shell an egg of white topics until you cup yolk."

Text C exemplifies the third aspect: language-based conceptualisms. The challenge is exemplified in the egg metaphor. Metaphors are common is most forms of human discourse (Lakoff & Johnson 1980); (Sperber & Wilson 1995). The reader here is probably unfamiliar with ways in which the programme is likened to an egg. However, as the text is taken from a programme handbook, the metaphor is likely to be known to those familiar with this language culture (i.e. rather than one devised by the author of the handbook). The example illustrates how language cultures frame concepts in ways that may vary from culture to culture (Boroditsky: 2001). Linguistic usage may also then influence the way cultures view things; (Gumperz & Levinson: 1996). The language journey for non-first language users is thus one of learning to see things in terms of the language culture which expresses them.

Similar metaphorical constructs are common in English medium universities. For example, learning is widely seen as a journey on which students take *routes* and *pathways*, and tutors ensure they are '*on track*'. Education is viewed as an 'enrichment' in which students *earn* or *gain* credit and *invest* their time. Academia is also an edifice in which students begin at *foundation* and *progress* through *levels* via *modules*. On the way, they need to *construct*, *build* and *deconstruct* and *attack* arguments. (For a detailed account see Henrikson 2013.) Some or all of these concepts may be unfamiliar to those new to the host language culture.

Only some of the students in the sample report on conceptual challenges, but once they become aware of them, they comment frequently. The first example is from classroom observation and shows how a particular metaphor blocks communication. A student was told '*your project shows an interesting germ of an idea*'. In a later interview, she explained she was shocked by the tutor's comment. At first she thought she could not understand it and then her interpretation was negative. She associated the word *germ* with dirt and bacteria and so felt the tutor had insulted her work. A further example comes from a student journal.

> 'Tutor say 'What does the text say about …?' I am misunderstand because I think have a listening exercise because 'say' for me means I must listen'.

Potential misinterpretations of metaphor were also tested in a classroom experiment. Students were asked to offer likely interpretations of the following metaphors (all used during classroom observations). Individual explanations follow each metaphor.

> A dead-end job: 'could be where life is in danger, perhaps a fire-fighter'.
>
> To float an idea: 'let it to go away, don't care about it anymore'.
>
> The economy has mushroomed: 'the economy grows in the dark, so I think maybe something illegal'.
>
> A raft of ideas: 'many ideas, but all weak and not good'.
>
> I'm at sea with this subject: 'it's like your dream subject' or, conversely 'it's a stupid subject because it is wet, like soggy'.

It is clear from the above examples that students, having understood the lexis, rely on their own cultural interpretations thus sometimes construing meanings different from those intended. In this way, metaphorical language is often reported as leading to miscommunication.

The final point about language concepts relates to use of '*you*' which, in English, can have a singular or plural referent. 'When teacher say '*how are you?*' to class, how I should reply? What is '*you*'?' This chimes with a recent Guardian article in which Guo (2017) comments:

'The habitual use of 'I' requires thinking of yourself as a separate entity in society. But in China no one is a separate entity.'

As one student in the current study explains, the difficulty of being critically evaluative in English relies not just upon needing to take a stance between two or more apparently conflicting ideas, but having to do so alone and in a second language;

> 'I know I should be critical, of course I understand this meaning, but for we Chinese I think this is uncomfortable. To say I think when others students hear me is not comfortable and maybe I will be very wrong because I do not know well what can I say'.

A conclusion and ten suggestions

The data show students encountering challenges around each of the three aspects shown in Diagram 2 above, i.e. UK English, academic English and language-based 'conceptualisms'. All students comment on aspects one and two, and some students move to show awareness of three. The data also show unfamiliarity with any of the aspects as having four significant impacts.

- Slowing of processing whilst the intended meaning is assessed;
- Diversion of attention from the message to the form of the message;
- Complete blocking of comprehension;
- Comprehension is assumed, but the reader/listener takes something different from the message from what is intended, sometimes without anyone realising a different interpretation has been made. (The latter can, of course, occur in any communication, but appears more likely when comprehension relies on interpretation of language which has culturally embedded conventions.)

The following 10 suggestions and observations for dealing with the aspects also emerge from the data.

1. Students see their UK university as needing to be aware of their language challenges and equipping them to best deal with them. A key finding, from the data, is that students are aware of a strong sense of partnership in which the university is responsible for awareness-raising and passing on information, rather than removing all challenges: '*tutors can note difficulties and solutions and to help us overcome*'. Part of this process is for university staff to be aware of and to pass on how previous cohorts have coped with similar challenges.
2. Students see themselves as temporary guests to UK English 'localisms'. They usually aim to become bilingual users of English as a Lingua Franca, (ELF). This implies a form of English shaped by its use in intercultural communication rather than by UK native-speaker norms; (Hülmbauer, Cornelia et al: 2008).
3. Texts and information should be as accessible as possible, i.e. without alphabetisms etc. and preferably presented as bulleted lists or diagrams. Concessives and other similar 'linking words' should be simple and used at the beginning of phrases. Materials also need to be available in advance of taught sessions, so students are able to study them and, if helpful, put them through a translation service such as *Google Translate*. It is helpful to provide information in both spoken and written formats.
4. Tutors need to be aware of the memory load on students as they navigate both new language and new ideas. Regular tutor-led content reviews encourage active use of key terms and so clarify them and assist the memory load.

5. Glossaries are helpful. These should include commonly used academic language, specific technical terms, common alphabetisms including institutional abbreviations, written and spoken near synonyms and commonly used words with polysemic academic extensions. Glossaries can be drawn up progressively by students themselves and displayed on teaching materials etc. (See the short glossary below as an example).
6. Tutor introduction and integration of websites such as *Anki* (qv) can promote learning of essential lexis. Advice on lexical memory training is also helpful.
7. Permitted use of mobile phones and/or student-student communication in class is efficient when specific language blocks communication.
8. Tutors and students need awareness of the potentials and pitfalls of web-based translation services, including the advantages of double translation (i.e. translating a text and then reverse translating).
9. Those working with international students, throughout the university community, need to be mindful of and point out culturally-based conceptualisms, including metaphors, particularly those used in extended form.
10. Clear contextual clues on the meaning of 'you' should be provided. Students note they find helpful activities which scaffold them towards giving opinions, which open tutor-student dialogue on challenges and which allow them to work in groups to prepare critical evaluation: '*Not I can't do, just I unsure first what tutor wanted. So better if we and tutor can discuss.'*

Glossary of terms used

Academic English	Genres of English used in academia e.g. the written language of research reports and the spoken language of lectures: sometimes referred to as EAP: English for academic purposes.
English as a Lingua Franca	English used for global communication between users who are not first language users. These forms of English may not need to obey the norms used by first language users.
English as an international language	English as a global mode of communication. There can be many forms of international English depending on the needs and contexts of the users.
Metaphor	A comparison between two concepts which are not similar in all respects but which share a common feature.
Polysemy	The capacity for a language item, e.g. a word, to mean more than one thing. The meanings are often related, but the intended meaning can usually only be deciphered in a particular context.

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Teaching language learners in mini groups:

an experiment with blended learning

Jo Blackwell

Keywords

language learners, mini groups, blended learning, flipped classroom, Japanese students, Moodle forum

The context

Community is a word you often hear at the University of Chichester, not least in International English where, according to the 2020 Undergraduate Prospectus, "*Our international students tell us they love studying here because of our friendly and supportive community*" (p187). We promise "*You will develop close working relationships with your lecturers and fellow students and you will be taught in small groups*" (p191). In some programmes, 'small' may mean a group of 14 students; in others, perhaps just a handful.

It seems to me that a lot is written about teaching large groups (e.g. Scrivener, 2005:331) - managing and dividing them, interaction and behaviour in them, the stress of teaching them - and there is plenty of material on teaching one-to-one – the intensity and flexibility of this "*special teaching context*" (Harmer, 2007:122). Yet I have come across little on teaching very small groups.

Some thoughts on mini groups

According to Exley and Dennick (2004:2), "*the optimum size for small group teaching, in general, is between five and eight per group*". In their article *Teaching Mini Groups*, Moore and Kot (2018) do not define the size of their 'mini group', but for the purpose of this particular 'mini' project, it is just four students.

With both pros and cons, one-to-one teaching is "*teaching at its most distilled*" (Meddings & Thornbury, 2009:92). Mini groups certainly share some of the advantages of one-to-one teaching; perhaps the most obvious is the possibility of tailored teaching, in which real and ongoing needs analyses are undertaken and incorporated into a made-to-measure syllabus, increasing motivation as *"Learners may believe they are luckier to be in a smaller group […] and have higher expectations of more focused teacher input and a more negotiated, individualised programme"* (Moore & Kot, 2018).

One of the drawbacks is that a mini group is likely to be less varied. According to Exley and Dennick (2004:2), *"when group membership falls below five, the diversity and variety of interpersonal interaction diminishes"*. Harmer (2007:123) highlights another disadvantage in common with one-to-one teaching: it is that *"the dynamic of a crowded classroom is missing".* This has made me reconsider my own views on classroom rapport and dynamics.

> "For magic to transpire in the language classroom, you need a healthy and consistent dose of solid rapport with your students and among the class" (Forrest, 2019).

Whilst I am someone who is not naturally quiet, and who enjoys the buzz of lively interactions in the classroom, I am also aware that this is not the case for everyone, and I try to remember that learning in a mini group means there is nowhere to hide. This may be particularly problematic for students who are already reluctant to participate. Furthermore, teaching a mini group may feel very different to working with larger groups. Moore and Kot (2018) suggest the *"need to adjust your expectations of what 'good dynamics' look like"* and *"You don't need fireworks for an effective mini group language learning experience"*.

My mini group

Image: outline of the Japanese archipelago superimposed on the national flag

Having just four students in an undergraduate English language module for international students, I wanted to explore what would only work, or might work better, with a group of this size. The module aims to develop students' English by focussing on the content and language of a range of current affairs materials, and part of both the sessions and assessment involves presenting and discussing current affairs topics. Whilst previous groups in the module have been multilingual, chatty and ready to speak their mind, the students in this mini group are quieter, and reluctant to interrupt or disagree with one another. They are from the same country, Japan, they share the same first language and are the same age. More than that, none of them is an extrovert.

My experience of teaching Japanese students has often, though not always, reflected the observation by Thompson (in Swan & Smith, 2001:297) that

> "eloquent, fluent speech is not highly rated in Japan; indeed, it is often distrusted. Tentativeness is preferred to assertiveness, hesitancy to momentum".

He goes on to highlight a cultural distinction highly relevant to this particular module:

> "The Japanese tend not to air their private opinions in public, which means that 'What do you think of…?' topic discussions can be full of long and painful silences […] The uninhibited aggressive participation in multi-national discussions by many Europeans may affront the Japanese sense of propriety" (ibid, 2001:309).

Having considered the features of both mini groups and Japanese language learners, I felt that my mini group offered opportunities not to be missed.

An opportunity to try something new

Previous cohorts were sometimes asked to read abridged articles in class before sharing and discussing their texts with the group. This kind of jigsaw reading activity is popular in language classrooms and there are benefits in, for example, practising reading for gist. However, it necessarily requires students to read and process content quickly, and often means they have only a superficial understanding of the information before discussing the topic. By 'flipping' (Fig. 1) some of this work, the reading is done before class so that students have the time they need to understand and process the texts. It also allows more time to discuss content and focus on emergent language during the class.

> "Flipped learning is a pedagogical approach in which the conventional notion of classroom-based learning is inverted, so that students are introduced to the learning material before class, with classroom time then being used to deepen understanding through discussion with peers and problem-solving activities facilitated by teachers" (HEA website, 2018).

Fig. 1: What is flipping?

I also wanted to allow students more autonomy in their choice of reading material – to choose which articles to read and discuss. According to Meddings and Thornbury (2009:7), "*The content most likely to engage learners and to trigger learning processes is that which is already there, supplied by 'the people in the room'*". More specifically, Hedge proposes book groups or 'reading syndicates' that *"usefully combine the motivation of self-chosen books, genuine classroom interaction […] of learners, and potential student recommendation of books to their peers"* (Hedge, 2000:221). These suggestions also seem to support theories of social constructivism, which stress the importance of the social nature of learning (e.g. Vygotsky, as described in Cook, 2008:228).

Designing the activity

As Stannard (2016) points out, *"There is nothing essentially new about the flipped classroom, but what is so different now is just how many tools we have at our disposal to make the flip more interesting"*. I am always careful when deciding whether to introduce technology into an activity, mindful of a warning from a writer on blended learning: "*Make sure it links to the wider aims of your lessons, and that your students are actually learning as a result!"* (Hockly, 2018). However, moving this activity online would allow students to participate when and where they chose without the need to actually meet, so a number of options were considered, including OneNote Class Notebook and various features of Moodle, the University's online learning platform. The apparent complexity of enrolling students into a OneNote Classbook, as well as setting up its pages and becoming familiar with its format and use, led me to a decision that the Moodle forum would be the simplest method for both students to post and the tutors to monitor. Lengthy introductions or new accounts and logins would not be needed because Moodle is already used by the students in all their modules. In fact, I discovered that this feature of Moodle that I had never before investigated is extremely simple to set up, introduce to students and monitor.

Participation in the forums is twofold:

1. Students post their chosen article to the Moodle forum and give a short rationale for their choice, requiring them to consider their audience and look critically at what they read.
2. Students then read the other students' posts, including their rationale, and post their own response to each article.

Fig. 2: Screenshot of a Moodle forum task

Clandfield and Hadfield (2017) suggest five principles of online tasks, which this project aimed to follow:

1. Interaction should be human-to-human not human-to-machine. The clearly defined audience for the posts comprises other students in the group and the tutor.
2. The task needs *"a reason for communication"*.
   In this case, sharing information and opinions in preparation for discussion and analysis in class.
3. It must *"have closure in an end-point […] so that it doesn't drag on or fizzle out"*.
   Clear deadlines were set: the initial post by a midweek deadline and comments on others' posts before the next class.
4. The task should *"involve two-way participation: members should both take account of others' contributions and contribute themselves".*
   Students recommend articles and then give and receive feedback on the articles.
5. Finally, it *"should include a range of interactions and task types".*
   Here, posting articles, giving a rationale for the recommendation, and commenting on others' posts all occur online and are then transferred to the face-to-face classroom for the group discussion and language work.

Reflections

I am very impressed with the enthusiasm shown by this group of students and their diligence in completing all the forum tasks set. It is impossible to know to what extent the number of students, the design of the task or simply the hard work of these particular students - or a combination of these and other factors - is responsible for the success of this project. However, in this instance students supported one another by sharing knowledge, resources and ideas, which meant they were well equipped for noticeably more in-depth discussions in class. We were also able to spend more time focusing on the discussions and language. In effect, the forum gave students the time and opportunity to rehearse the in-class discussion.

Because this task enabled students to choose their own texts, and because each student in the group read and commented on the others' articles, there was also a more collaborative atmosphere in the classroom when we discussed a certain point in X's article or the language in Y's article. As Moore & Kot (2018) point out, another feature of mini groups is that *"Your learners will have higher expectations of your feedback so you need to deliver!"* and using the Moodle forum with such a small group has also proved to be a quick and simple way to respond to each student and monitor the group interactions.

For me, this project has been an opportunity to explore more widely something I already used – Moodle. Time is limited, new things take time to learn, and it is often possible to get along without learning something new, so it is easy not to notice the range of tools available. I still believe that technology, like any other resource, must earn its place in teaching and learning. However, this has been a valuable task for maintaining interaction outside the classroom and preparing students for a better experience in the classroom. Because of the size of the group, it has also been very simple to set up and monitor. I now look forward to exploring the opportunities of using the Moodle forum with larger groups and the added complexity I imagine that will entail.

