[9] Eshet-Alkalai Y, Caspi A, Eden S, Geri, N. & Yair, Y., editors. Interpersonal and group interactions using educational blogs. Proceedings of the Chais conference on instructional technologies research.; 2009; Raanana: The Open University of Israel; 2009.

[10] Paz Dennen, V. Pedagogical lurking: student engagement in non-posting discussion behaviour. Computers in Human Behavior 2008, 24, 1624-1633.

[11] Holley, D. & Oliver, M. Student engagement and blended learning: portraits of risk. Computers & Education 2010, 54(3), 693-700.

[12] Wishart C & Guy, R. Analyzing responses, moves, and roles in online discussions. Interdisciplinary Journal of E-Learning and Learning Objects 2009, 5, 129-144.

[13] Coldwell J, Craig A, Paterson, T. & Mustard, J. Online students: relationships between participation, demographics and academic performance. Electronic Journal of e-Learning 2008, 6(1), 19-30.

[14] Coulter, P. & Draper, L. Blogging it into them: weblogs in information literacy instruction. Journal of Library Administration 2006, 45(1), 101-115.

[15] Kozel-Gains, M. & Stoddart, R. Experiments and experiences in liaison activities: lessons from new librarians in integrating technology, face-to-face and follow up. Collection Management 2009, 34(2), 130-142.

Learning and Teaching in Business through Rich and Varied Information Sources

Ian Hughes, Business School, University of Wolverhampton

Introduction

There is an old Chinese proverb, sometimes attributed to Confucius, which states 'I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand', which suggests that experience is the best teacher. There is a close fit here with issues which Kolb (1984:21)) discussed about the Lewinian experiential learning model which hinges progress in learning on the impact of the 'concrete experience'. However, another proverb sometimes attributed to Confucius says 'By three methods we may learn wisdom: First, by reflection, which is noblest; Second, by imitation, which is easiest; and third by experience, which is the bitterest.' But there is no real dichotomy here, experience can be a bitter teacher – how many students do you know (or even colleagues or perhaps even yourself) who have learned through personal bitter experience the simple lesson of 'Read the question before you start, while you are answering it, and again when you think you have finished'. For a graded summative assessment failing to consider this can be personally disastrous, but it is a lesson remembered (hopefully) by most.

But is personal experience the only option? Can we learn 'experientially' from other people's experience? Dewey (1938:69) suggested a model of experiential learning based on observation of the environment (conditions), knowledge of what has happened in similar situations in the past – through personal experience **or from information, advice or warnings from those with wider experience**, and judgement to blend these into a decision (author's emphasis).

This paper explores areas around experiential learning, case study use, problem based learning and the requirement for students to engage with more complex learning and assessment environments. This requirement is driven by student learning strategies (Lim and Johnson, 2002) and employer perceptions of student competency shortfalls (CBI, 2007). A possible solution used by the author in teaching project management techniques is explored in terms of pedagogy, and student and teacher engagement. The approach offers a rich and varied set of information sources, and provides students with a complex environment to analyse and report on.

Simplicity or Complexity – 'Customer Wants and Needs'

Goodwin and Jenkins (1997) assert that 'Lessons using stories, fables, myths, and legends have an advantage because they can deal with complex issues concisely'. But why do we need to consider complexity? Should we rather concentrate on simplifying teaching content and 'vehicles' to provide basic 'nuggets' of knowledge which the students then apply in whatever assignment we offer them? The answer here has two parts. Firstly, if we are content that our only goal is to get students through courses, and that students are a happy party to this concept as they all fall into Richardson's (2005:676) concept of strategic learners, then perhaps that works. However, if within Higher Education (HE) we are here to develop deep learning, the we need to consider how our approaches to teaching might support that Richardson (2005:677).

Secondly, we may consider our customer base and responsibility to be broader than any student's immediate goal. Jackson (2009) reviewed literature on employers' views of the competency of graduates in the work environment. While this revealed broad contentment with some graduate attributes, such as use of ICT, many other areas were considered to be deficient. Although Jackson concentrated on key competencies, such as organisational and communication skills, there was also an underpinning theme in the concerns expressed about graduates who 'learn little about how to analyze and solve complex, messy problems that confront today's business managers and leaders as they seek to navigate the global economy' (Quelch (2005). This is supported by comment within Boud & Solomon's work (2001:165) which defined executive effectiveness as 'demonstrating decisiveness combined with sensitivity in making difficult judgements in response to complex situations' , and Knight & Yorke (2004:8) who reported comments from managers who felt that students lacked ''the ability to handle ambiguous and complex situations'.

