Discourse

Learning and Teaching in Philosophical and Religious Studies

The Higher Education Academy

Discourse:

Learning and Teaching in Philosophical and Religious Studies

Editorial board:

Discourse:

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Contents

Editorial: Diversity, Criticism and Discussion

All the disciplines supported by the Subject Centre face fresh challenges at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Public discussions of religion, ethics, the environment, science and society dominate the media and much of our life. The quality of the discussions is variable, but of vital importance to human progress and development. Now, more than ever, we need informed graduates able to address these issues with insight and clarity. Additionally, there are academics, both well-established and new, whose scholarship and experience of diverse points of view and traditions will be crucial, in the coming years, to promote a society open to intelligent and rational dialogue on pressing problems about our lives, our communities and the world, philosophically, scientifically, ethically and spiritually. It is part of the liberal tradition that rational dialogue and discussion should embrace all those willing and able to contribute, and one key challenge is to find ways that they can. The benefits to the university, and to society as a whole, of increasing the opportunities available to a more diverse range of participants, will be immeasurable.

This issue of *Discourse* covers a wide range of material, all of which, in one way or another, addresses aspects of the challenges above. We have included articles on the impact of liberal education models in interdisciplinary philosophy education in Scotland, black theology and intercultural teaching, and creating a safe classroom space for students to talk about sexual theory. There is an interview with the President of the British Society for the Philosophy of Science, Steven French, in which he describes his own diverse teaching experiences. We also have reports on a major project on improving academic literacy for students with dyslexia and other diverse learning needs, funded by the Subject Centre, and a lively dialogue between history of science and philosophy of science teaching and their future together. And there is a discussion piece reflecting on how we talk to (and about) and engage with students and their own diverse experiences of being engaged with their disciplines.

As always, feedback is welcomed and encouraged. Discourse always aims to stimulate discussion and reflection on education at all levels of theory and practice.

David J. Mossley, Editor

News and Information

The Higher Education Academy

The Higher Education Academy's mission is to help institutions, discipline groups and all staff to provide the best possible learning experience for their students.

Its aims and objectives are:

1. To be an authoritative and independent voice on policies that influence student learning experiences;
2. To support institutions in their strategies for improving the student learning experience;
3. To lead, support and inform the professional development and recognition of staff in higher education;
4. To promote good practice in all aspects of support for the student learning experience;
5. To lead the development of research and evaluation to improve the quality of the student learning experience;
6. To be a responsive, efficient and accountable organisation.

http://www.heacademy.ac.uk

The Subject Network

The Subject Network is a network of 24 subject centres based in higher education institutions throughout the UK. It is funded by the four HE funding bodies in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. It aims to promote high quality learning and teaching through development and transfer of successful practice in all subject disciplines.

The Subject Centre for Philosophical and Religious Studies

The Subject Centre for Philosophical and Religious Studies is based at the University of Leeds and at a partner site at the University of Wales, Lampeter and covers the disciplines of Philosophy, Philosophy of Science, History of Science (including the History of Medicine and Technology), Theology, and Religious Studies.

Mission statement

To support and promote Philosophical, Theological and Religious Studies higher education in the UK, and to build on its culture of dialogue and reflection.

Strategic Aims

- To work in collaboration with PRS colleagues and students in order to be effective advocates for our disciplines in the development of national and regional policies.
- To fund and take part in projects and events that support the development and recognition of good teaching practice in PRS.
- To participate in relevant research developments.
- To provide a repository of relevant knowledge and expertise within our subject communities.
- To maintain a well managed, flexible and properly structured subject centre staffed by appropriately qualified people with academic and creative strengths.

Visit the website for the Subject Centre for Philosophical and Religious Studies (formerly the PRS-LTSN) of the Higher Education Academy:

http://prs.heacademy.ac.uk

Departmental Visits, Workshops and Contacts

Departmental Visits

We have now visited almost all of the departments in our subject communities. We have contacted all the departments (either via your departmental Subject Centre representative or your Head of Department) and if we have not yet set up a face to face meeting then please do not hesitate to contact us at the address below to arrange one. The aim of the visits is to gather information about existing effective practice and to find out what the most pressing issues for your department and for individual lecturers and tutors are, so that we can better direct our resources and efforts to serve the PRS community in all learning, teaching and assessment matters.

Departmental Workshops

We also offer a full programme of workshops. These are designed to help us help you with issues raised in our first visits and to see how things have changed in your learning and teaching environment. We aim to provide workshops and support advice on any learning and teaching issue that has a subject-specific dimension. These workshops can be tailored to your departmental needs and time and can cover topics such as plagiarism, assessment and tutor training. Please contact us to discuss how we might help you with a workshop for your department, free of charge.