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Feminist automobilities:

the car as place

Dawn Robins

The car is essentially a masculine subject area. It is imbued with many masculine connotations and controls the public space. Automobility research looks at the relationship that people have with their cars, concerning itself with a genderless car-driver cyborg system that maintains neutrality over masculinity. Place formation and how the car is viewed and utilised see positive meanings attached such as 'freedom', 'power' and 'courage' but there are also negative feelings of 'fear', 'threatening', 'confined' and 'bound to' through work and home commitments. This research, which I conducted using feminist methodologies in 2006 (Robins 2006), looked at the gender differences between the use of the car and the power relations surrounding it.

The aim of the research was to pay attention to the implications of a gendered character of automotive spaces and places, and to how feminist representations of space and place transcribe into the concept of the car. How people feel about their car can be an emotive subject, so getting a better understanding of why we choose the car over other methods of transport will help to target measures to reduce usage, congestion and pollution.

A focus group methodology was used to elicit a richness of data, and the findings indicated that, although all genders have similar emotions to driving, the formation of the car as place offered new and fruitful ways to view the topic.

Key Words

automobility, gender, masculinity, femininity, space, place, security, fear, public, private, home, actor network theory

Introduction: gendered transport

Studies of gendered spaces began in the 1970s as a way of increasing the number of women in academia. Historically, men have written geography about men, for men, and women have effectively been written out of history. It is now generally accepted that there are distinctions between masculinity and femininity across space. Masculinity appears to dominate space, enjoying the freedom to move within it, while femininity finds its natural place by learning the place of things (Leslie 1993). Whereas masculine identity is defined by the control over space, feminine identity seems to become that which is controlled by being bounded (Leslie 1993:693).

Women's space tends to be seen as the home, and is often described as the ultimate feminine space, yet it is also a site of conflicting metaphors, such as reproduction and production, safety and violence, freedom and oppression. Seamon (1979) argues that the home is an intimate place of rest where a person can withdraw from the hustle of the outside world and have some degree of control over what happens in this limited space (Cresswell 2005). Yet for many, the home is a place of seclusion, tyranny and continual work and demands. Although this is not necessarily always a gendered issue, it is, in the main, women who feel trapped and bound by the home.

Image 1: Starting an automobile, 1907

A rare sight in the early days of motoring

Credit: © SZ Photo / Bridgeman Images

Gendered transport is a fairly new sphere of attention and early work saw the rejection of the 'neuter Commuter' and acceptance of the term 'transport-disadvantaged'. By studying women and their transport needs, it quickly became evident that transport was not freely accessible to all. Originally, men made cars for men and women could not turn the crank handle to start the car. Hence, they could not drive (Image 1).

In later years, cars were not accessible to many women, as the pedals were too far away for shorter women to reach. Women in the 1950s, 60s and 70s, with prams, pushchairs and shopping were often denied access to the buses, taxis and even trains. This was due to their inability to navigate stairs and steps, and there were rarely places on the transport mode to store such large items (Image 2).

Technical innovation and design have since helped to sort out many of these issues, but there are still many threats to access that aren't just physical obstructions, but rather manifest in the form of violence and both physical and sexual assault.

Image 2: Front cover of 'John Bull', June 1957 (colour litho)

Credit: Private Collection / © The Advertising Archives / Bridgeman Images

Automobilities

It is only in recent years that Automobilities has developed into a unique car-driver assemblage (Dant 2004) that has gripped the imaginations of social science academics. No longer just a product, machine, mode of transport or commodity, the car-driver is a part human/part machine cyborg system of interlocking networks that coexist independently but remain necessarily related to each other (Thrift 1999). John Urry sees the concept from the perspective of 'the system' that links together car, driver, roads, fuel supplies and 'other novel objects, technologies and signs' (Featherstone 2004:2). Automobilities uses 'actor network theory' to see the relationships that are developed within and around mobility to understand the impacts that are involved. This allows a variety of unseen actors, both human and non-human, to play a role within the research sphere, and allows for an integrated approach that incorporates the many facets of the subject.

Urry and Sheller (2000) came up with six components of Automobility. These are Automobility of:

1. manufactured object;
2. item of individual consumption;
3. a powerful complex of technical and social linkages;
4. quasi-private mobility;
5. a dominant culture, and
6. environmental resource user

(Urry and Sheller 2000).

The car is the single most expensive item after a house, yet it drops in value significantly as soon as it is driven off the forecourt. It is this value that is seen as humanising the car. The status symbol, 'pimped' vehicles and accessorising contribute to making the car not just a prized possession but a canvas for a multitude of emotional senses to be added to the term 'Automobility'.

Humanising the car is described by various researchers as 'feeling the car' (Shelley 2004) and ascertains that the 'car materialises personality and takes part in the ego-formation of the owner or driver as competent, powerful, able and sexually desirable' (Shelley 2004: 225). Thrift (2004) sees the car as a suit of armour that provides a protective shield enabling the driver to act as a powerful weapon, with the right to fast and carefree travel, aggressively approaching traffic, heedless of any danger. Individual consumption also allows for an understanding of how drivers interact with the technology available in the car (Thrift 2004). Technology is also a masculine area, in which marketing to men aims technology advances such as sound systems and ABS braking, while marketing of cars for women concentrates on space, safety and security issues.

Automobility has reframed the notions of mobility by providing what has become known as 'quasi-private' mobility (Urry 2004). The car provides 'timeless mobility' that coerces people into an intense flexibility (Urry 2004:28). No longer restrained by timetables, screaming children, and anti-social behaviour of other travellers, the car driver enjoys instant mobility to any number of destinations, opening up choices for where to live and work, what leisure activities to partake in, and how and where to socialise. Coupled with this newfound freedom, though, is the fact that although Automobility allows for versatile mobility, it has also allowed for out-of-town retail outlets, suburban living and mobile working, thus ensuring that the car becomes a necessity rather than a bonus. This has shown to be particularly problematic to women, who now find that they have to juggle children, work and leisure over greater distances (Pickup 1984; Jarvis 1999; Kwan 2000; Hjortho 2001). The more people own cars, the further afield facilities become, leading to congestion and safety issues. This creates a scenario where what had started as a time-saving innovation has become a time-consuming, energy-consuming and socially debilitating pastime (Urry and Sheeler 2003).

Outstanding questions

Urry (2006) rightly questions the linear thinking behind the increase in car use that has led to the expansion of infrastructure necessary to cope. One surely has to question in greater depth, however, whether these journeys are necessary. One could argue that *all* journeys are necessary, either because of the need to transport oneself to another location or because of a psychological need to be mobile. What we should be asking is why the *car* is chosen as the method of mobility, what specific attributes the car either materially or psychologically provides that are lacking in other modes of transport, and whether the gendered differences apparent in journey distance and frequency are apparent in the reasons for modal choice.

Automobilities research in more detail

In my introduction, I set out briefly why this research should take place, what it hopes to find out, and how. To recap, the aim of the research was to look at the implications of a gendered character of automotive spaces and places, and at how feminist representations of space and place transcribe into the concept of the car. The research objectives are to:

1. *Understand the power relations around the car, including usage and ownership.* For instance, who gets the driveway/garage? Who decides what car to buy and when? Who gets to drive when the family go out?
2. *Determine how a car is used, and explore perceptions and attitudes towards the car*. Is the car an escape? What is stored in a car? Are there gendered differences in the gadgets and accessories purchased?
3. *Understand the activities which take place within the car*. Do family meetings take place? Is homework discussed? Are music and media enjoyed? As I explained in the introduction, how people feel about their car can be an emotive subject, so getting a better understanding of why we choose the car over other methods of transport will help to target measures to reduce usage.

Feminist Methodologies

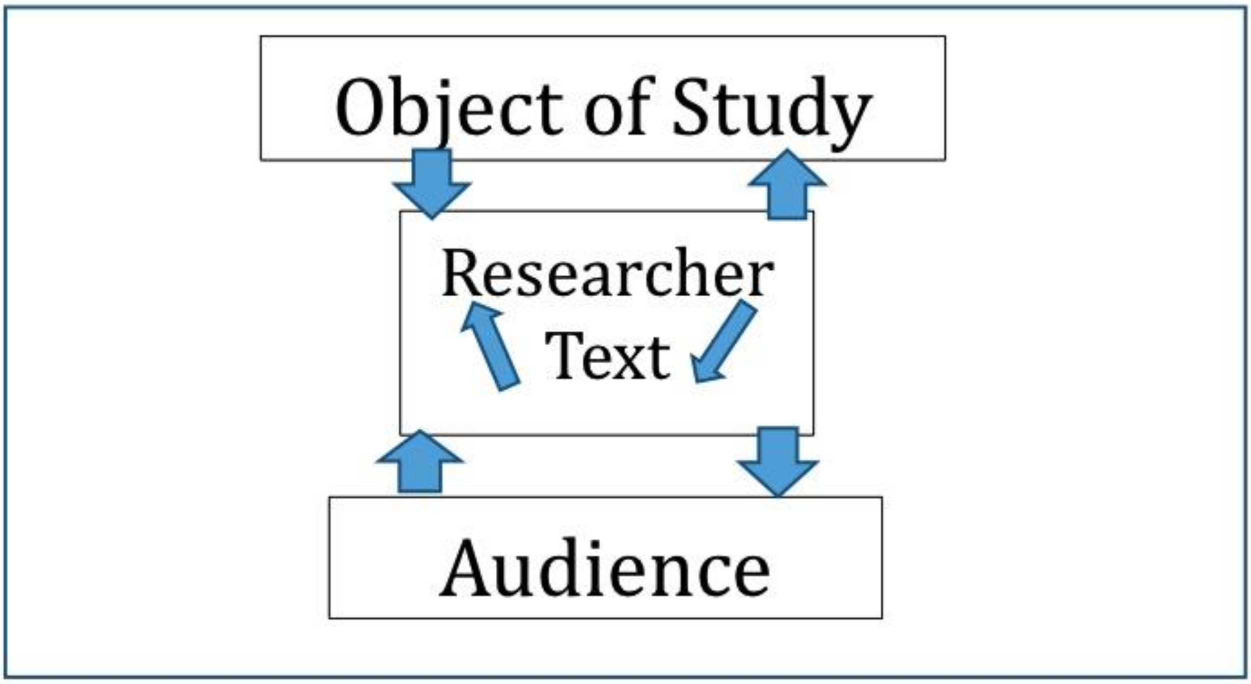
As the purpose of this research was to ascertain peoples' attitudes to and perceptions of their cars as things other than a mode of transport, a qualitative methodology of focus groups was chosen. Six focus groups – three female and three male – were carried out in West Sussex, a county where the percentage of cars per head of population is 10% higher than the national average. It was decided to take a feminist approach to the research, as a gendered paradigm was needed.

Feminist methodologies have received a lot of scrutiny over the years, as arguments have abounded over how best women can research women. Feminist methodologies look at the meanings behind social constructions. Feminist standpoint epistemology argues that a hierarchical society will produce different standpoints (Hesse-Biber and Yaiser 2004). Standpoint theory gives the researcher the opportunity to critically examine the lives of marginalised as well as the dominant social groups.

Positionality, or situated knowledge, is a process that enables all actors to see where they are 'positioned' in research, and to understand the role of other actors. Figure 1 below shows this process.

> 'This is where debates about positionality and situated knowledge usually diverge. In the latter, research is not done only by 'people', but by sociotechnical hybrids, cyborgs and actor networks. More than just people. Boulder cams. Tape recorders. Passports. Paper. Other 'co-agents'. Collectively. More thoroughly entangling the lives of selves and countless others. In fleshy ways.'
>
> (Cook 2005)

Figure 1: Situated Knowledge or Positionality



Source: 'The view from somewhere' (Keith 1992, cited in Cook 2005)

When analysing the focus group transcripts, special attention was given to interpretation and emphasis. The main themes used in the discussion are power relations surrounding the car, what the car is used for, understandings of space as a place, and the gendered differences of the relationships people have with their car. As the object of the research is to look at gendering, the analysis takes a feminine slant, to enable a comparison with previous literature.

Gendering Automobilities: some findings

The public and private spheres

If the public sphere is dominated by the masculine, and the private space inhabited by the feminine, then one could be forgiven for thinking that the increase in car use by women translates into a breaking out of this conceptual theory and an attempt at equalising the gendered spaces. Unfortunately, this is not necessarily the case. Many women feel restricted to what they can do with the car due to feelings of insecurity, safety and intimidation.

> "I feel safe in my car but I don't feel safe, shall we say, out of it. I mean I feel safe inside the actual car, I can lock the doors, turn the music up, and it is quite a powerful feeling of safety and security. But I don't feel safe when I stop. Whether it is either a car park, traffic lights or even outside my house. I dread breaking down and I hate going somewhere I don't know."
>
> [Linda: 26yr old.]

Thrift (2004) discussed the concept of the car as being a suit of armour that gave a sense of power and dominance over the landscape, whereas for women, the power is in the sense of defence against the perceived masculine landscape and the threats this engenders.

Sam, a health worker said,

> "I used to live in London and have lived abroad so am used to lots of people and public transport and I actually think I felt a lot safer then, than now… Why is it car parks are so dark, quiet and out of the way? Have you ever tried to find a garage in a strange town when you are nearly out of fuel? There aren't any! There are signs for pubs, hotels and churches but never garages and when you do find one it is shut."

This highlights the issues of public spaces being unwelcoming and even frightening for women, especially at night, and confirms the theory that masculinity appears to dominate the landscape, enjoying the freedom to move within space (Leslie 1993).

Freedom or control?

Although many of the interviewees thought the car would be a revelation and vehicle to freedom, it quickly became apparent that quite the opposite had occurred.

> "I use the car now because it seems like I have no choice. I fought hard to be able to have my own car as I thought it would give me the independence I wanted but now I find myself trawling all over the place, picking up and dropping off at all times of the day or night".
>
> [Sue: 30yr old].

This is felt to some degree by many of the women in the groups, particularly those with children. Besides the powerful emotions of independence and freedom, there was a feeling of being controlled, timetabled, regulated and channelled into a cycle of never-ending journeys to unconnected places on an almost 'on-call' basis. This constant venturing into the public sphere does not seem to lessen the feelings of fear and insecurities. Instead, the car provides a barrier against the public space and, rather than strengthening the control over the public space, it appears the car is only a thin veil behind which to hide. Particularly with women, effectively taking their private space with them in the guise of their cars, ventures into the public spheres are occurring less frequently than it appears.

Gendered bodies and lifecycles

Gendered bodies and lifecycles are an important area for understanding how we feel about driving at any given time of our lives. Feminist literature argues that our bodies are socially constructed, have material and discursive forms, and are subjected to social controls. Combined with the argument that our actions are dependent upon the lifecycles that we pass through, you have enormous restrictions placed on the mobility of different genders. Gendered statements are rife in the Automobilities realm, with innuendos such as 'boy racers' and 'women drivers' highlighting the derogatory view of women. An off-hand comment by Mandy (40yr old sales manager), caused an outcry when she stated: *"I think I am a good driver, Andrew, my husband, always said I drove like a man."* This perception of men being better drivers than women has no empirical grounding, and is just a stereotypical view that seeks to undermine the ability of women.

The cyborg-human car assemblage is seen in the way people view the car-driver. Simon stated that if he saw a woman driving a sports car with the top down he would find her 'sexy'. Metros are for old men, BMWs for arrogant aggressive drivers, and Mondeos are company cars. The lifecycle of women plays an important part in what women drive. Many women stated they had the family car whilst their partner drove the car he wanted.