The challenge is for business schools to develop student ability to look at complex and messy problems rather than simplistic scenarios where students can quickly learn to hunt for 'key words' and develop simplistic answers so that we as academics can have an easier time grading the papers. I would describe this as a two dimensional approach to a 'case study', a single text source which relays a series of 'facts' to the students to review and create some order out of. For students who have come up through a standard education system of school-college/university this is far too often what they are used to, and often quite adept at finding the 'keywords'. However, it is an approach which is fairly easy to create and maintain – changing the names of target organisations, or minor amendments to data, to maintain currency and reduce risks of plagiarism. The problem with building complex learning environments such as the case studies used within the Harvard Business School is that they usually take time and effort to develop, and yet without careful preplanning could be obsolete very quickly,

and may have fairly few information types (e.g. a complex text based source). If the developed case can only effectively support one set of assignments then the work can at best be rotated through the process every five years or so(to avoid 'inherited plagiarism'), or at worst used once and thrown away.

These days with decreased staff levels, and pressure on staff to generate other income, then a non-sustainable approach is out of the options list. So the question then becomes how to develop a 'three dimensional' learning environment or vehicle, rich in information and information types, which allows a series of different questions to be asked, that does not require an excessive amount of work to create, or absorb a large amount of money to buy(there are case sources out there for 'hire',e.g. from ECCT – Cranfield University). Ideally, the vehicle should support at least a case study approach to learning, if not moving fully to a problem based approach (Savin-Baden, 2000; Hmelo-Silver, 2004).

Teacher's Needs and Wants
The teacher is part of this overall environment, and Figure 1 depicts the overlapping interests, while emphasising that each player has interests outside the overlap. Heffernan *et al.(*2009) investigated what makes a good lecturer, coming to the conclusion that 'dynamism' was a key attribute in a good teacher, and their views are supported by Entwistle (1987:20 - 21) who talks of students 'sharing the lecturer's enthusiasm' especially if the lecturer can provide 'striking examples and enthusiasm'. Teachers in HE may be deeply interested in their own research subject area, but not perhaps enthralled by teaching it, or involved in delivery of content which is outside their own personal research area. Here then motivation to deliver good teaching may be low – which in turn is likely to reduce any real dynamic approach within the teaching of what may well be a fairly dry subject area in itself. Already, if Heffernan *et al.* are to be believed, we are moving out of that good teaching and learning opportunity and into a module of diminishing teacher, and thereby student, interest and motivation.

Figure 1

Industry and Society

A Possible Way Forward
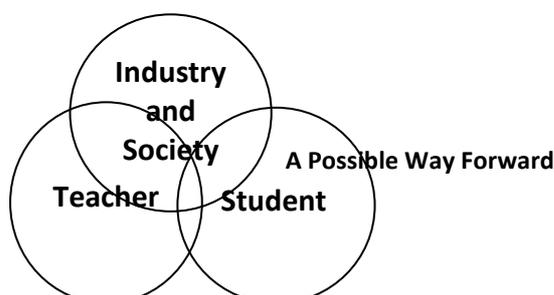
Teacher **Student**

How can we merge the concepts discussed so far to develop a meaningful teaching and learning environment, that is re-useable, motivating for the teacher and student alike, has relevance to course and 'customer' requirements, yet does not require excessive amounts of content creation for already overburdened staff ? I found myself in this dilemma teaching elements of a project management course involving the analysis of project requirements and the preparation of project documentation. Adding to my woes, the cohort was very mixed, including practicing consultants, ICT experts, production managers, NHS and FE College administrators, and 'normal' students. I needed a vehicle which would give no one individual a particular advantage, yet engage all in discourse so that peer to peer learning could also be enabled.

A key tenet of project management practice is the area of Lessons Learned. Project management methodologies such as Prince 2 (OGC, 2009) emphasise the importance of learning from the positives and negatives of a project, through a structured learning log and associated end of project report. These lessons should be shared within the organisation/organisations concerned to enable organisational learning, although there is debate within the profession about how often this really takes place. These concepts fit closely with those around reflective practice described by Schön (1987), and others. Industry has highlighted a problem with Business School graduates as being unable to re-contextualise what they have learned so that it fits within their new environment and new projects (CBI, 2007). Projects by nature are or have some aspect of uniqueness (Lock, 2007:5) so what happened in one project may not match with the next. Ideally, therefore, this ability to re-contextualise also needs to be part of what we teach, and somehow embedded within the overall approach.