Contacts

Our list of departmental contacts continues to grow, but there is still a small minority of departments that have not registered a representative. If you would like to be a representative for your department, please contact us at:
Subject Centre for Philosophical and Religious Studies
Department of Theology and Religious Studies
University of Leeds
Leeds LS2 9JT
Tel: 0113 343 4184
enquiries@prs.heacademy.ac.uk

Future Discourse 2007: Second International Philosophy Conference on Learning and Teaching

29-30 June 2007, University of Leeds

Call for Papers

Keynote Address: Professor E. J. Lowe (Durham, UK)

This conference, which follows a highly successful inaugural conference in 2005, will address teaching philosophy at universities and colleges. Papers looking at theoretical and practical issues are invited; topics may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- The state of philosophy learning and teaching
- Teaching:
    - Specific topics and philosophers
    - History of Philosophy
    - Applied topics
- Small and large group teaching
- Environmental issues and sustainability
- Using texts and new technologies
- Teaching postgraduates

Papers and presentations on other topics are welcome and diverse presentation styles are encouraged. Successful papers will be allocated forty minutes of presentation time with a further twenty minutes for questions and discussion.

Please supply a 1000 word outline of your paper indicating the main topic and content, presentation style (read paper, workshop, discussion, panel session etc.), for blind refereeing, together with a 150 word abstract for publication in advance of the conference. Abstracts and outlines (which must be separately anonymised) should be sent electronically as attachments (in MS Word or compatible formats) to Dr David Mossley at **futurediscourse@prs.heacademy.ac.uk** to arrive no later than December 15th 2006. Please include your name, institution and any special presentation requirements in the main body of your e-mail. See **http://prs.heacademy.ac.uk/events/prs/2007/06/29/future_discourse_2007.html** for more details.

Teaching Practical Theology in Higher Education: Conference

1-2 March 2007, Oxford Brookes University

Call for Papers

Keynote speaker: Dr Ruard Ganzevoort, Professor of Practical Theology at Kampen Theological University, the Netherlands

The number of students studying practical theology has grown phenomenally over the last twenty years, with the expansion of higher education and the wider distribution of theological education. The proliferation of Masters level programmes in the UK, addressing applied, contextual, practical and ministerial concerns, is a sign of its vitality and relevance. It is, therefore, timely to consider the area of teaching and learning within the field.

We welcome contributions from:
- university lecturers and researchers
- theological educators
- theological practitioners involved in training
- Church training and development officers

We look forward to receiving a wide variety of papers from practitioners in the field of theological education.

A call has been issued for two types of paper. The first is a standard academic paper that disseminates research or teaching practice. The second is a workshop paper that requires some form of practical activity exploring teaching and learning. Papers will be considered for publication in a special edition of a peer-reviewed journal or as an edited collection in a book. Paper proposals are requested in Word format. Prior to the conference, copies of all academic papers will be posted on the web page, together with workshop paper proposals. Papers should be sent to: **practicaltheology@prs.heacademy.ac.uk** by November 30th 2006.

For further details and to register, please visit **http://prs.heacademy.ac.uk/events/prs/2007/03/01/practicaltheology.html**.

Yorkshire and the North-East AHRC-Funded Doctoral Research Training Programme

18-19 January 2007, York

The programme is aimed at first and second year research students (full-time and part-time) attending a university in Yorkshire or the North-East, undertaking research in:
- Biblical Studies
- History & Philosophy of Science, Technology & Medicine
- Religious Studies
- Philosophy
- Theology

It is funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, coordinated by the Subject Centre for Philosophical and Religious Studies and facilitated by academics in university departments.

This is a free programme which seeks to provide subject-specific support for sharpening skills in researching, writing, presenting and publishing.

There will be a two-day residential on 18-19 January 2007 held in York. A follow-up, one-day research conference will take place at the University of Sheffield in June 2007 (date to be announced).

This is an excellent opportunity for research students to meet others working in the field and to learn more about the following:
- Research methods and trends
- Delivering presentations
- Ways to improve academic writing
- How to get published
- Building a bibliography
- Careers and employability

Although the programme is free (including accommodation and meals), partipants needs to register by December 8th. We welcome applications from all students; however AHRC-funded students will be given first priority. To register or find out more:
- Visit our website: **http://prs.heacademy.ac.uk/ahrc**
- Contact Dr Clare Saunders at **clare@prs.heacademy.ac.uk**, or on 0113 343 1166.