> "I always wanted a Mini but had to have a car suitable for children and family life. Now the children are grown and driving themselves, I can at last have the car I want. I must make the most of it though as my mum is getting increasingly arthritic and I will probably have to have a vehicle she can get into soon."
>
> (Heidi: 48yr old)

Men, on the other hand, did not seem to see the constraints that women saw:

> "I've got two cars; a Morgan which is my fun car and another fun car I suppose, a Golf GTi. I rarely take passengers, so I can play music and do what I want. If we go out as a family we take my wife's car."
>
> (Peter: 52yr old)

Gadgets

When it comes to gadgets, the genders are actually similar. Each likes the comfort and security features, and the entertainment accessories were seen as beneficial to all. Stereotyping can also be detrimental to men. Although being portrayed as mechanically minded, many men faced concerns over both the use and the reason for many of the car's technological accessories and, whereas women felt comfortable in their ignorance, men felt frustrated and helpless.

> "I've just learnt where the air-con button is and I admit I am constantly setting off the alarm when I open the doors."

(Richard: 54yr old).

Power relations

Power relations within the home have been researched extensively (Fraad, Resnick et al. 1994; Ahrentzen 1997; Domosh 1998). They include the division of labour within the home, economic decision-making and technology use. Power relations surrounding the car encompass all of these areas, and there appears to be clear distinctions between who carries out particular tasks involved in car ownership.

Purchasing decisions tend to be the male prerogative:

> "We went together to look for a new car. We had discussed what we wanted but tried a few out and then I chose the one I wanted"

(Steve: 28yr old).

Divisions of labour around who drives is also quite clear-cut;

> "I drive and she looks after the kids",

Simon: (38yr old).

Where the car is parked is also contentious:

> "My dad gets the drive and I have to find a space in the road somewhere" Kelly (22yrs). "I get the drive but only because he has the garage. It is a double garage and one side is his Beemer and the other is his prized possession the Escort Mk1"

Sally: (33yr old).

The Car as Place

When we looked at the car as a sense of place, we saw that the conceived space is predominately masculine and not, as first considered, generic. The production, manufacture and distribution of cars is predominately large scale, heavy technology and public sphere orientated, and therefore predominately masculine. Who owns the car has an impact on situating the car within place, and young people who shared a car with siblings or parents had little fondness for the car, and did not consider it as their first car. Feminine personalisation came in the form of cuddly toys, blankets and pillows, whereas masculine personalisation centred on gadgets and accessories such as spoilers and speakers. Naming first cars was common and all, without exception, remembered fondly their first car.

When asked about their perceptions of the car as place, the differences became apparent. The majority of men felt the car was a mode of transport and, although comfortable and enjoyable, it was little more than that. Many of the women, on the other hand, felt that the car was far more than just a mode of transport. They felt strongly that it was not just a personal space but also a private space, an extension to the home and more importantly, a refuge:

> “I would say those awful teenage times, you know, when you can’t communicate, you realise they are taking up more of the house than you and you just need to get out. I would say I was going for a drive and escape to the countryside and drive around the scenic bits … you go back feeling refreshed.”

(Sue 36yr old)

For some, the car is a means of escape to another private space:

> “My car allows me to get to where my horse is kept which is an escape for me.”

(June: 32yr old).

For others it is the escape:

> “Before my son left home, I would sometimes have had enough of him and I would take the car and park up down the road and read for a bit. I kept a blanket in the car for these occasions.”

(Sue: 43yr old).

Driving with a purpose was important for men, but women were happy to drive for the sake of driving.

What people used their cars for was sometimes very personal and at other times very practicable:

> “The car is the one space I can talk to the children without the distraction of computers, TVs or games machines. On the other hand, it is lovely when it is just myself and my husband as we get to talk and have quality time.”

(Sally: 41yr old)

Image 3: Office on the move

In many instances both men and women used their car for additional purposes – as an office (Image 3), tool shed, gym bag, horse tack room etc. However, the layout of the car posed some interesting topics of conversation.

> “I don’t like taking passengers as my front passenger seat is my handbag…I have it laid out with my phone, sandwiches, drink, and diary etc. all within easy reach, and I don’t like it disturbed.”

(Lisa: 51yr old)

> “I keep some horse treats and my wellies in the car so I can stop off and see the horses when I want.”

(Tina: 28yr old).

> “I teach football so have all the kits and balls etc. in the boot and they stay there between matches, apart from washing.”

(Simon: 36yr old).

Massey (1994) describes place as open and porous, and the boundaries of the car as place are indistinct, because there is a tendency to see the car as another room belonging to the home, an escape either to somewhere or within. The car is just as Dant (2004) describes: a set of clothes, part of the everyday fabric of our lives. Yet it is also a place we visit, somewhere on which we bestow a fondness and identity, but also a site of conflicting emotions of safety, security, threat and danger.

Conclusion

There were few differences between the driving experiences of the different genders – both either liked or disliked driving, and reacted in similar ways to congestion and other drivers. Differences were found in the consumption of cars (the use of the car and the activities that take place within it), rather than in the act of driving. It can be argued that, as Dant (2004) described with his notion of a driver-car, the fundamental aspect of Automobility is that it does not have a gender. Human beings necessarily relate and react to the car in order to carry out tasks enabling independent mobility. But then Automobility is more than just a driver-car, more than merely a series of signs, symbols and values, once it is included in the realm of everyday living. The means that behind access, use and desire are included in the means of understanding. To be gendered then, Automobility needs to extend itself from its original isolationary stance, and reposition itself within the social sciences, to allow the multiplicity of voices to be heard.

Place is a necessary construction, enabling us to live fulfilled lives (Cresswell 2005). Places are not designed, they ‘become’, and yet the car is *designed*, both with the driving experience and journey type in mind. This research has shown that the car has become an ultimate place for many women. It is a private space with which the female user can enjoy and protect herself in the public sphere. It has become somewhere we can endow with our individuality, personalise and ‘feel at home in’ and yet take wherever we go. It seems we are now so mobile that we take our places with us in order to remain fulfilled. Cars are made, yet the place they become develops gradually from the possessions we bestow on them to the emotions they elicit.

The transport infrastructure is constantly evolving, as is the concept of gender, with shopping centres and large industry locating close to motorway networks, thus ensuring that car use becomes a necessity. This assumption of car use entails further demands and restrictions on those who are unable to use this method of transport, making the transport-disadvantaged even worse off. Fuel systems, car design and economy may well change, but as we consistently turn to the car to reach further into the public spaces, the car will surely continue to be seen as a place of safety and security, and be further endowed with the personal identities that we give to our homes.

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About the author

Dr Dawn Robins completed a BA (Hons) degree in Geography with a 1st Class Honours and, in 2005, was awarded the Wiley Prize for academic achievement and a full Scholarship to complete a Research Masters Degree at the University of Southampton. In 2006 the Economic & Social Research Council (ESRC) awarded her a full Scholarship to study the impacts of the privatisation initiative on the passenger railway in Great Britain for her Doctorate. Dawn combined her research with working as an Analyst at the transport consultancy, OXERA, and also the House of Commons Transport Select Committee where she provided the expertise in rail and general transport policy as an Inquiry Manager.

In 2010, Dawn arrived in Chichester to research an EU funded project into maritime business clusters in the Channel region. In 2011 she took on additional transport research and now coordinates research projects for the Business School, also supervising graduate researchers.

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Developing a stakeholder engagement approach for payments for ecosystem service schemes to improve water quality in agricultural catchments

William M Roberts

Payments for ecosystem services (PES) schemes are an increasingly popular option for improving water quality in UK agricultural catchments. Although stakeholder engagement has been shown to be a key factor in the success of schemes, current guidance for this is underdeveloped. This pilot study explored the nature of stakeholder engagement being carried out by experienced catchment management practitioners who were establishing PES schemes in three case-study catchments. Practitioners engaged in novel ways with catchment scientists to gain an understanding of the catchment, with early adopter farmers to design the schemes, with late adopter farmers during implementation to encourage enrolment and with both types of farmers during evaluation by disseminating results. However, this differed for a scheme where an 'intermediary' organisation sought to link payments from multiple downstream water users to upstream farmers. This understanding was combined into an approach that will guide future schemes aimed at improving water quality but could also be useful for schemes addressing other environmental issues.

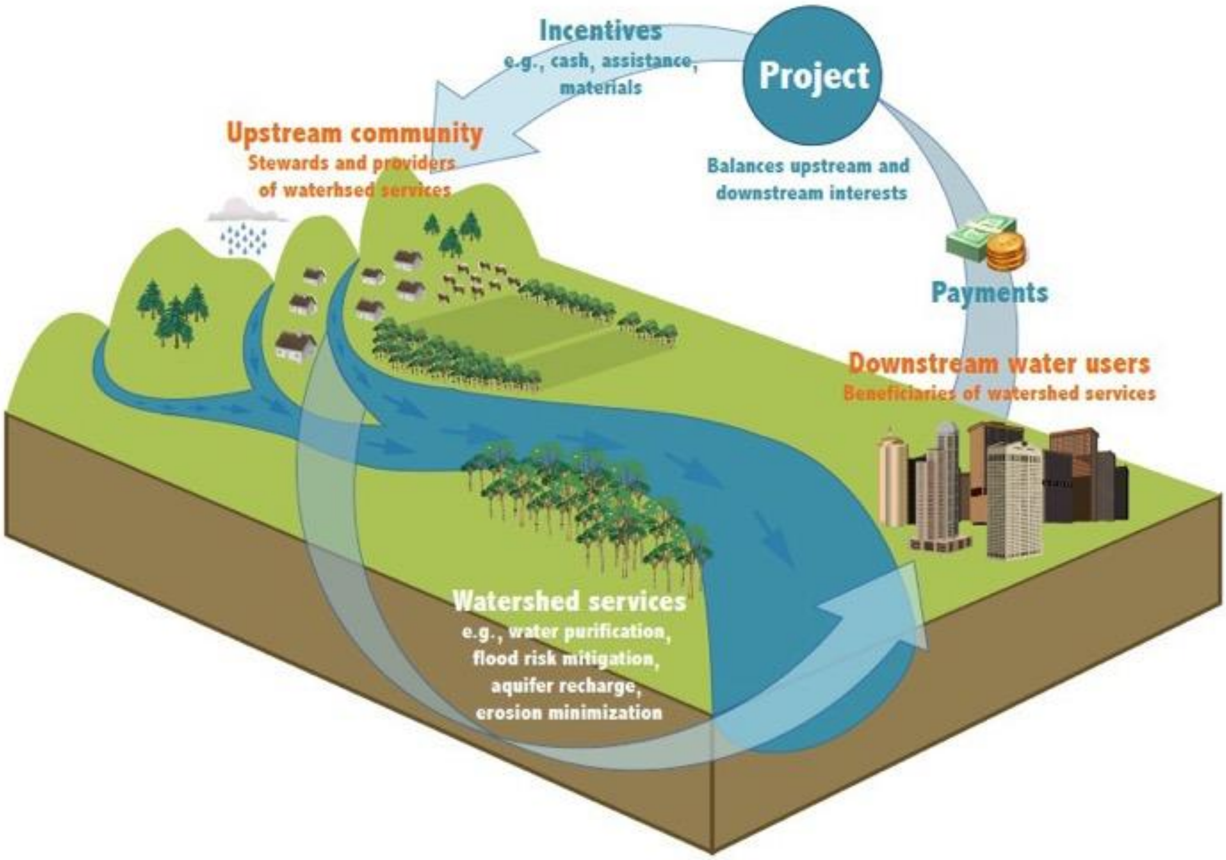
Keywords

stakeholder engagement, payments for ecosystem services, water quality, agricultural catchments, catchment management, PES practitioners

Introduction

Elevated inputs of nutrients nitrogen (N) and phosphorus (P) from agriculture to rivers, lakes and groundwater is a major cause of water quality deterioration in many countries (Le Moal, Gascuel-Odoux et al. 2019). However, agri-environmental policy frameworks are not always sufficient to improve water quality. To overcome this, downstream users impacted by poor water quality are increasingly taking the problem into their own hands by paying upstream farmers to improve practices in what practitioners often refer to as 'payments for ecosystem services' (PES) schemes (Figure 1).

Figure 1. The PES concept (Bennett, Nathaniel et al. 2013).



Stakeholder engagement in catchment management and PES

Stakeholder engagement is the process of involving people in decision-making who are likely to be affected by water quality. It is crucial for solving water quality problems because of the local knowledge required to solve local problems and because of the large number and diversity of land managers that contribute to the problem and thus need to be engaged with (McGonigle, Burke et al. 2014). Stakeholder engagement is therefore a key requirement laid out by many overarching water quality policies, such as the EU's Water Framework Directive (OJEC 2000), which puts a strong emphasis on a participatory approach. As such, stakeholder engagement is generally well understood and practiced in catchment management.

However, the nature and structure of engagement will vary depending on the type of catchment management and a unique approach may be required for PES over other types of catchment management. For example, stakeholder engagement has been a key factor in some of the most effective water quality related PES schemes such as the Vittel and New York City Water PES examples (Appleton 2002, Perrot-Maître 2006). In the Vittel example, where the bottled water company paid farmers to improve practices, stakeholder engagement was key to negotiating and setting mutually beneficial payment levels. This is an aspect that may not be relevant to other forms of catchment management, and which, in this case, encouraged a high percentage of farmers in the catchment onto the scheme.

PES design

Many papers dealing with PES design come from the fields of biodiversity conservation and have tended to focus on aspects such as spatial targeting of practices and conditionality of payments (e.g. Jack, Kousky et al. 2008, Wendland, Honzák et al. 2010). Furthermore, the majority of these papers deal with experiences in developing countries, such as Mexico and Trinidad and Tobago. This means that, where stakeholder engagement has been covered (e.g. Kosoy, Corbera et al. 2008, Rawlins and Westby 2013) it has been in countries where PES schemes may differ greatly in aims and in integration with vastly different policy frameworks (Wunder, Engel et al. 2008). As such, guidance for stakeholder engagement in water quality focussed PES schemes is limited, and even more so in developed countries such as the UK. For example, in Defra's 2013 guidance on PES (Smith, Rowcroft et al. 2013), stakeholder engagement is not included as one of the seven key principles, which should ideally underpin any PES scheme. Instead, they advise that "in developing a PES scheme, it may also be appropriate to undertake stakeholder engagement with those likely to be affected by the scheme". Although they do cover stakeholder engagement in a little more depth later on, this has not been fully built upon in order to provide adequate guidance for practitioners looking to establish water quality focussed PES schemes.

Objectives of the study

The objectives of this pilot study were to i) understand stakeholder engagement in three developing PES schemes led by experienced catchment management practitioners and to ii) use this understanding to develop an approach that will guide stakeholder engagement in future schemes. To achieve these, I worked with key stakeholders or 'PES practitioners' in three case-study catchments through workshops and meetings to explore the practice of stakeholder engagement. I then used this understanding to develop a framework to guide stakeholder engagement based on the key stages in establishing a scheme.

