Optimal Learning through Collaboration: How, Why, Who, and Where?

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What I’m going to talk about today

• My background
• Definitions
• How? – case studies
• Why? – impact
• Where? – environment
• Concluding remarks
• References
Definitions

• Optimal learning - very similar to what we in the UK call inquiry-based learning or Research-informed Teaching (diagram from Staffordshire University Research-informed Teaching website)

Learning journey from responsive to active and experiential learner
Definitions 2: Collaboration

• University level
  – Between librarians and academic policy makers
• Faculty level
  – Between librarians and Associate Deans of Learning and Teaching
• Award level
  – Between librarians and award leaders
• Module level
  – Between module leaders, librarians and students
• Tutor Group level
  – Between tutors, librarians and students
  – Between students
How? (case study 1)

• The case for the Fish-Scale of academicness (Alke Groppel-Wegener – Senior Lecturer Crafts)

• Using visual metaphor to evaluate text-based information – imagine every information source is a sea creature

• New way of fostering information discernment or digital judgement
across texts
that appear
just too weird.
They might have developed
at too low a level
to make sense to a non-expert.
PhD or post-doctoral work
can seem that way when you are
starting out in academia.
Don’t get frustrated by them,
if you have given it a go,
carefully re-reading sections
and looking up words that
you don’t understand,
maybe they do live out of your depth for now.

Go ‘back up’ to find some introductory sources,
which should help you establish the ideas,
debates and perspectives
and get you familiar with the jargon,
and maybe later in your academic career
you can go back down,
when tackling
a source in
the deepest
academic
abyss
will
have
become
easier.
How? (More case studies – see handout)

- Staffordshire University – Alison Pope (2)
- University of Nottingham - Wendy Stanton (3)
- Birmingham City University - Stephen Gough(4)
- Open University - Katharine Reedy(5)
How? (case study 6)

• The case for blended learning in a core module
• The reclaiming of induction as a learning experience
• Information literacy for a purpose
• Online peer assessment
  Learning is a collective social activity (Hepworth & Walton, 2009; Osborne, 2010; Walton & Hepworth, 2011; Molinaar e al, 2011; Chu et al, 2012)
• Tools – the Assignment Survival Kit (ASK) - (developments)
• Assessment - the great external motivator
  IL is pointless without it
• How is it delivered?
Students given assignment in induction week

Tutor marks assignment (formatively) and gives it back

Students redraft their assignment

Online Peer Assessment - Students discuss each others drafts on VLE discussion board - using Assignment Survival Kit - ASK

Students hand in their final assignment for marking

Induction
Week
1st draft
Week 1
Essay process
Week 2
Learning styles
Week 3
E-resources
Week 4
Referencing
Week 5
Plagiarism
Week 6-8
OPA
Week 9 -12
Research methods
Getting started...

Being faced with your first assignment at University can be a daunting prospect. This piece of software might help you to cope! It will help you to plan your time and the steps you might need to follow to survive and produce your first piece of assessed work. About ASK...

Start date
30 / 05 / 2013 (dd/mm/yyyy)

Due date
__/__/2013 (dd/mm/yyyy)

Type of assignment
Essay

Please note that any information provided under the ASK web support pages is advisory only. No liability will be attached to the University.
You've indicated that you are starting to work on your paper on 30/05/2013 and will be finishing on 25/12/2013.

According to the dates you have entered, you have 208 days to complete this assignment. It's never too early to start!

The focus of your paper is an essay.

Use the navigation menu at the left to go through the process of writing your assignment, step-by-step.
Assignment Survival Kit goes mobile - ASKapp
• Statistical test indicated a significant difference between students’ performance (n=38) on the two assignments ($t (1, 74) = 11.380, p<.001$). For assignment one, the mean across both groups was 40.22 with a standard deviation of 6.50; for assignment two, the mean across both groups was 57.92 with a standard deviation of 7.05. (Cleland & Walton, 2012)

• An increase of two grade points
Why (2)? - Student reflections - Online Peer Assessment

- “It’s a really good idea, hearing everyone’s different comments to improve. Effective feedback will help me know where I went wrong. It is good as we’re all communicating with each other giving positive feedback and effective criticism to help improve (student 15)”
- “It will be good as it is not only helping ourselves via feedback but it also helps others. I am looking to gain more knowledge and understanding of how to write in higher education. If the feedback is logical and fair I will take it on board, if not I’ll discard it (student 54)”
- “I’m looking for a much wider range of constructive criticism to help improve my writing style and learning process (research, referencing etc.) for future modules (student 91)”
- More here: http://journals.staffs.ac.uk/index.php/ipihe/article/view/6
“very nice essay with plenty of interesting facts and figures. Also you have a good chance to compare arguments as you have put in yours about people needing 2 hours per week exercise but someone else’s states that its 60 mins a day”
“Really enjoyed reading your essay, you have approached it from several angles. I would have liked you to expand more on your statement about diabetes. Be careful with your use of punctuation in your citations, you have included full stops, commas as well as putting nothing next to a name before brackets, it needs to be consistent. Also, your quote from the *Guardian*. They didn't find that out, they are commenting on what others have researched so just be careful how you word it. Overall, a really interesting essay.”
Who?

- Module leaders and tutors – partnership is vital
- Librarians, have to be in possession of three distinct areas of expertise, not unlike like Poseidon with his trident,
  - Librarianship
  - Teaching
  - Research
- Why?
  - Know your information domain
  - Know your pedagogy
  - Know the process of research first hand and how to demonstrate impact in a methodologically sound way
- By widening our skills base we will gain trust, deliver learning effectively, be able to demonstrate impact and add value
Where?

• Go where the students are, to their learning environment where they feel most comfortable
  – Their classrooms
  – Their VLEs
  – Their social media?
Concluding remarks

• Online peer assessment optimises learning through collaboration because it triggers:
  – The cognitive processes of comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis
  – The metacognitive process of reflection on action
• We know this because students:
  – achieved significantly higher grades between formative and summative assessments
  – articulated reflection on action
  – reported that they will transfer their newly learned skills and knowledge in the future
• More work to be done – the Fish-Scale research project is scheduled to report its initial findings early in 2014.
References


Students in circle, http://irudiak.argazkiak.org/276df12b972b1b876f80402474acdf8d_c.jpg. Creative Commons.