Reports

Enhancing Academic Achievement among Philosophy Students with Diverse Learning Needs:

Funded Project Report

Yvonne Bremer et al

Special Educational Needs Consultant
Subject Centre for Philosophical and Religious Studies

Background and rationale

The project was put together to examine, and hopefully present some solutions to, the challenges posed by the increasing number of students with special educational needs (SEN),

dyslexia in particular, entering higher education.

The reasons for this increase stem mainly from a) the current government's agenda to widen participation among 18-30 year olds to 50% and b) the fact that schools have become better at supporting students with special needs, thereby enabling them to achieve the requirements for university admissions.

Although there has been a great deal of research in how best to support students with diverse learning needs in higher education, it appears that many staff in departments either are not aware of strategies for enhancing academic performance for students with SEN, or are of the opinion that it is not part of their 'remit', believing it to be the domain of specialists. This second point—that SEN is a problem for specialists—is reinforced by the way higher education institutions keep SEN units and skills study centres separate from academic departments. That is to say, specialists employed to support students with SEN rarely interface with academics. Instead they work directly with students and rely on them to be able to articulate their needs.

Our project aimed to redress this lack of communication between academics and SEN specialists so that support strategies could be embedded in the curriculum. We also felt that employing alternative methods of communicating material might mean that academics are able to enhance the achievement of all students—not merely those who have been identified as having special needs.

The need for a subject-specific approach

If academics are less than enthusiastic about sourcing and implementing alternative teaching methods provided by educationalists generally, and SEN specialists specifically, it may be in part because the work that they do tends to be regarded as 'generic', while academics understand their subject areas to be highly specialised. Approaches that are effective with engineering students, for example, may not be seen to be helpful for philosophy undergraduates grappling with subject-specific issues such as logic or the writing of highly structured, detailed arguments.

Our project aimed to facilitate a two-way conversation between SEN experts and academics—in this case academics working in philosophy—so that alternative teaching methods could be applied appropri-

ately and with a view to addressing the particular needs of the subject community. This means that SEN specialists and philosophers were called upon to cooperate to find means of enhancing academic achievement. The focus was on developing academic achievement for students who have diverse learning needs, with an emphasis on dyslexia.

Projected outcomes

There were two main outcomes expected from this project. The first was to have academics experiment with a variety of teaching methods, some of which were new to them, and to report on the efficacy of the methods based on student achievement over a period of time, to be assessed in a qualitative way through focus groups. (It was also envisaged that this might be followed up in the future with another project which would seek to identify quantitative data on the effects of such methods on student achievement.) The second was to demonstrate a working relationship between academics and a SEN specialist and to show how philosophy departments and SEN advisors might establish a useful dialogue in order to support students with diverse learning needs. Keith Crome reports on this in the *Discourse* article, 'Reflecting on collaboration with SEN specialists'.

Methodology

Individual academics who were in contact with the Subject Centre, and had expressed an interest, were invited to take part in a focus group as part of a workshop day facilitated by the SEN specialist, Yvonne Bremer. The findings of this day would inform how we progressed with the project.

Conceptual framework

To give some background to the project and its methodology, from the educationalist perspective, this section seeks to clarify the rationale that was used to discuss teaching and learning in lectures, seminars and through the use of course materials, which was elaborated on and built

upon in the focus group and workshop sessions.

What makes effective teaching and learning in a lecture?

Structuring

- The topic emphasis for each section should be clearly stated.
- Information should be critically evaluated, and links to the next piece of information should be made clear.
- The cumulative, sequential nature of information should be made explicit.
- Students should be able to follow the lecturer's cognitive map, which should be clearly signposted with distinct headings.
- The process of delivery should also be signposted by using summarising and questioning, and application of the new knowledge to examples.
- The students should be engaged emotionally by collaboratively setting expectations in terms of learning outcomes and the projected aims for the session.
- The information covered should be effectively summarised.

Variation in style and pace

- Methods of delivery which are not exclusively auditory should be used.
- Visual associations should be created, with images, colours, different fonts, and staggered appearance of text in PowerPoint.
- Repetition of key concepts should be linked to easily remembered phrases, rather like a narrative.
- A reference document should be used to support delivery so that students can track the progress of the information and note their own memory joggers and associations.
- Pace changes should be used that are responsive to lulls in energy levels.
- The type of interaction should be varied and inclusive. Suggestions for achieving this include: widen group participation, invite comments, or split into pairs or threes for short dis-

cussions, five or even three minutes each way.