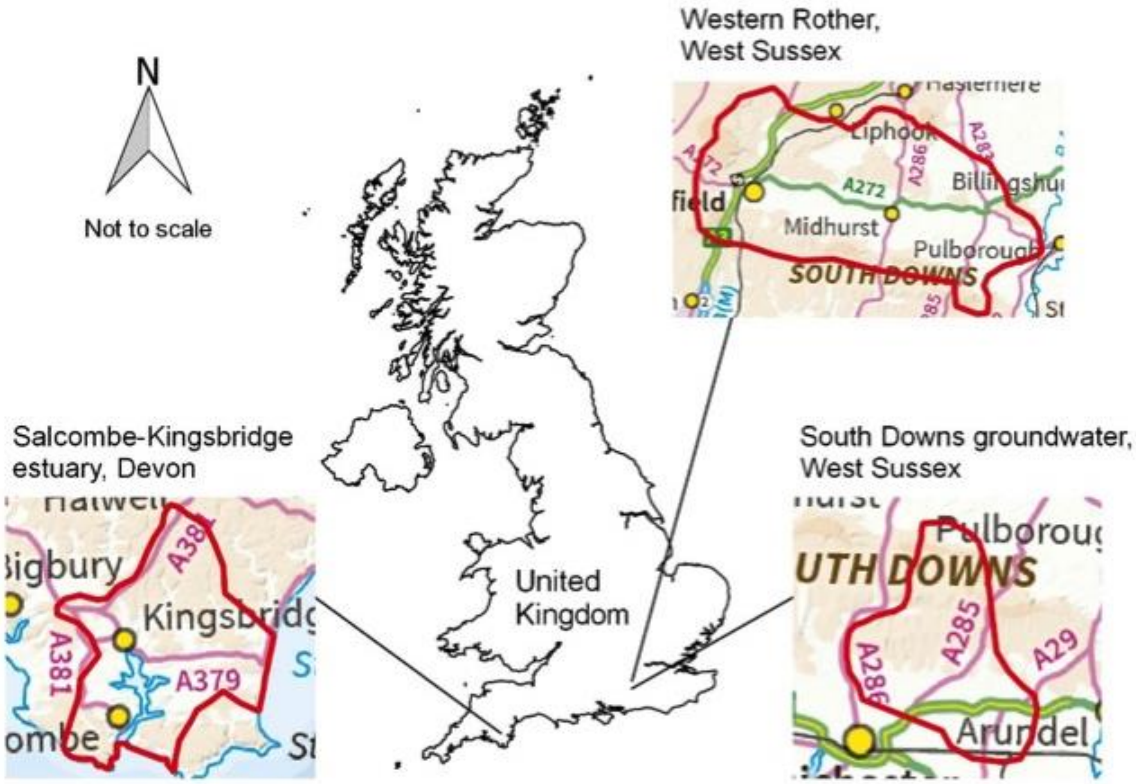
Methods

Case-study catchments

All three case-studies form part of the Channel Payments for Ecosystem Services project (https://www.cpes-interreg.eu/), which is an EU Interreg (inter-regional) funded project led by the University of Chichester to facilitate PES establishment over a three-year period. They included the Western Rother river catchment in West Sussex, South Downs groundwater in West Sussex and the Salcombe-Kingsbridge estuary in Devon (Figure 2, below).

In the Western Rother catchment, the main downstream users are Southern Water who abstract (i.e. remove water from a source) water for drinking at Hardham near the catchment outlet and confluence with the river Arun. In this catchment, they are impacted by erosion of agricultural fields and subsequent sedimentation of the river. This increases filtration and dredging costs at their downstream abstraction point. As such, they are developing a PES scheme to incentivise upstream farmers to adopt practices that reduce erosion. South Downs groundwater is an important source for raw water for Portsmouth Water who distribute it as drinking water after processing. They have, amongst others, a group of boreholes to the west of Arundel. However, the concentrations of nitrate in water at those boreholes have recently exceeded drinking water standards. To avoid the high costs of setting up and running a nitrate removal plant, Portsmouth Water are designing a PES scheme to incentivise catchment farmers to adopt practices that reduce nitrate leaching. At the Kingsbridge-Salcombe estuary, the main problem is algal blooms resulting from increased nitrogen and phosphorus inputs from agriculture in the surrounding catchment area. Acting as an intermediary, the Westcountry Rivers Trust, a registered River Trust charity since 1995, are developing a scheme to attract payments from downstream users (mainly tourism reliant businesses) to upstream farmers that will ensure more water friendly practices.

Figure 2. Location and boundary of the three case-study catchments within the UK. Maps: Ordnance Survey.



Data collection

To gain a better understanding of stakeholder engagement for PES, I worked with these key stakeholders or 'PES practitioners' through workshops and meetings (Plate 1), and gathered information from stakeholder engagement plans. In my analysis, I counted the number active engagements such as meetings, seminars, workshops and visits but excluded passive engagements such as websites, because many of these might introduce skew or bias to the data. For the same reasons, one-to-one meetings with farmers to agree actions and sign contracts were also excluded. As the practitioners were in the early stages of establishing schemes, some of these engagements had been conducted, whereas others were only planned. I used summary statistics to explore the number of engagements with different stakeholder groups and how they varied between different stages of scheme establishment and case-study.

Plate 1: Meeting with catchment scientists to discuss data requirements and acquisition. Photo: Kate Rice

Key stakeholder groups

The intensity of engagement will vary depending of the nature of the stakeholder or group of stakeholders and their interest in and influence over the scheme (Sterling, Betley et al. 2017). Looking inside these developing schemes, I identified seven distinct groups of stakeholders being engaged:

1. Catchment scientists (from academia or industry external to the practitioners' organisations)
2. Early adopter farmers (See: Ryan and Gross 1950)
3. Late adopter farmers
4. General public
5. Government/politicians
6. Other interest groups (NGOs, businesses etc.)
7. Other water users (who may benefit directly from improved water quality)

Stages of scheme development

As stakeholder engagement will vary with the different stages of any environmental project (Sterling, Betley et al. 2017), I investigated the number of engagements with different stakeholder groups at each stage of scheme development. Four key stages of scheme development were evident:

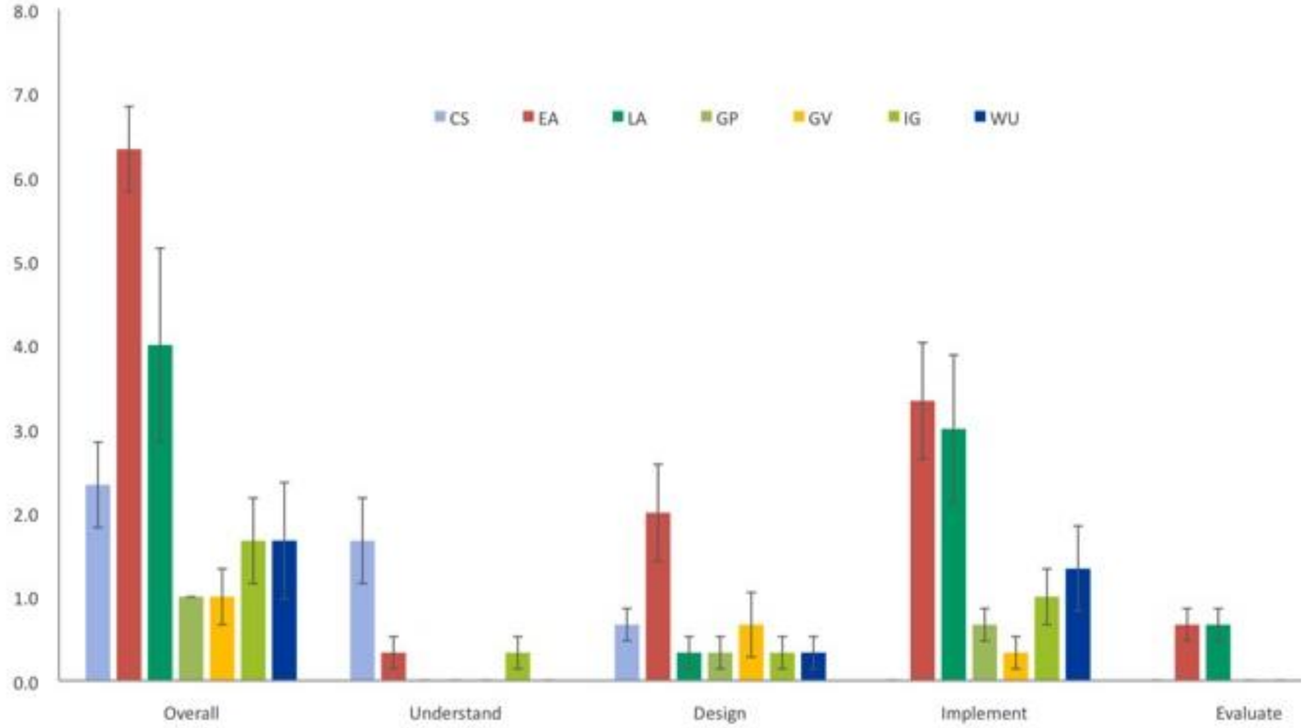
1. Understanding the river/groundwater catchment
2. Designing the scheme
3. Implementing the scheme
4. Evaluating the scheme

Understanding the catchment involved defining a baseline of water quality data and establishing a scientific link between farming practices and water quality. Designing the scheme involved determining the practices to be incentivised and the financial mechanisms to be used. Implementing the scheme involved agreeing on contracts with farmers and farmers carrying out those practices. Evaluating the scheme involved collecting data on water quality and practice change post-implementation.

Results, observations and discussion

The average number of engagements either conducted or planned for the three-year project period was high at 18 ± 1. The number of engagements was greatest for early and late adopter farmers (Figure 3 below), which makes sense, given the high number of farmers that needs to embrace practice change if a scheme is to have an impact on water quality.

Figure 3. Average (mean) and standard error (*n* = 3) for the number of engagements by stakeholder group for the schemes overall and for each stage of scheme development.



Key: CS, catchment scientists; EA, early adopter farmers; LA, late adopter farmers; GP, general public; GV, government/politicians; IG, other interest groups; WU, other water users.

Stage 1: understanding the catchment

During the stage of understanding the catchment, practitioners engaged mostly with catchment scientists (Figure 3). This was usually to provide data to establish baseline conditions in the catchment and to establish a scientific link between farming practices and water quality. It was usually done through meetings involving data synthesis and report writing. For example, Southern Water held meetings with catchment scientists from the Environment Agency, South Downs National Park Authority and the Arun and Rother Rivers Trust to explore avenues for the acquisition of baseline data and to understand stakeholders in the catchment (Plate 1). They also worked with catchment scientists in Universities to establish the connectivity between erosive fields in the catchment and the river. Where data was not available this was done through eliciting expert judgement. For example, Portsmouth Water sought the opinions of the local farm advisors on the general attitudes of farmers towards water quality issues.

Stage 2: designing the scheme

During the design phase, early adopter farmers were engaged for the purpose of designing the scheme (Figure 3). Involving farmers or 'sellers' of ecosystem services in the design of practices and payment mechanisms using these 'co-design' approaches ensures that the schemes will be compatible with current farming systems and financially attractive, respectively (Tittonell 2014). They did this in novel ways, for example, Portsmouth Water worked with farmers of the South Downs Farmers Group to decide on practical treatments for a cover crop field trial. They invited the group to visit the field trial, shared data on nitrate leaching, and discussed payment mechanisms and levels. Southern Water also engaged with early adopter farmers through the Rother Valley Farmers Group indicating that UK government supported 'farm clusters' are a useful vehicle for PES development.

Stage 3: implementing the scheme

During the implementation stage, there was increasing emphasis on engagement with late adopter farmers (Figure 3). Plans for this took the form of communication for behavioural change as the intention was to make farmers aware of the issues, to motivate them to change practices and reward them for changed practices, which was hoped to result in sustained new practices (Cabanero-Verzosa 1996). An example of this was in the Western Rother catchment, where Southern Water hosted farmers at their Hardham water treatment works to discuss and make farmers aware of sedimentation issues they are facing (Plate 2). Websites and social media were also an important tool for making farmers, and the general public, aware of the issues and schemes, and these passive engagements could be analysed separately once the schemes are more developed.

Plate 2: Making farmers aware of the issues of sedimentation in the Western Rother. Photo: Kate Rice

Stage 4: evaluating the scheme

Engagement for scheme evaluation mainly involved plans to disseminate the results of scheme evaluation to farmers enrolled on the scheme. However, the lack of data for this stage may indicate that not all engagements were fully planned. Other techniques for engaging stakeholders in evaluation could include citizen science (Conrad and Hilchey 2011) where ecosystem service buyers are numerous and diverse, and farmer self-evaluation and benchmarking, which has been shown to encourage behaviour change (Burton and Schwarz 2013). Good engagement during the evaluation phase may encourage further participation in the scheme from other ecosystem service buyers and sellers. This also highlights the need to view PES scheme development and engagement as a potentially long-term, iterative process if they are to have maximum impacts on water quality.

Variation between case-studies

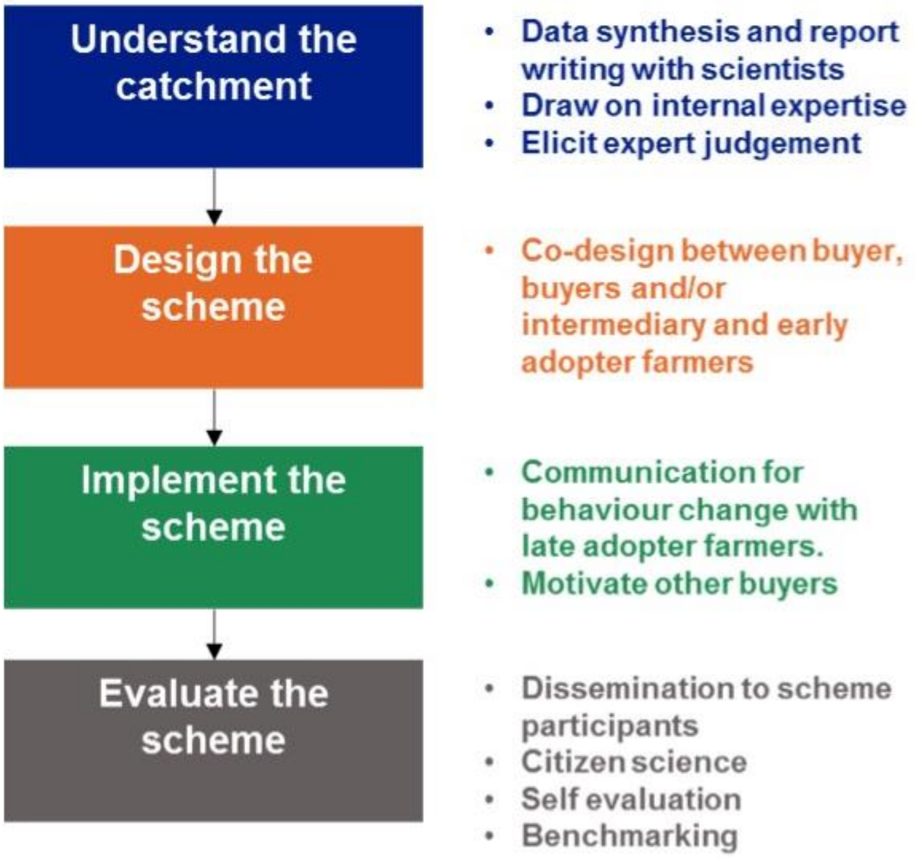
High variation around the average number of engagements (Figure 3 above) indicates that engagement also varied by case-study. During the understanding the catchment stage, Westcountry Rivers Trust relied more on internal personnel than did the other two practitioners. This could be related to their expertise in catchment science and the wealth of data and tools made available to them as a registered River Trust through the 'Catchment Based Approach' (https://catchmentbasedapproach.org/). At the design and implementation stages, Portsmouth Water and Southern Water, being single buyers of water quality ecosystem services, both took similar approaches as outlined above. Whereas, the Westcountry Rivers Trust being more of an intermediary, needed to also attract a range of potential buyers onto the scheme and hence had or had planned more engagements with other water users and other interest groups. They also engaged more with government/politicians such as Defra, Natural England and the Environment Agency as a way of influencing and informing policy.