The approach under investigation takes events from history, both ancient and modern, and looks at them through modern project management approaches, engaging the student with a complex environment, rich in information sources. However, because of the richness of the information source subject areas other than project management could benefit from the approach. Suitable events that are well supported include *Titanic*, *The Great Escape, The Battle of Britain* and many, many, more. They are useful in that there are written sources, oral history sources, and DVD sources – often both historically

based and entertainment based – and are the subject of associated project management focused books. One advantage of the use of historical contexts rather than recent projects is that they are more likely to have good information sources, that are less likely to be clouded by litigation issues or 'marketing' spin. This multiple view of the events under study means that students need to engage with the complexity of the material, and also apply some analysis and judgement as to the validity of some of the information provided. Lim and Johnson (2002) comment about student's learning strategy being driven by the complexity and perceived value of their studies, and the complex problems presented in these stories provide a rich resource.

The 'entertainment' DVDs become a useful source, but one which they need to consider carefully; this applies whether it is a Hollywood blockbuster or a Shakespeare play. Anecdotal evidence, from two student cohorts, suggests that they find the approach interesting and engage readily with the material and the learning construct. Several students went on to develop a personal interest in the subject matters used for the classes. So far the 'stories' used are *Henry V* , *The Great Escape*, and *The Dambusters* . As the DVD is purchased by the student as a personal copy they must watch the DVD within their own time to be able to then engage within class, or to attempt the assignment; this becomes leverage to engagement and obviates issues around copyright. So, the student interest seems to be satisfied.

The story and supporting information is complex and the 'history' has to be re-contextualised into the parameters of modern project management, so at least some of the 'industry' requirements are met in reaching for traditional approach shortfalls.

The third stakeholder, the teacher, controls the choice of subject matter. Ideally the teacher picks an event or series of events that s/he has some personal interest in, thus helping with their own motivation and dynamic delivery. However there are some parameters to be considered, eg ideally the DVD should not be a recent release, as they tend to be more expensive, nor too obscure, as this may impact on availability for students to purchase. Seek a story where the DVD includes multiple language sub-titles to help at least some foreign students as well as maintaining inclusivity for students with a hearing problem. The nature of the story should also fit in with the learning outcome requirements, the educational aims need

to be supported by the 'entertainment, rather than the entertainment driving the education. By utilising existing rich information sources, the teacher can concentrate on the assessment design and relevant teaching, rather than on the generation and maintenance of 'background' information. The richness of the information 'cube' available allows different assignments to be developed, indeed at multiple taxonomic levels if need be.

So far this historical event approach seems to address a range of pedagogical issues, but little real evidence is available. This work will represent an ongoing study and attempt to gain insight from teachers, students and industry through a questionnaire based study engaging with teachers and students in a range of environments, and with professionals to try and gain an industry perspective.

Conclusions

Good teaching drives good learning, and good teaching is driven in turn by enthusiasm and the use of 'striking' examples on the part of the teacher. Complexity in content, with a variety of information sources, and the use of a 'story telling' construct can help deliver that richness and complexity that future employers fear is missing in business school graduates cognitive skills. Different teachers will be enthused and motivated by different concepts, and some may well find that using historically based stories, supported by movie industry DVDs, famous plays, and academic historical texts gives them a useful source of content and context. But this does not have to be historical fact, perhaps a teacher might be fascinated in some useful work of fiction that could form the basis of learning and discussion – from *Lord of the Rings* to *The Italian Job, Starwars* to *Casablanca*. There is a risk that "the Story" might be too strong and in fact interfere with the intended learning – at present we do not know and further study into this pedagogic construct is required. While the author's work so far has focused on the subject domain of Project Management, it is doubtful that this is the only subject area within the business field that could employ this concept.

References

Boud, D., & Solomon, N. (2001). *Work-based learning: A new higher education?* Buckingham, England: SRHE & Open University Press.

Confederation of British Industry (CBI) (2007). *Shaping up for the future: The business vision for education and skills*. London: CBI.

Dewey, J.(1938) *Education and Experience.* New York: Macmillan.

Entwistle, N. (1987) 'A Model of the Teaching-Learning Process' in J. T. E Richardson, M. W. Eysenck and D.W. Piper, *Student Learning*. Milton Keynes: SHRE and OU Publishing.

Goodwin, S. & Jenkins A. (1997) 'Teaching Through Stories'. *Journal of School Health*, Vol. 67, No. 6. Available online at http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1746-1561.1997.tb06314.x/abstract [Accessed 15th August 2011].

Heffernan, T., Morrison, M., Sweeny, A. & Jarrat, D. (2009) 'Personal attributes of effective lecturers: The importance of dynamism, communication, rapport and applied knowledge'. *International Journal of Management Education*, Vol.8, No. 3, pp. 13-27.

Hmelo-Silver, C.E. (2004) 'Problem-Based Learning: What and How Do Students Learn?' *Educational Psychology Review*, Vol. 16, No. 3, pp. 235-266.