Elements of surprise and humour

- The use of a video clip or a short extract from a radio recording is novel and unexpected and acknowledges that people learn in different ways. Photographs and personal details of a philosopher enable students who have working memory difficulties to establish associations for the information they are hearing.
- Humour, riddles and puzzles all temporarily engage us emotionally with feelings of confusion, anticipation and enthusiasm, and facilitate academic resilience and achievement.

Interaction between lecturer and students

- The lecturer should model a structured process of thinking in the delivery of the lecture.
- Cognitive processes such as the lecturer's own use of questioning, comparisons, assumptions and implications of the knowledge, which have been internalised, should be made explicit.
- The lecturer should remember what it was like to first start to study philosophy, assess which modes of thinking are most productive, and demonstrate how to practise them. They should be put into the context of exercises for the student.
- Short invitations should be given to students to encourage them to think through, although not necessarily feed back, in the light of the information that has been given.

Seminar observation (component parts of student/tutor involvement)

Observation of students in seminars is a useful tool to evaluate how well the students are developing the selected learning aims for small group sessions.

We look for an increase or improvement in:
- **Understanding**

Students test understanding, through examples from reading, to support their discussion and arguments and clarify concepts.

- **Critical thinking**
Students review evidence in the light of theories, and enhance their capacity for logical reasoning and formal argument.
- **Personal growth**
Students clarify attitudes, articulate and reappraise values, master academic discourse on the subject and evolve a sense of responsibility and commitment.
- **Communication skills**
Students refine questioning, listening and explaining skills, present and defend their position clearly and cogently, and give and get feedback.
- **Group and teamwork skills**
Students set, allocate and monitor, initiate and lead tasks within a group.
- **Self direction in learning**
Students clarify their own goals as learners, manage study time and effort and set priorities, accepting responsibility for evaluating their own work and their progress as learners and increasing their motivation for independent learning.[1]

Process of encouragement

Students with diverse learning needs such as dyslexia may need explicit encouragement to prepare and participate. Reduced or guided reading tasks can make the information more readily accessible. Hesitancy about participating can be addressed in a number of different ways.

Ways of encouraging students to prepare:
- Provide a clear week by week course manual to outline the required reading for lecture and seminar.
- Make photocopies or a course handbook of collected texts, or make them available on the internet, so that they are readily accessible for each module.

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[1] Based on Forster F, Housell D, & Thompson S., *Tutoring and Demonstrating: A Handbook.* (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh/UCoSDA, 1995).

- Especially in early sessions, set tasks that are limited in scope and achievable.
- Setting up preparation as questions encourages reflection; for example 'read pages 10-15 and note three reasons why you think…', is better than unreflective reading with no particular purpose made explicit.
- Setting sub groups of students different preparatory tasks on a common text can help to ensure a wide range of contributions.
- Developing Directed Activities Related to Texts (DARTS) can make reading an essential part of learning.[2]

Ways of encouraging students to contribute:
- Make sure that learning is seen as a co-operative process.
- Use methods which foster students' contributions early on in sessions.
- Make students aware of the skills they are expected to practice.
- Set students realistic and achievable tasks.
- Make students aware of the importance of participation.

Process of Participation

A diverse student body in terms of previous experience and knowledge may make it necessary to explain participation to students. Those students who are embarrassed by their specific learning disability need to have reassurance through clear ground rules as well as a conceptualising of behaviours that make up a repertoire of participation. This could be broken down as follows:
- Listening attentively to others.
- Giving information to others.
- Asking others for information.
- Giving examples.
- Checking out what others have said.
- Giving reactions to the contributions of others.
- Asking for reactions to one's own contributions.
- Initiating discussion by asking questions, giving ideas, making

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[2] **http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/think/read/darts.shtml** has a good summary of what DARTs are and how to use them.

suggestions.
- Bringing together and summarising.
- Encouraging others to take part.

Process of establishing group safety ground rules

Students are more likely to meet ground rules that they have agreed. When formulating rules for group interaction within the group, the process immediately involves students and draws out the elements of participation described above. It shows students that their ideas are valid and valued.

Suggestions of ground rules are:[3]
- Don't interrupt people whilst they are talking.
- Turn up on time.
- Do at least some preparation.
- Seek consensus rather than confrontation.
- Don't dominate and overpower people.
- Actively encourage others to join in.
- There are no 'stupid' questions.
- Take a share of responsibility for making the group work.
- Make an effort to contribute your ideas and opinions.
- Criticise people's ideas rather than them personally.