Devising a tailored approach to stakeholder engagement

I used these observations in order to define an approach to stakeholder engagement (Figure 4 below), which is augmented at the evaluation stage by suggestions from the author. Although the approach accounts for varying engagements depending on the nature of the catchment and on who is implementing the scheme, the approach only covers the initial establishment of schemes, which in reality are likely to be long-term and iterative. At present, there are no data indicating the success of this approach or the engagement carried out by the practitioners i.e. data on the percentage of catchment farmers enrolled onto the PES schemes is lacking. However, what gives the approach credibility is the wealth of catchment management and stakeholder engagement experience held by the practitioners. Southern Water have a long history of catchment management and, in the Western Rother catchment, have been involved in the Arun and Western Streams Partnership, who have completed numerous river improvement projects in the catchment. Portsmouth Water have been conducting catchment management for over 10 years, and most notably they have been advising farmers on improved practices through the Downs and Harbours Clean Water Partnership (https://www.cleanwaterpartnership.co.uk/). The Westcountry Rivers Trust was set up as a registered charity in

1995 and has since completed numerous catchment management projects including successful PES schemes such as 'Upstream Thinking' (http://www.upstreamthinking.org/). The approach will therefore be useful for guiding, ***not directing***, other practitioners who are looking to develop PES schemes for water quality improvements in agricultural catchments specifically. It could also guide engagement for PES schemes in other fields such as biodiversity conservation.

Figure 4. Overall approach to stakeholder engagement for establishing PES to improve water quality in agricultural catchments.



Conclusions

Payments for ecosystem services practitioners must encourage the numerous land managers and farmers who contribute to the water quality problem to enrol and change practice. The high levels of stakeholder engagement observed in the case-study catchments, and the novel methods being used by the practitioners show that those experienced in catchment management are using stakeholder engagement widely in water quality focussed PES schemes. This shows a clear appreciation by practitioners of the crucial role of stakeholder engagement in catchment management. It also shows that PES schemes are well aligned with overarching water quality policy, such as the EU's Water Framework Directive, that puts a strong emphasis on a participatory approach. Through PES, this engagement will lead to schemes incentivising practices that are highly cost-effective and attractive to local farmers, which are key features of successful schemes in developed countries. Other practitioners looking to develop similar schemes could use the approach devised in this paper to guide engagement with the aim to achieve similar results.

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About the author

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A Quaker ethic in business:

350 years old and still relevant?

Barbara Hayes

Keywords

Quaker Testimonies, speaking truth to power, 10 Principles for a New Economy, decision-making process, trustworthiness, attentive listening

Some context

The Religious Society of Friends or Quakers stemmed from George Fox's realisation, in 1647, that God's light is in every person. With a radical Christian understanding, Quakers rejected violence but embraced equality, simplicity and truth, later known as the Quaker Testimonies. In the turmoil of civil war, the Quakers challenged the authority of both church and state, resulting in persecution and the tradition of 'speaking truth to power'.

Due to their refusal to take oaths, Quakers should always speak the truth, Quakers were barred from the professions and from public office so trade was an obvious way to earn an income. As a result, Friends have had a long and mainly honourable involvement in business.

George Fox by Thomas Fairland Library of Congress. Source: WikimediaCommons]

Some of the UK's longest-lived companies, with high levels of brand recognition, were founded and run by Quakers for a hundred years or more.

[Plaque on the East Street branch of Barclays Bank, Chichester: photo: Barbara Hayes*]

However, by the second half of the 20th century this involvement was greatly diminished.

> 'The influence and spread of Quakerism in business began a slow decline in the second half of the 19th Century, with the arrival into UK and USA law of the joint-stock company with limited liability, and subsequently as Quaker businesses were sold by their family owners, or merged with other organisations. Scale and complexity led to professional managers replacing family members. Some of the original Quaker firms grew into global businesses, but Quaker start-ups failed to keep pace with those which exited. The 20th Century saw a continued decline in the number of truly Quaker businesses, and in the number of Quakers following business careers. In the early 21st century the symbolic takeover of Cadbury, in a hostile bid by Kraft, left only Clarks Shoes and Scott Bader (the chemicals company) amongst the few surviving medium to large Quaker, or substantively Quaker influenced businesses.'

[Quakers & Business]

A Quaker response to the 2008 financial crisis

This does not mean that Quakers have ceased to be concerned with the quality of economic life and, following the global crash of 2008, there was a re-statement of Quaker values in 2015 in '10 Principles for a New Economy', recognising the need for a 'right ordering' of the economic system for the common good. The Principles are as follows:

1. The purpose of the economy is the enhancement of life, human and non-human.
2. We do not over–consume the earth's resources.
3. All [including future beings] have an equal right to access and make use of global commons.
4. Everyone needs time and resources to participate in community life.

5. The wellbeing of people and planet are not sacrificed to preserve profits or reduce national deficits.
6. Money is created under democratic control for positive social benefit rather than private profit.
7. A fundamental equality is recognised, not limited by race, gender or social origin.
8. The tax system redistributes from richer to poorer, with richer people paying a greater proportion of their income.
9. Businesses are structured and owned in a variety of ways. Co-operatives and community-owned enterprises form a large part of the economy, as well as private and national ownership
10. A participative and more truly representative democracy is key to our peaceful and prosperous co-existence.

Not all Quakers support every point in the Principles, but the statement led to the development of materials for local reading groups to study, with the aim of helping Friends to develop their understanding and to be more confident in speaking of economic matters. The topics covered included the purpose of economic life, the relevance of Gross Domestic Product [GDP] as a measure of success, ownership models, future energy provision and others. The reading materials encouraged thought and exploration rather than providing 'answers'.

In Chichester, some members of the local Quaker reading group decided that they wanted to continue to explore how they might respond to what had been discussed, and so the New Economy Group was formed. Group members have a range of experience, including international financial markets, the law, psychology, education, social care and industry. We were aware of a whole range of national and international organisations working in economic issues, but decided, initially, to map some of the local activity which touched on our concerns. These included the local credit union, debt advice, transition towns and others. At the same time, we made contact with the Business School of Chichester University. The plan was to learn what other people were doing, to explore connections and ways of working together, and to identify what the group might offer uniquely.

We contacted Rob Warwick, Reader in Management and Organisational Learning, because of his interest in ethics and corporate responsibility and arranged to meet to explore connections. It was at this point that we were invited to lead a session as part of the ethics module for third year students, with the content for us to define.

Preparing for the CBS business ethics session

Our first task was to develop an outline for the session and check that it fitted with the aims of the module. We rejected working directly on the Principles listed above, as each one would have required a session on its own. However, good decision making is essential to all successful and ethical organisations, and we decided to concentrate on that. It was the decision-making processes of the big banks that were questioned in 2008, along with their particular practices.

We proposed a session to include a little Quaker history, so that students could understand who we are, to provide sufficient information on Quaker businesses, as the basis of our 'authority' to speak in this context, input on the Quaker Testimonies, as the values that underpin action and an exploration of the Quaker decision-making method, so that they could assess if it felt relevant for business today. Broadly, we were seeking to explore, amongst ourselves and with the students, whether time-honoured Quaker values and methods still have relevance for business organisations. We were not presenting an academic theory, but trying to share an experience.

Members of the facilitation group undertook to research particular areas and, as is always the case, we gathered much more material than we could ever use. The real work began when we started to make decisions about what to include and how to present the material. Quakers stress the validity and importance of every individual's experience. A common quotation is 'What can *you* say?' [George Fox] so we wanted to build on the student's existing experience, provide a new experience, and make the session practical rather than predominantly theoretical. We wished to model the process that we were introducing, as well as explaining the theory. It should be noted that the planning process itself embodied key elements of the formal Quaker decision-making process. A group of people with a wide range of expertise had to listen to each other attentively and seek unity in decision making for a common good. Five of us then worked together to deliver the session in a way that was both coherent and allowed all to contribute.

The CBS programme we developed

[The Quaker team who facilitated the CBS Ethics in Business session: photo: Rob Warwick]

After outlining the purpose of the session as above, and stressing that Quakers share a commitment to particular values and process rather than to absolute 'right answers', we began, as is our custom, with several minutes of silence. The silence allows us to gather our thoughts and to be fully attentive to the agenda and to others present. The students were also silent and, although this is an unusual experience for many people, they went with it. They were then asked to think of a decision they had had to make in the past and to note the values that were part of their decision making.

This was followed by a brief explanation of who the Quakers were historically, their involvement in business, and the factors that led them to thrive as business people. Some of the factors are social and historic, but key are the Testimonies and a community which continues to explore what its shared values mean in action. So we spent time describing these as follows.

Some features of Quaker practice

Quakers do not have a creed or statement of orthodoxy; rather they have Testimonies which have developed over time. Each of the Testimonies is essential to the wellbeing respectively of individuals, all levels of community including workplaces, and the planet. They have been identified over time through the experience of a living community.

Perhaps the best know is the **Peace** Testimony which sprang out of the Quaker origins in a time of civil war. Non violence ranges from dealing with inter personal conflict to being a Conscientious Objector.

The other Testimonies are Truth, Equality, Simplicity and, most recently Sustainability.

The **Truth** testimony is the reason that Quakers cannot make oaths, as their word should always be trustworthy anyway, but it also meant that commercial contracts were honest and honoured, that prices and wages were fair and set rather than bartered, that financial records were meticulously kept. Bankrupts were supported unless there was evidence of wrong-doing, and business activities were overseen by the local Meeting.

Equality was based on the concept of ‘that of God in every person’, so early Quakers refused to doff their hats to their ‘betters’, girls had equal education with boys, and everyone should be treated with equal respect.

Simplicity includes lifestyle as well as manner of speech, and Quaker businesses mainly dealt in necessities such as food and clothing or goods and services, such as banking or iron production – necessities that underpinned the activities of others.

In some ways these historic Testimonies are encapsulated by the more recently adopted Testimony of **Sustainability .**

Implications and applications for contemporary business practice

All the Testimonies are relevant to economic activity and challenge much modern practice. The session did not allow us enough time to explore the on-going relevance of the Testimonies to business in depth, but we could pose some questions to stimulate further thought. These questions included

- What’s an honest price when you have to ring your insurance or telecoms company to negotiate a deal?
- What is truthful record-keeping when major auditors have failed to flag up problems in companies that have gone on to collapse or are shown to have falsifying their assets?
- How do we live simply in a consumerist society?

In the 19th Century, Rowntree banned advertising because of the risk of promoting consumerism. Early Quakers wore simple greys; now simplicity is more about avoiding single use plastic and aiming for sustainable production. Equalities legislation has come a long way since the Quakers began, but inequality continues with low pay in many sectors, and the CEO is given more public respect than the cleaner. The Peace Testimony prevents Friends from working or investing in companies associated with armaments, but we all come across conflict at work.

Quaker decision-making

Having explored the Testimonies as the values that underpin decision-making, we then took a detailed look at the decision-making process itself. Of the religious groups that began at the time of the English Civil War, the Quakers are one of the most long-lived, and the decision-making process is a key factor in this. The process is unique to Quakers, and is used at every level of the Society of Friends, from deciding whether to have a fridge in a local Meeting House kitchen to the national, ground breaking decision to be the first religious group to support gay marriage.

The purpose of what Quakers would call a 'Meeting for worship for business,' is to achieve unity in decision-making. It is not a debate, there is no point scoring and no voting. Instead it is a time of attentive listening to all the views or ideas expressed, each of which has its own validity. After an opening silence, a topic is introduced. Each of those present can contribute only once, unless there is an essential point of information. There is a time of silence after each contribution, so that people can absorb what has been said. When everyone who wishes to has spoken, it is the role of the Clerk, who acts a bit like a chair person, to prepare a minute that outlines the feeling of the meeting and notes the particular decision which is understood to be 'the mind of the meeting'. The draft minute is read out and amendments agreed if necessary. If 'the mind of the meeting' is not clear, that itself is written as a minute and the decision is deferred to a future date, possibly with a request for more information. The traditional signal of assent is 'I hope so', spoken aloud. Once accepted, the minute cannot be changed, except for points of grammar.

Apart from unity in decision-making, within what can be a very disparate group of people, a Meeting for Business can also be an opportunity to exercise Quaker values and to build community.

> "These Meetings are not merely occasions for transacting with proper efficiency the affairs of the church but also opportunities when we can learn to bear and forebear, to practice to one another that love which 'suffereth long and is kind'." (Quaker Faith & Practice 3.03).

How the CBS session 'worked'

We had three essential questions for ourselves and for the students.

A] Does this method have value in a complex world where it is important to hear many views and experiences, respectfully, if good decisions are to be made?

B] Might this approach contribute in smaller groups to a sense of team and the common good.

C] Is this approach to decision-making helpful in engaging university students and others in grappling with complex ethical issues?

Two members of our group explained the why and the how of the process, and provided a handout (see Appendix) before the whole group presented a role play, so that the students could see it in action. We were concerned that it would not be a very exciting watch, but felt it was essential to demonstrate how the process works. It may have been the quality of silence, respect for grey-haired visitors or their own innate kindness and humanity, but the students respected the process and remained attentive.

After the role play the students split into three groups, with one of our number as a resource person to each group, and were asked to do a case study. A complex organisation had two matters to decide - one ethically complicated and the other more straightforward. Students chose the role they would represent in the organisation and their input was from that perspective. Not all groups came to a decision on the more complex issue and one, encouraged by the resource person, did as Quakers would with more time, and came back to the issue for further consideration before making a decision. All engaged with the task, although some found the concept of speaking only once very difficult. One person taking the role of Clerk commented how hard it was ***not*** to speak, and a second acknowledged that normally they would be formulating their response rather than really listening to what someone else was saying.

We spent some time hearing what worked, what was difficult, and how the students experienced the process, before reverting to the personal decision they reflected on at the start of the session. Might it have felt different or had a different outcome using this sort of process? One view was that they may have felt more confident in the decision if it had been arrived at in this way. We also looked at the values that students had identified. There were certainly some links with the Quaker Testimonies, although the language was different. But interestingly for us, several students referred to how their decision might impact their future. This may have been partly pragmatic - 'How will this look on my CV?' - but it is also an insight from someone at the start of their career. Ethics exercises are often presented as 'What do you do now, in this case?' with perhaps less emphasis on 'Where this line of thought might take you in the long term across a career?' Or 'What will its future impact be on you personally and on society'?

Reflecting on the experience, we were pleased with how the session had gone. In particular we were impressed by the openness of the students, their willingness to engage with unfamiliar concepts and to give serious consideration to the possibilities of this way of working. We had the impression that some of them at least would continue to mull over the experience. Those just setting out on a career are not in a position to introduce radically new ways of working within existing business structures but listening attentively, speaking and acting honestly, taking all views seriously and seeking unity are all beneficial and possible.

At the outset we identified the core concepts and ideas to be explored in the session. In retrospect it may have been helpful to have mentioned 'Meetings for Clearness' which use the same method but take no decisions, acting as preparation for particularly complex decision-making. More significantly, we could have chosen to use the session completely differently and instead explore the '10 Principles for the New Economy', how they relate to the Testimonies and what this might mean for our wider economic life. Kate Raworth [2018 edn] suggests that her model of doughnut economics should be on the table at all business or decision-making meetings as a prompt to behaviour. Perhaps the Quaker Testimonies or the 10 Principles could have a similar function. Maybe we'll explore those options another time.

Acknowledgements

For their respective contributions in helping me to develop this article, I would like to express my thanks to **Rob Warwick** for inviting us into the university; to all the **members of the Chichester New Economy Group** who contributed to preparing the session; to my fellow presenters – **Janet Beckett, Hilary Cooke, Derek Foote** and **Jenny Webb** – who also commented on this article; to **the CBS students** for their openness in engaging with what we were presenting; and to **Bob MacKenzie**, who offered suggestions and guidance in helping the article 'fit' its academic context.