Jackson, D. (2009) 'An international profile of industry-relevant competencies and skill gaps in modern graduates'. *International Journal of Management Education*, Vol. 8, No. 3, pp. 29-58.

Kolb, D. A. (1984) *Experiential Learning*. New Jersey, Prentice-Hall.

Knight, P. and Yorke, M. (2004). *Learning, curriculum and employability in Higher Education*. London: RoutledgeFalmer.

Lim, D. H., & Johnson, S. D. (2002). 'Trainee perceptions of factors that influence learning transfer'. *International Journal of Training and Development*, Vol. 6, pp. 36-48.

Lock, D. (2007) *Project Management.* 9th Ed, Aldershot: Gower.

OGC (2009), *Managing Successful Projects with Prince 2: 2009 Edition.* London: OGC.

Quelch, J. (2005) A New Agenda for Business Schools, *The Chronicle of Higher Education,* Volume 52, Issue 15, Page B19, Available online at http://chronicle.com/article/A-New-Agenda-for-Business/18206/ [accessed 22 Feb 12]

Richardson, J. T. E. (2005) 'Students' Approaches to Teaching in Higher Education and The Open University'. *Educational Psychology*, Vol. 25, No. 6, pp. 673 — 680.

Savin-Baden, M. (2000) *Learning in Higher Education: Untold Stories*. Buckingham: SRHE and Open University Press.

Schön, D. A. (1983) *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action*. London, Temple Smith

Book Reviews

Bad Education
Phil Beadle
Crown House (2011)
Review by Nick Collis

Bad Education is an often humorous, sometimes enlightening and occasionally shocking compilation of 'Super Teacher' Phil Beadle's 'On Teaching' Guardian columns. Beadle, who came to public attention applying his award-winning teaching techniques to a group of delinquents in Channel 4s 'The Unteachables', draws on his wealth of experience to dispense anecdotes, observations and insight into the world of the professional educator, covering a wide range of topics from the practical – 'The Learning Environment: Life in a Glass Dungeon' to the more contentious 'Politics and Policy: Welcome Mr. Gove'.

It is the earlier chapters that prove the most insightful, showcasing the frequently soul-crunching obstacles that modern secondary teachers have to face on a daily basis, both within the classroom and without – 'What are we learning today sir?' 'The possessive apostrophe' 'But we learned that yesterday' 'No. You didn't' 'You're a crap teacher sir' – being one memorable example. Beadle effectively skewers some of the pomposity and buzzword addiction of policy makers in some of the book's best chapters – the use of 'Assessment for learning' in place of 'assessment of learning', a sudden dictate to provide 'Key Words' for lessons and New Labour's educational mantra 'Poverty is not an excuse', all receiving an F from Mr. Beadle.

Misguided policy makers are not the only ones to be on the receiving end of a tongue lashing. Information Technology, the PC brigade, academics, homophobia and taxi drivers all rouse the author's ire as well. Beadle comes across as caring and passionate about both his pupils and the teaching profession throughout the book, and it's this warmth that engages the reader and makes the swipes at those mentioned above all the more palatable.

There are some inconsistencies along the way which jar slightly. I.C.T and its use within schools is both celebrated and derided within the book's 180-odd pages. You'd be hard pressed to pin down the author's opinions of New Labour's educational policy (in full flow by the time these columns were written) as this too seems to ebb and flow throughout. Some of this could be down to the elongated nature of newspaper column compilations not being written as a continuous narrative.

Overall, this is an enjoyable and interesting read for anyone interested in education and the kind of challenges that are faced by teachers on a daily basis. For those teachers, I imagine reading this without a knowing smile and continuously nodding head will prove difficult. For those looking to become teachers, this book may come as a shocking and sobering risposte to the adverts of smiling, happy children listening attentively at the teacher's feet that the government use to lure idealistic grads into the profession. I hope, and doubt, that it would put many off however, as the author's passion and excitement for his chosen vocation is evident throughout. It's this passion, coupled with the humanity and humour evident in each one of these columns, that makes this book a great read.

Ethics Protocols and Research Ethics Committees: Successfully Obtaining Approval for your Academic Research
Dan Remenyi, Nicola Swan, Ben Van Den Assem
Academic Publishing International (2011)
Review by Peter Norrington

This is a purposefully small book, written in a style which should be accessible at any university student's level. As a small book, it cannot cover every aspect of ethics and research, certainly not in depth, and perhaps not in breadth. So, rather than reading this inappropriately as a contribution to academic discussion on research ethics, the questions I am interested in for reviewing this book are 'who is this for?' and 'will it meet their needs?'