Appendix 1

The Quaker Meeting for Business process

1. The Meeting begins with a few minutes silence as people focus their minds.
2. The Clerk acts a little like a chairperson and 'manages 'the meeting. S/he is usually a mature Quaker but as responsibility for the meeting is shared any Friend can be the Clerk. The Clerk does not participate in the reflection on a subject, unless it's to give a point of information or similar. The Clerk ends the opening silence, usually with a phrase like 'Thank you Friends'.
3. The agenda will already have been circulated and the Clerk or a suitable person will introduce and briefly outline the matter for decision.
4. All those present have an equal right to speak and show that they wish to speak by standing. If two people stand at the same time one will sit and stand again in due time. Those wishing to speak do so only once so in-put should be well considered & significant.
5. After each in put there should be a silence to absorb/ reflect on what has been said. Others may then speak. This is not a debate or argument for or against another speaker's contribution but a statement of views, feelings or information.
6. Second contributions are acceptable if genuinely necessary. If we are truly listening then things do not need to be just repeated. This is not about hammering home an argument.
7. When the Clerk discerns that full consideration has been given to the issue s/he will draft a Minute, possibly with the help of an Assist Clerk, to draw together what's been said and to give the outcome, if one is clear. This is then read back to the Meeting for amendment/acceptance. To signal acceptance Quakers say 'I hope so', the hope being that the decision is acceptable and guided by the spirit.

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*About the photo of the plaque.

Barbara writes**:**

> **'**I believe the plaque was put up by local Quakers as part of a Quaker history trail. The building owner must have agreed, but I assume it's just chance that the building is now a bank.'

About Barbara

Barbara Hayes is a member of the Chichester Friends New Economy Group. Prior to retirement, she was an Industrial Chaplain in Oxford and Birmingham, working in the retail, manufacturing, science-based industry, transport and social enterprise sectors, alongside work on corporate responsibility and ethics.

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Developing marketing and business consultancy skills in undergraduate students

Lionel Bunting

The University of Chichester Business School offers a series of open, optional, extra-curricular business and marketing events called 'The Marketing Forum', aimed at students and businesses. These events are designed to enhance the student experience and to bridge the gap between academia and the commercial world. They serve as an interface for learning by students and businesses, to develop, harness and apply students' knowledge of marketing, digital marketing and digital literacy, as well as wider aspects of business.

At the Forums invited businesses present issues or challenges they face to students, to generate ideas and possible solutions. This article details the evolution of the Forums, how they are structured, what aspects did or did not work well, and shares some experiences and feedback from participants. The format of the Forums can be adopted by almost all subject areas, and is offered to academics from other disciplines as a possible 'template' for facilitating direct access and an interface to businesses.

Keywords

Experiential learning, co-creation, marketing, consultancy, digital literacy, employability, business, smes, knowledge exchange, student experience.

Introduction

The Forums are a series of events for students and businesses that enable invited business to present a real life marketing issue for students to review, discuss and propose solutions for. It's a perfect way for businesses owners and executives to gain a fresh perspective on their business from the creative and enquiring minds of marketing and business students. The idea was something I had been thinking about for some time in response to increasing business needs for students to apply their knowledge in a commercial way and contribute to solving business problems, and also in response to a range of reports and findings on teaching, learning and employability.

Our current education system and business

A House of Lords (2015) report claimed that our current education system is failing our students in not effectively tackling topical issues and literacies for the future workplace. Although the report almost exclusively focuses on the use of technologies, it also emphasised aspects that were part of the government's industrial strategy of developing the integration of creativity, social skills, business skills and entrepreneurship into education and training alongside digital literacy. The report by New Media Council (NMC, 2017) specifically supports the notion that developing digital literacy and digital capability (Jisc 2015; 2019) is a necessity for students to obtain and keep employment, with the onus on higher education institutions to equip students with these skills. And of course these skills need to be developed and used in practical situations and in the workplace (Jisc, 2014). The CBI (2011) amongst many others reported that employers wanted more employable graduates, and expected students to do more to prepare themselves for the workplace. An analytical mindset and problem solving, as well as the commercial context in which organisations operate, is necessary (BIS, 2015), along with technical skills and knowledge. Many businesses seem starved of marketing and technology ideas and solutions and struggle to understand the complexity of the new tech-savvy consumers.

Marketing Forum guest speaker: Millionaire entrepreneur Eleni Thompson

Higher education and business

In terms of higher education, much has been written about the ways in which digital technology specifically can support collective, creative and connected forms of learning and study (Henderson et al 2016). New technologies are widely seen to support students in the co-creation of knowledge with peers, yet there is little focus on the use, application and transfer of this knowledge to others and to business. A co-creative approach is, according to Carey (2103), a process driven equally by the academic and the student, embracing the student as a stakeholder in the learning process. This approach is taken a step further with the Forums, since the learning process involves a third component - real businesses. Businesses are a valuable component of the students' co-created learning approach, which involves action-based learning, an important mode of enquiry based on the premise that learning takes place among and through other people (Megele, 2014).

This body of research based academic evidence compels us to acknowledge that students are not being supported with topical issues, relevant literacies and other forms of preparation for a future workplace. Moreover, commercially, there are demands and challenges that are also not being met. For example, Glick (2018) reports that many organisations are complicit in failing to adopt a culture of continuous learning. As a result, digital skills in particular are foremost amongst barriers to employment. In addition, businesses have identified barriers to engaging with universities in their desire to have direct impact on, and communication with, students and academics in building relationships and meaningful knowledge exchanges.

A student perspective

Students, too, have barriers to building relationships with universities, especially in the case of part time or commuter students, who often feel excluded from extra-curricular activities, which often take place in the evening, when these students are likely not on campus due to other commitments. UCAS and HECSU (nd.) and Leeds University (nd.) report that more daytime provision is needed, as day students are disadvantaged from experiential opportunities more readily available to their counterparts who live at or near the university. Such findings urge academics to find ways to enhance the curriculum and improve student experience. Student experience is of course one of the key metrics of many university rankings (Locke, 2014), which have become extremely valuable mobility measures for prospective students and possibly even for higher education employees in a highly marketised sector.

Marketing Forum guest speaker: Bill Strohacker - Director of Strohacker Design School

Evolution of the Marketing Forums

Whilst principally intended to provide an experiential bridge between academic and business and to enhance student's learning thorough extra-curricular activity, the Marketing Forums could also help to address some of the wider issues evident across the sector. They can contribute to enhancing the student experience at the University of Chichester, with students learning beyond the formal teaching sessions, learning that is aligned to assessed modules but which is a co-created experiential based learning environment with no assessment, focused on personal development, knowledge acquisition and knowledge transfer.

Precedents

The idea of adding value to the student experience and learning by inviting guest speakers and business people into universities to speak to students is not new. At some universities, this is a formalised coordinated element alongside teaching; at others, it's more of an ad-hoc activity, whilst at some, it involves leaning on personal contacts and inviting them in at relevant points in a module/course timeline. As such, this latter approach is not widely publicised across the institution or externally. The University of Chichester Business School did not have a formal or centrally coordinated approach, which has led to students to perceive learning and opportunity imbalances across subject areas within the School.

While students were learning on their degree programmes and often working on subject-appropriate case studies, they did not often interface with businesses in more typical business style environments. Research (D'Abate, 2010; Wilson, 2012) supports the idea that developmental interactions and experiences prepare students better for the workplace, and lead to enhanced career development and progression. Accordingly, I proposed that a speaker's event would be established each semester that would appeal to students from all business subjects and would be scheduled to facilitate attendance, thus overcoming one of the barriers that had previously hampered guest speaker events and attendance numbers. These events were not necessarily the easiest to organise. Difficulties included the complexities of timetabling, rooming, securing good and relevant speakers, marketing the events, ensuring that students attended, and the management and stress associated with organising these larger events that I experienced.

Insights from the first two years of this experiment

A number of ideas were pursued to ensure the success of the first two years of these speaker events. Clearly, they attracted some very interesting guest speakers and were well attended by Business Students and Business School staff. However, one thing that came out of this quite strongly was that students wanted to interact more with the participating businesses and speakers, who in return wanted to have time to interact with students to gain insight and ideas from them. Conversely, feedback from students attending also showed that, despite their interest in the talks, it was after all **a talk**: several speakers were very didactic and it was challenging for students to remain interested and focused for the duration. It was this feedback, along with students' finding it challenging to develop and apply their digital literacy meaningfully, that prompted me to set up the Marketing Forums.

Smaller businesses in particular have found it difficult or impossible to engage with universities and participate in knowledge exchange that was largely financially beyond their mean. Many also wanted support with digital technology and innovation, digital skills and marketing, since generating awareness, reaching potential customers and generating sales was often their company's priority for survival.

More generally, businesses often struggle to interface with universities (Guardian, 2019), as historically there have been limited touch-points or vehicles for this to happen. Moreover, universities which are research focused often produce work that fails to resonate with management practice (Bansal et al. 2012), thus reinforcing the notion that universities are not business/management focused in practice, as reflected in the limited opportunities for meaningful exchanges between university and business. In some instances there are, as is the case with the University of Chichester, live projects for relevant assessed modules but these are in a minority and take time to set up and generate results.

Improving connectivity and reciprocal competitive advantage

In light of this, I reasoned that a more immediate platform was needed if businesses were to be encouraged to work more closely with our students. Drawing on many years' experience of working in the commercial sector, running businesses and through attending business networking events and involvement on external consultancy projects for the University of Chichester, it became apparent to me that the challenges smaller businesses faced could in part be addressed and supported by revisiting academic activities and processes to improve connectivity and even provide some competitive advantage for the businesses (and students) from doing so (Guardian, 2019).

Marketing Forum guest speaker: Catkin Bodmer-Wemyss
Director of Bryt Skincare

Having experience in both the worlds of academia and business, I was aware that the behaviours, challenges and expectations of each world were different and not always congruent. I pondered how providing student involvement, removing financial barriers and providing a forum for businesses to engage with universities would make it easier for businesses to access knowledge, and deliver a unique bridging opportunity for students to explore and operate across both worlds. This approach, in part, had been adopted by Brennau University (Erickson & Laing, 2016) as part of their MBA Entrepreneurship programme, citing the round table networking and speaker series as one of its unique differentiators.

Launching the Marketing Forums

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In 2015 the Marketing Forums were launched as a regular series of shorter, focused business events scheduled across each semester at an appropriate time to appeal to the most students especially since many students did not live on campus. Various reports/research show that universities need to do more with their enhanced offering to students during the daytime, so that commuting and part-time students can gain the full university experience (UCAS, nd), whilst remaining sensitive to the needs of external speakers and businesses. A simple format of 5x20-minute blocks was used to structure each event and ensure the events were fast paced, held people's interest and kept things moving. The events were set as a series, on the same day of the week and at the same time and place on each occasion, so that they became more of a regular feature in the goings-on of a university, and firmly established in the minds of students, where a one-off event might not.

As the Marketing Forum events progressed, so too did the content. This ensured: that speakers provided highly appropriate talks for our students' learning, that activity elements enhanced students' skills and that the round table element enabled students and businesses to gain something meaningful from their exchanges. Reports, including those by BIS (2015) and Erickson & Laing (2015), often highlight networking, communication, business etiquette, commercial awareness and problem solving as highly sought-after skills, yet ones which are often lacking in graduates. So, in part, the Marketing Forums set out to address some of these deficits in students and to provide opportunities for them to observe, learn, share and practice a range of skills in a safe and managed environment. Any activities that get students more involved are, according to HEA (2015) *'a positive step towards improving the quality of student learning and ultimately engagement.'*

Grogan (2019) evidenced the future-looking position of the University of Salford's strategy and their development of exceptional industry partnerships to lead the way in real world experiences to prepare students for life in the world of work. He advocated moving beyond partnership to foster an approach that was co-creational and coproduced with students and external stakeholders, at institutional level and at course and modular level. Healey et al. (2014) evidence the benefits of partnerships in learning and teaching and provide evidence of these benefits in curriculum design and assessment.

Marketing Forum guest speaker: Wayne Hemmingway, MBE

Connecting the Forums and taught modules

Over time, assessment for two taught modules, on which I lead, became linked to the forums, ensuring the value of the events provided opportunity for students to develop their ideas, thoughts and practical skills and turning these into relevant and value-added content in the module assignments. This is an effective approach (e.g. Megele 2014). Although evidence has been available for some years linking engagement to learning gain and achievement, the HEA (2015) suggests that greater understanding is still needed on this relationship, given the attendant variables and complexity.

How the Forum works

The format was developed to be attractive and appropriate to both students and businesses, with a faster-paced approach reflective of a business environment and of business networking events. The idea was to introduce students to new ways of doing things and better prepare them for a range of events and formats for business events that are found around the country. Networking, digital literacy, agile mindset, problem solving and communications regularly make the top ten skills (Prospects, Targetjobs, 2018; Emarketer, 2019; CIMA, 2017; CBI, 2011; Jisc, 2019) that students need for the workplace and I felt it important to address these skill areas to support the formal teaching at University and better prepare students for placements and graduate roles. It is these extracurricular activities that, according to Wilson (2012) contribute importantly to the development of graduates' skills.

Process

These fast paced sessions have the following 5x20-minute block schedule.

- 20 minute networking, refreshments and welcome
- 20 minute guest talk
- 20 minute interactive activity
- 2x20-minute business consultancy rotations.

Although this is the prescribed format, it is easy to be flexible and responsive to change and individual demands, for instance if a guest speaker wishes to have 30-40 minutes or attending businesses want longer consultancy rotations.

For the consultancy element, invited businesses present a specific business issue or problem to a group of students with them in a round table format. The students would then ask questions, discuss previous activities of the business and put forward ideas that might assist the business to move forward.

Student round table consultancy

The aim is for students to draw on their academic learning, personal experiences and - where relevant - workplace experiences to propose appropriate ideas to address the business issue. Academic members of staff provide the expert voice for each business consultancy table and ensure that the discussion does not stagnate, enabling all participants to have a voice. At times, the expert academic might add value to the discussion to support student comments or to address gaps in the discussion. I provide the overall event management, introductory welcome, timekeeping and moving people through each component of the event and facilitating a roundup and feedback at the end of each session.

Guidance to students

Students are given information and advice on how to network, how to problem solve with businesses, how to present ideas and are provided with an overview of the consulting process to help in structuring these early sessions with businesses. They are encouraged not to simply throw out idea after idea, but rather to develop these with the business and think them through to implementation, considering the cost, risk and potential outcomes.

At the end of each forum, a round-up is undertaken, where participating businesses summarise the key learning outcomes and action points for their business. This helps to gain an idea of what may or may not have been useful in the discussion and provides a level of feedback for participating students. In classes following the Forum events, I discuss the event with students to ascertain their learning, eliciting what worked for them and how they might be able to approach things in different ways on another occasion.

Who has been involved?

Businesses and entrepreneurs

The Forums have attracted a wide range of businesses and entrepreneurs, either as speakers/facilitators or as businesses seeking enquiring minds on their challenges for the consultancy rotations. These businesses include tourist attractions, hospitality, food producers, retailers, education, arts organisations, local government, beauty salons and beauty product manufacturers, musicians and health & therapies. Guest talks have also covered a wide range of topics - not just focused on tactical marketing activities, but also aspects of marketing and business as a whole, including social media, digital marketing, content strategy, retailing, business start-up and business planning, customer segmentation, economic renewal, destination branding, events and sponsorship, social safety and security, managing people, organisational leadership, business networking, customer service.

Students

The Forums are largely promoted to undergraduate and postgraduate business students, although not exclusively limited to them. The use of social and digital media provides a wider reach, and attracted attendees from other subject areas and indeed interested individuals from outside the University, who are free to attend. The guest speaker and businesses for the consultancy rotations play an important role in attracting students, as – so far - there has been little interest from certain areas of the University. In part, this is due to the Forums being labelled as 'Marketing' and hence perceived not to be relevant and also because of the dual campus setup of the University (Bognor Regis and Chichester), so that different subjects are based at each campus. Nonetheless, the Forums the Forums have attracted students from accounting, events management, tourism, human resources, computing and IT, marketing, musical theatre, English, psychology and sports management.

Evaluation

So far, I have not carried out any formal evaluation. However, I elicit informal feedback from academics and businesses at the close of the event. This has been a valuable element, so that everyone can see in the moment just what the initial reception has been by businesses, and what key points they are taking away with them to reflect on or act on. Most businesses have stated that the input from students far exceeds their expectations, with all stating that they were leaving the event with multiple points of learning, reflection and consideration. Feedback from students has been quite free flowing, some of them remaining after the close of the event to discuss their experiences with the academics and me, which was hugely interesting and revealing. The feedback from students does not stop there, many drawing on these experiences, interactions reflections in later taught sessions with me.

Later, I would e-mail students and business participants asking for feedback. This is principally to draw out thoughts after participants had time to reflect and consolidate, and - for businesses - possibly to implement ideas. Not every participant responded but many did and there were some really constructive suggestions: about what worked well and what didn't work so well, what had been learned, how valuable they had found the sessions and reporting some interesting outcomes as a result of participation. For reasons of space, I have not included the full extent or critical analysis of the feedback and comments in this article, but you are welcome to contact me for details.

Through discussion and feedback from students an interesting point came to light, with a number of students proposing the idea of linking the events to assessment in specific marketing modules, and clearly indicating the skills that would be developed or gained through the events and how this might positively impact the assessments. I took this proposal forward with a first year marketing module on social media marketing and this became one of the first co-created student assessments for the Business School, something that Healey et al. (2014) consider as an activity of the highest order in relation to student partnerships and student engagement. Engaging students in partnerships creates active learning and is meaningful for students, evidencing how embedding this in the curriculum speeds up learning and intellectual development and identifying that such activities elevate student performance and engagement (Healey et al., 2014).

What has not worked so well

Clearly, there have been some excellent benefits and outcomes for all stakeholders, but not every element has worked. One notable aspect that lacked involvement was the extremely limited use of social media by participating students, something that the organisers were hoping for, to raise awareness of and interest in activities at the University. There were a limited number of non-marketing students attending, and this has since led to the renaming of the events from Marketing Forums to Business Forums to reflect the diversity of the content and businesses in attendance. The choice of participating businesses had a large impact on students' future attendance at an event. Where there were 'challenging' business people who were not overly receptive to student input and who created a tougher environment for them, this meant that some students were deterred from attending again as they felt their contribution, value and voice were not being adequately heard or appreciated and led to the self-questioning of their own value. Erickson & Laing (2016) found that there were inevitable culture clashes between academia and business and also that attendees needed to feel they learned something valuable. The two worlds collide in this environment, with each having differing expectations of one another but ultimately students need to work with both for skills development and to learn something from the interactions and speakers.

Benefits

Feedback from student debriefing sessions notes many benefits from the Forums. All welcomed the opportunity to meet and interact with a range of businesses in a familiar environment and experience the way that business networking events are organised. They feel better prepared to attend and engage in such events for future employers.

Student round table consultancy

Some students said that they didn't know how to introduce themselves appropriately to businesses or converse with them, and this was a barrier to their personal development. They found that the interactive task element of the Forums that includes activities such as networking skills, the personal verbal business card and working a room are all extremely useful in their personal skills development and understanding of business interactions.

Being able to work on real business problems was also deemed to be an excellent aspect of being involved in the Forums. Although some students would have had some experience of this in an academic setting, through assessed modules, the Forum environment was much more organic and required a different approach and mindset to helping the businesses attending. At first, students felt that their knowledge and skills were of little or no value to businesses, but with support and academic facilitation of the Forum events, students quickly gained their voices and established their value in relation to the business problems and how they can help to address them.

Developing consultancy skills

Both participating academics and students came to realise that, initially, student input was largely a series of ideas being fired at the business, thinking that this was what the businesses wanted. As sessions and students evolved, and with academics informally 'shaping' the approaches of the sessions and students, student involvement moved to more of an analytical or questioning approach and providing ideas that were more formulated, worked through with depth and applied to the business. Although this meant that there were fewer ideas, they were of a higher quality, more thought-through and useful ideas.

The businesses did find it extremely useful having young enquiring minds working on their business challenges, a demographic segment many of them wished to reach but one in general terms had struggled to understand and connect with. Of course, some of them did not always take on board these possible solutions and students expressed they were sometimes disheartened by this but acknowledged that the delivery of their solutions could be improved as too could refining their idea and providing a more in-depth explanation that was highly specific for each business. An interesting outcome from speaking with businesses was that their participation gave them some much-needed time before the event in preparing for it and during the event spending time looking at their own business issues and considering them from a different perspective which many stated was extremely valuable part of the process for them. However, it was not always clear what they took from the events and what, if anything, was implemented in the business as this was not always shared by them. Although I contacted the businesses via email and received some feedback and thoughts sometime after the events it did not always include content on what they went on to implement. Indeed students commented that they would like to know what businesses went on to do with their ideas after the initial event feedback. This information would enable the students to reflect, analyse and improve. Perhaps this is a future discussion with businesses prior to their participation, to enhance the longer term learning outcomes for students and mutual respective benefits from the process.

A high point: Instagram for Business

One notable student action and outcome came from a third year marketing student. The student provided a very quick Instagram training session with one of the businesses at a Forum event following a number of students indicating that the business would likely achieve much more from using Instagram than the social media they were currently utilising. The business took this on board, learned how to use it and did go on and develop this further and reported that the business has since monetised this channel. The student reflected on her intervention and developed a final year marketing dissertation on Instagram for business, using a live training workshop for businesses as the research focus. At the point of writing this article the student in question has secured a graduate level role for an international brand as their Social Media Manager.

Employability prospects

In terms of employability outcomes for students, several final year students indicated how the Forums had assisted in securing final year placements and indeed graduate roles. During interviews, these students have cited the forum events as examples to demonstrate networking and communication skills and also how they have developed analytical skills working with businesses to solve real business issues; all highly regarded employability skills. Meeting businesses is a valuable learning experience, and one that has enabled students to build their professional networks, gain project work for assessed modules and secure placement and job opportunities. Students who attended from other departments across the University were also using the Forums positively as a way to demonstrate their exposure to business, business topics and problem solving – features which they stated were not as plentiful in their course as they would have liked.

There is some subjective evidence, from one specific cohort of marketing students, that those who participated achieved better grades in their assignments. In one specific module, their final assessment demonstrated higher order thinking and analysis, with much greater level of application than assignments submitted by other students who had not attended and their overall grade was notably higher because their work more appropriately addressed the assessment criteria. Of course one could surmise that these were simply the better students, more committed to their studies and more active in their own learning, and this may well be the case. Spending time with these students over the academic year, they were also able to showcase in class their thought process and problem-solving ability better in relation to questions and challenges in class. This was also evident with subsequent groups but a future project here for me might be to develop a suitable measurement and evaluation framework to ascertain in greater detail the impact and value for students of participating in the Forums.

Conclusion

According to NMC Horizons (2017) the student of the future is a 'maker' - someone who goes beyond critically understanding problems to being able to produce solutions. This is a view supported by HEA (2015) in stating and evidencing the value and impact of real world authentic learning experiences, as a high impact learning pedagogy, one that increases students' engagement. They suggest that there could be more opportunity and impact in developing this further into assessments within programmes. There are evidenced benefits for students and businesses and for universities too, in playing a key and fundamental role of an educational organisation for the benefit of the community it serves whilst contributing to economic development in its various forms. Academics can take from this a format that works, that involves and engages students, staff and external stakeholders for the benefit of all. The Forum is a simple model that can be implemented at low financial cost, it is easily adjusted to suit the particular academic department and university and elicits enormous benefits. As Erickson & Laing (2016) demonstrate, it can be used as a differentiator in the student recruitment process and can enhance business-university-student engagement, as well as the student learning experience.

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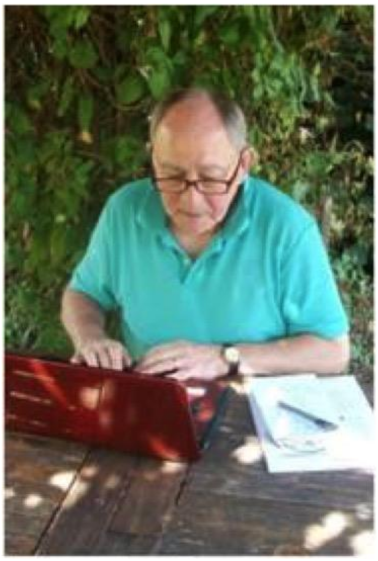
Writing in a social space:

forming a university community of writing practice

Bob MacKenzie



Keywords

Community of writing practice, academic writing, writing in a social space, critical friend, scholar practitioner, flipping

Context

The production and consumption of rigorous, persuasive writing in all its phases, formats and contexts is central to academic and research work. Yet, when it comes to getting down to writing and publishing, many of the range of people who populate universities often feel left largely to their own devices, and at sea.

Others who live and work beyond university campuses also experience similar barriers and inhibitions, which are by no means unique to academia. Yet what everyone has in common is at least the option of performing as a 'scholarly practitioner'.

The scholar practitioner ideal

McClintock (2004) sees the idea and ideal of a scholar practitioner in the following way:

> 'The scholar practitioner ideal has been analysed from various perspectives as to the nature of skilled and principled action ranging from adult development and higher education to epistemology.'

The term scholar practitioner 'expresses an ideal of professional excellence grounded in theory and research, informed by experiential knowledge, and motivated by personal values, political commitments, and ethical conduct. Scholar practitioners are committed to the well-being of clients and colleagues, to learning new ways of being effective, and to conceptualizing their work in relation to broader organizational, community, political and cultural contexts. Scholar practitioners explicitly reflect on and assess the effectiveness of their work. Their professional activities and the knowledge they develop are based on collaborative and relational learning through active exchange within communities of practice and scholarship.'

(McClintock 2004)

As an experiment, Dr Rob Warwick and I, with the support of Dr Dawn Robins, invited colleagues from across the School to join us in spending some regular quality time together in a small, facilitated community of research and writing practice (after Lave and Wenger 1991). We set out with the aim of creating a rare space - a kind of in-house writing retreat - for Business School staff and postgraduate students who have an interest in writing and publishing their research. We wanted to co-create conditions – however temporary and occasional – in which they would derive and offer mutual interest and support within a group of critical friends who grapple with similar writing-related issues of various kinds, whatever their academic discipline. In the course of our meetings, a shared purpose emerged for each participant to develop an article of their choice, and to see themselves in print through the medium of this special edition of The Association for Management Education and Development (AMED)'s quarterly online journal e-Organisations and People (e-O&P).

At AMED, we publish e-O&P to serve as a bridge connecting academia and other fields of practice. So it seemed appropriate that we should choose this particular edition to frame and celebrate the fruits of a nascent community of academic writing practice within the University of Chichester Business School.

Facilitating writing in a social space

Beginning in the 2018/19 academic year, we have been running a series of monthly workshops at Bognor Regis campus within the regular research development space on Wednesday afternoons. As e-O&P's commissioning editor and convenor of the AMED Writers' Group, I undertook the role pro bono of lead workshop facilitator, and subsequently, as the project `took shape, as co-editor with Rob of this special Summer 2019 edition of e-O&P.

In his editorial for this issue (Editorial 1), Rob generously refers to the lightness of my touch (Warwick 2019). If that is how it's perceived by others, then I'm glad. However, it might help to make a little more explicit the thinking that underpins how I see the process of facilitating such communities of academic writing practice, and how my practice – and that of this group - has evolved experientially.

My approach draws upon previous similar work elsewhere, including that of my roles as convenor of the AMED Writers' Group, my experiences of supervising candidates as Set Adviser on the IMCA Business School's Senior Executive Action Learning (SEAL) doctoral programme, and previous engagement with the Institute of Small Business and Entrepreneurship (ISBE)'s Special Interest Group for early career researchers. Conceptually, my evolving practice is informed in particular by principles of writing in social spaces (Murray 2015), action learning (Revans 1998), by theories of personal, systemic and ecological influences on academic writing (Kempenaar and Murray 2016), by propositions about critical friendship (MacKenzie 2015), and by three sets of assumptions.

My assumptions about writing in a social space

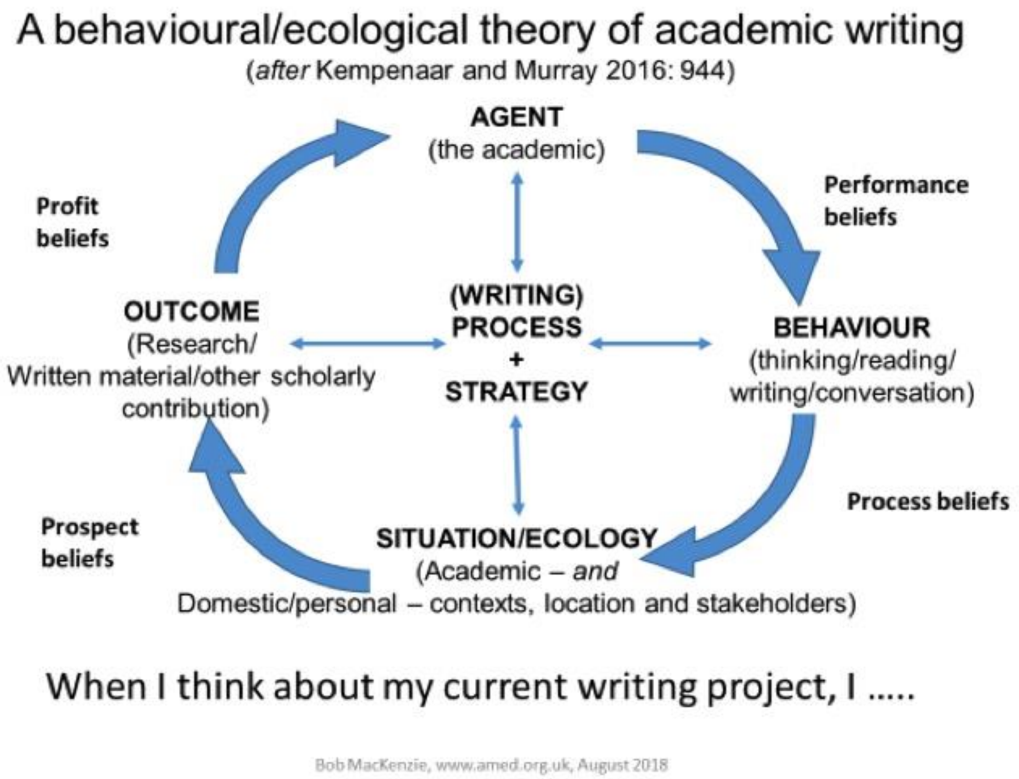
These assumptions are that:

- Writing is both a process (a verb) and an artefact (a noun). Writing in a social space therefore necessarily embraces both aspects. Reciprocally and iteratively, writing and speaking can inform and enrich each other.

- Writing involves supportive social/relational as well as individual/solitary activity. Weightings may differ according to individual circumstance and personality, but even the most solitary of writers will generally find a need to talk about their writing project at some point, whether before, during or after publication. It's important to exchange and test ideas and experiences, through both talking and writing, concerning all sorts of writing-related issues, as an integral part of anticipating, doing or reflecting upon the writing itself. Their writing entails scribing - forming words on the page or screen, and more broadly making their mark.
- Writing-related issues that emerge can be as much (and sometimes even more so) practical and psychological as methodological and technical. Unless addressed, these issues can lead to writing inertia, evidenced by empty page syndrome or writer's block.

Figure 1 below is an amalgam of two interdependent conceptual models that Kempenaar and Murray (2016) have formulated to explicate the process of academic writing. Their theory draws attention to the important influence of context, and to the constant interplay of personal and environmental factors that affect individual academic's experiences of writing. Whilst taking great care not to claim it as an accurate representation of their thinking, I introduce these ideas early in the workshop series as a framework to help participants identify the variety of ecologies, stakeholders, thoughts, feelings and resources that affect their writing activity or inactivity that they must take into account. This serves to stimulate reflection and conversation within the group:

Figure 1:



To sum up, Kempenaar and Murray propose that:

> 'the relationship between the academic writer and the demand of the person-environment relationship to produce writing is appraised internally by the academic in terms of potential or actual threat, or challenge posed by this relationship. This triggers an internal, secondary appraisal process which determines the academic's resources to write, which can be broken down into a set of control beliefs about the different domains of behaviour required to write productively and successfully. ..... (These) control beliefs are informed by the individual's biological characteristics and experience, but they are also shaped by the system or ecology in which the individual is located in both past and present'
>
> (Kempenaar & Murray 2016: 948).

Given all this, at any stage of the writing process, it can help for academics to come together as critical friends in a small, informal, facilitated community of (academic) writing practice such as that which we are endeavouring to foster within the University of Chichester Business School. Over the past year, we have noticed a growing critical friendship within this community. If writing in a social space is to be effective, the presence and practice of critical friendship is important. So the following section sets out to explain its characteristics.

A note on critical friendship

One way of understanding critical friendship in the context of writing is that it is writing 'criticism' expressed as a form of appreciative inquiry (e.g. Mohr & Watkins 2002). It moves as necessary backwards and forwards along a continuum of constructive challenge and willing support which is offered and accepted in a spirit of well-intentioned and well-informed generosity. Critical friends seek to help each other develop their best writing possible, and to recognise opportunities for shared learning.

It might help to say just a little more about what distinguishes critical friendship from friendship as it is commonly practised.

Friendship

Friendship can be regarded as an interpersonal relationship, often formed through an implicit 'contract', which is characterised by an emotional and intellectual affinity. Friendships involve mutual trust and intimacy, and are expressed differently in different periods, cultures, discourses and contexts, including virtually and face-to-face.

Critical friendship

As I understand them, critical friendships can be temporary or longer-lasting dyadic or multiple, formal or informal helping relationships with mutual benefit. For writing, their purpose is to encourage (prospective) authors to recognise that they have something worthwhile to say, to experiment with various ways of saying it, and to help them see their writing through to – and after - publication as a careful, engaging piece with a particular audience in mind. Critical friends negotiate the creative tension inherent in shifting over a dynamic continuum of challenge and support. Their privileged relationship is characterised by reciprocity, mutuality, shared values, generosity, a thirst for intellectual and practical excitement, by sharing various forms of communication, and by relishing the sheer fun and pleasure of being in the real or virtual company of other critical friends. They can also help each other to develop 'writing courage', and the ability to surmount the small wounds encountered when offering and receiving any criticism, in a way that can build and strengthen such a relationship (see Table 1 below).

Table 1: Some qualities of critical friends for writing

Critical friends are rare and greatly valued. They are:

- Trustworthy and competent in subject and/or process, or potentially so
- Able to lower their defences sufficiently to enable them to receive as well as to give constructive feedback
- Intent on being mutually supportive and constructively challenging
- Reasonably available to each other
- Intent on helping each other to achieve a critical perspective
- Capable of understanding critical incidents (Tripp 1993), or of noticing 'arresting', 'striking' or 'moving' moments (Shotter 2011)
- Able to give the benefit of the doubt to each other's learning, ideas, advice, experience and actions
- Able to monitor and re-negotiate their respective psychological contracts, e.g. (Guest and Conway 2001)
- Able to engage sensitively in dialogue (Schein 1999: 201-12)
- Open to ending their critical friendships and finding new ones at an appropriate point
- Careful to avoid collusion or excessive dependency, or being sucked into a counselling or therapy role.

(Extract from MacKenzie, B. (2015: 45). 'Critical friendships for coaching and mentoring in writing'.)

It is these qualities that we have been endeavouring to foster and express in this community of academic writing practice's ventures into writing in a social space.

How we work

As I mentioned earlier, this particular workshop series (others take place elsewhere) is for the benefit of Chichester University Business School staff and post-graduate students who have an interest in research and writing. It is for people who feel they would value the support of other critical friends who are facing similar writing-related issues of various kinds.

Our aim has been to provide a forum for participants to share and develop writing that interests them, whatever its nature or focus. So what they decide to bring to the group is up to them. These sessions benefit from a rich variety of the writing-related backgrounds, ideas, approaches and styles that participants bring and share. Individual writing interests have included, but are by no means limited to:

- Case studies
- Technical and research-related reports
- Blogs and social media
- Academic journals
- Trade/Professional press
- Newspapers
- Dissertations and doctoral papers
- Books and book chapters
- Editorials

As a group of critical friends, we engage as peers in a spirit of reciprocal, well-intentioned, informed and sensitive challenge and support, according to a clear set of ground rules, which we discuss and review as necessary.

A loose process framework for writing in a social space

Typically, we work flexibly along the following lines:

- Welcome, introductions and an outline/reminder of critical friendship, action learning and social writing processes.
- Agenda-building, based on individual participants' writing-related goals and issues.

- Periodic input where appropriate concerning issues raised by participants (examples might include: editing, composition, developing an argument, the 'rules' of different types of writing, choosing a particular publication etc).
- Action learning conversations: These conversations form a core element of our sessions, in which we address for example barriers to writing, finding inspiration, collaboration, making the most of success, sustaining momentum, writing routines and environments, overcoming writing anxiety and inertia etc.
- Free writing as a group activity
- Moments of individual writing
- Spending equal time in pairs or trios of critical friends
- Closing with a brief plenary review, in which individuals can articulate issues they might wish to address before our next meeting.

Informal aspects

Informal aspects are also very important in fostering trusting writing relationships. For example, a highlight of our December 2018 gathering was indulging in mince pies, mulled wine and a Janus-like Christmas Quiz. This was an opportunity for participants to look back on their writing over 2018 and ahead to 2019, reflecting on or anticipating their writing practice, experiences, aspirations and achievements. From time to time, a few of us would also repair to a local pub afterwards, there to carry on the conversation in equally congenial circumstances. In so doing, however, we are mindful that this is not to everyone's tastes or time budget.

Silent writing in a social space

It's worth noting that there is often a designated period of silent solo writing in the company of other people who are in the room doing the same. This fosters a strong sense of solidarity and silent mutual support. ('We're all in it together.'). This feeling is similar to that which I might experience sitting in a library Reading Room, when everyone is reading a different publication, or simply relishing the privilege of having a quiet space to think, aware that their fellows are similarly engaged whilst pursuing different individual agenda. Such feelings are also reported, for example, in Intensive Journal writing workshops (Progoff 1992), within which participants write entries in their own personal journals, silently, in the company of others.

A partnership between internal and external facilitators

Rob, Dawn and I each contribute a different aspect of facilitation which, taken together, has resulted in this publication. Rob is in effect commissioner of this writing experiment, and represents and legitimises our activity through negotiations with senior university management. Dawn coordinates the practical logistics of securing a physical space and communicating with participants about schedules. I contribute a relative outsider's perspective, and my writing, editing and facilitation background. And the other participants, in their practice as critical friends of each other, variously take on facilitation roles in the moment. It is a heady, shifting mix.

What next?

It has been a privilege for me to be involved in this university community of writing practice. Should the project continue – and possibly even open out to others – then it might help to consider questions such as: What might we continue? What might we change? and How might we make these changes? I'd like to conclude by offering a few thoughts of my own.

Image: Janus, ancient god of gates, doors and beginnings.
Source: http://www.novareinna.com/festive/janus.html

Time allocated to writing alone in a crowd

One problem we soon recognised that we could not ignore, and which seems to be endemic in contemporary university culture, is that of an ethos of incipient busyness and acute sense of time pressure. Participants often proffered 'lack of time' as an excuse either not to write for publication, or for having to leave early, arrive late, or to give their last-minute apologies for not attending. Whilst extolling the virtues and benefits of writing in a social space, I realise that it's important to acknowledge explicitly its counter-cultural features. That said, Rob has already mentioned elsewhere in this edition the very positive feedback of the majority of participants involved. (Warwick 2019). If the university decides to continue with and develop this form of writing support, perhaps we might consider returning to the original plan of three-hour sessions, so that more time could be given over to writing alone in a crowd.

Flipping: e.g. by using Moodle more

In this edition, Jo (Blackwell 2019) explains the practice of 'flipping', citing the following extract:

> "Flipped learning is a pedagogical approach in which the conventional notion of classroom-based learning is inverted, so that students are introduced to the learning material before class, with classroom time then being used to deepen understanding through discussion with peers and problem-solving activities facilitated by teachers" *(HEA website, 2018*).

Interestingly, on this occasion, our writing support group made very little use of Moodle's potential resource, preferring to focus almost exclusively on coming together in person. This leads me to wonder whether Moodle is generally perceived more as a teaching and administrative tool for students alone. Is it possible that it could also be put to greater use by academic writers in strengthening their community of practice?

Prospects for writing in a social space.

As the group reaches its mature, 'performing' stage (Tuckman & Jensen 1977), it may be that more spontaneous forms of communities of writing practice will emerge. (There are signs of this happening already). Hence, in addition to - or instead of – sessions having a designated facilitator, perhaps there could be more informal sub-group and chance meetings 'offline'. The group might even begin to engage in greater degrees of spontaneous self-facilitating or self-managing, with more occasional contributions from a designated internal or external facilitator.

Conclusion

Writing in a social space complements other approaches to academic writing

Writing in a social space complements – and does not replace - more formal taught modules on academic writing (e.g. Day 2018). It also complements – and contrasts with - the perhaps more typically solitary, competitive set of gendered assumptions and stereotypes of what is generally considered 'academic writing practice'. Greenhalg (2019) characterises this as expressed by 'the "lone wolf" male academic competing with colleagues for a slot in a prestigious journal'. Set alongside this tradition, 'writing in a social space' – whilst not claiming to be a panacea or suitable for everybody's needs – is imbued with a spirit that Greenhalg maintains is:

> 'to emphasize the importance of reflection, collaboration, acceptance of ambiguity, attention to audience and context, and nurturing self and others' *(Greenhalg 2019*).

Writing in a social space thus acknowledges the potential for what we might call masculine and feminine/feminist academic writing strategies and practices to work in tandem.

Writing for e-Organisations and People is a form of rehearsal

e-Organisations and People (e-O&P) is the journal of the Association for Management Education and Development (www.amed.org.uk), which is an educational charity. It aims to connect practitioner academics and scholar practitioners, for their mutual benefit. Contributions are well-written in plain, accessible English. Often articles appear in e-O&P to test and explore ideas before the authors develop them further for the more mainstream academic press. They can also offer accessible digests of more formal academic papers that have already been published. These digests are written by and/or for intelligent, interested and time-poor practitioners in the field of academia and/or personal, organisational and management learning and development, with the aim of achieving wider impact. Instead of the typical blind peer review and star rating requirements of the Research Excellence Framework (REF 2021), e-O&P articles benefit from a rigorous process of critical friendship, in which feedback is offered by a known person.

e-O&P thus seems a perfect space in which to publish the writings of this embryonic community of academic writing practice, in which the 'practice' of writing in a social space is as much a form of rehearsal and experiment as it is synonymous with 'academic integrity'. We hope you enjoy what you find in these pages, and that you are inspired to join in our community of writing practice, or form your own.

Acknowledgements

In addition to Rob's thanks that he expresses at the beginning of this edition in his Editorial Part 1, I would like to thank **Rob**, **Dawn** and the authors whose work appears in this edition for their cheerful willingness to experiment with writing in a social space. **David McAra** of AMED has performed his usual essential role behind the scenes in arranging the final layout and formatting of the text, and in managing the secure editorial web page where pre-publication articles are placed for final checking. I would also like to say what a pleasure it has been to have experienced the warm community spirit that seems to pervade both Chichester University campuses. As Schumacher (1973) asserted, 'Small is beautiful…'.

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Some forthcoming events

You are most welcome to join us

Please click on the links if you'd like to find out more.

Date	Event	More info
16 August 1.15-4.30 pm, London SE11	**AMED Writers' Group** *Intergenerational writing and conversations*, with the Open Source Thinking hosting team	
20 – 23 September, Currer Laithe Farm, Yorkshire	**4th Open Source Thinking residential Gathering** https://www.opensourcethinking.org.uk/ost2019 **(All spaces taken)**	
September	**Publication of the Autumn 2019 edition of e-O&P** '*Creative collaborations*'. Guest Editor: Louise Austin.	
10-11 October Jagiellonian University, Krakow, Poland	**7th Annual Humanistic Management Conference** 'Solidarity and the common good'	Humanistic Management Network
18 October 1.15-4.30 pm, London SE11	**AMED Writers' Group** *Writing to influence healthcare policy and practice*, with David Zigmond (details tbc)	
December	**Publication of the Winter 2019 edition of e-O&P**, with an Antipodean flavour Guest Editor: Peter Hughes	

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e-O&P is AMED's quarterly online journal, available in pdf format, for academics, professionals, managers and consultants at all stages of their careers. It addresses innovative approaches to personal, professional and organisational development in a reflective and accessible way. It has a practical bias with a balance of well-written thought pieces, case studies, interviews, articles, reviews and editorials. Our articles are succinct, engaging, authentic and easy to read. We maintain our high standards of writing through the careful selection of relevant themes, through applying the principles of critical friendship, and through our support of outstanding guest editors.

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Once selected, our editors have a pretty free hand within a broad set of guidelines. Guest editors deliver to the *e-O&P* editorial board a set of articles of suitable quality, ready for publication, according to a pre-arranged schedule. This involves editors in inviting proposals for contributions, identifying authors, commissioning stimulating articles, reviewing, and where appropriate, critiquing drafts and proof-reading final copy and liaising with the e-O&P Editorial Board.

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For their particular edition, guest editors often find it useful to create a small, temporary editorial team to support them, including Critical Friends. The *e-O&P* editorial board is happy to help them find such collaborators, and is on hand to explore any issues or concerns that arise, bearing in mind our limited time to engage in extensive, detailed reading or conversations.

We are always looking to expand *e-O&P*'s critical friendship network, which would be available to guest editors or individual authors on request. Depending on their preferences and any specific need, Critical Friends can help by reading drafts, offering constructive feedback, clarifying ideas, commenting on style, providing encouragement, or by proof-reading or copy-editing pre-publication texts. In return, this offers Critical Friends the opportunity to develop greater insight into, and awareness of possibilities for, their own writing and professional practice. They might even consider subsequently becoming a guest editor or author for *e-O&P*.

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At the Business School we support the development of enterprising, professional graduates and we deliberately create an executive education environment that encourages open questioning, project management and team working.

The Business School is renowned for its work on regional regeneration with a particular focus on coastal communities in the UK and the EU; small and medium sized enterprises as the key driver of economic growth, and the strategic economic planning for the regional Local Enterprise Partnership.

AMED stands for the Association for Management Education and Development, www.amed.org.uk. We are a long-established membership organisation and educational charity devoted to developing people and organisations.

Our purpose is to serve as a forum for people who want to share, learn and experiment, and find support, encouragement, and innovative ways of communicating. Our conversations are open, constructive, and facilitated.

Through AMED, we strive to benefit our members and the wider society. Exclusive Member benefits include excellent professional indemnity cover at a significant discount, free copies of the quarterly journal *e-O&P*, and discounted fees for participation in a range of face-to-face events, special interest groups, and our interactive website. We aim to build on our three cornerstones of ***knowledge***, ***innovation*** and ***networking*** in the digital age. Wherever we can, AMED Members, Networkers and Guests seek to work with likeminded individuals and organisations to generate synergy and critical mass for change. www.amed.org.uk, or contact **Linda Williams**, our Membership Administrator, E: amedoffice@amed.org.uk, T: 0300 365 1247