Course requirements

Achieving academic literacy for dyslexic students requires that we think very thoroughly about reading and assessed writing tasks.

Reading

If this is inaccessible the students are at an immediate disadvantage and may become very discouraged.
- Set tasks that are limited in scope with appropriate questions to encourage reflection.

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[3] Examples taken from Exley, K & Dennick, R, *Small Group Teaching. Tutorials, Seminars and Beyond* (London: Routledge, 2004).

- Develop Directed Activities Related to Texts (DARTS).
- Clarify and define specific vocabulary with examples from within the students' own frame of reference.
- Conceptualise and contextually enliven the writing of particular philosophers, giving personal as well as social and cultural details.
- Direct students to easier, more general information available on the web before expecting them to read the original texts, so, once again, they are able to place the information in context.

Writing

Students with dyslexia often have very time consuming approaches to organising writing and have difficulties with a range of skills. Interpretation of the essay title may result in the wrong emphasis. Structuring of information, linkages between ideas and paragraphing can be very muddled. Structuring, using an argumentative style, is a significant component of successful philosophical writing and its exposition needs to be made explicit. Grammar and sentence structure could be considered as not within a lecturer's remit, but short exemplary exercises on sentence fragments and the use of words that do not add to the meaning, embedded in learning/study skills sessions within departments, have been evaluated as useful to students.

- Use exercises that will move students into recognition of different thinking modes.
- Make explicit the concepts used in argumentative discourse as an example for students to use in writing.
- Involve students in team-working scenarios producing summaries, critical analyses or reviews and make explicit the components that make such processes successful.

The focus group

This was held on 1st November 2005 at Manchester University. Philosophy lecturers from MMU, UCLAN and Lancaster University

attended, as did two SEN specialists and two Subject Co-ordinators from the Subject Centre for PRS.

The intention of the focus group meeting was to bring educationalists and philosophers together, with the aim of participants increasing their understanding of the subject specific nature of learning and teaching in philosophy. In addition, by taking part in activities such as re-reading Descartes as a group with mixed philosophy experience, ranging from none at all to extensive, we hoped that participants would gain a more rounded appreciation of differences in learning states and styles, and cognitive styles, and that through this we would be able to suggest a range of different strategies to facilitate more effective learning which we could investigate further in the course of the project.

It was agreed that there was a need to establish a shared language of communication regarding teaching and learning, so the group began by defining certain key principles. These then informed the learning tasks that the participants performed during the course of the day, and were developed as the activities progressed.

Key principles

1. Operational Definitions of Dyslexia[4]—Historically, definitions have been descriptive, indicating a perceived deficit in the individual which is then seen as the cause of inhibited learning. Educationalists now perceive that it is more effective to give attention to the context of instruction within HE and identify the circumstances that enable individuals with different learning requirements to achieve their best potential. In this way we are using an operational definition of dyslexia, moving away from the students' causative factors to give attention to the instructional circumstances. This involves the integration of neurological factors with cognitive, behavioural and affective aspects, to tease out how these different processing difficulties will

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[4] Reid, G., *Dyslexia: A Practitioner's Handbook* 3rd edition, (Chichester, UK: John Wiley & Sons, 2003). For further reading purposes see particularly Part III, 'Teaching and Learning', chapters 7-9.

affect learning:
- neurological and biological roots of explanations have tended to be what has been focused on in the past, for example visual processing magnocellular abnormality, or levels of activity in cerebral hemispheres.
- cognitive processes involved in some of the tasks we expect students to complete should be examined, as even something as basic as reading requires a complex array of skills. Dyslexics have a range of difficulties with reading and information processing, such as selection of relevant from irrelevant information, memorising, following sequential details, excessive elaboration and losing track of the key points. We can create an environment that facilitates easier identification of the key points for students so that they are able to apply a structure to their own independent reading.
- acceptance of behavioural and affective aspects of learning means that there is an acknowledgment that the social and cultural context within which learning takes place is crucial in mediating how effectively students learn. Students and staff can benefit from awareness raising about the diversity in ways of knowing, and awareness of their own behaviour and emotional responses in certain learning contexts.

2. The importance of teaching and learning being perceived as processes—in particular the dilemma of the need to present content in a short space of time versus more interactive approaches to curriculum delivery.

3. The importance of metacognitive learning—thinking about our preferred ways to learn, to encourage self-reflection as a learner.

4. Recognising core aspects of SpLD (Specific Learning Difficulties) that are common difficulties but do not represent an identical entity.

5. Recognising a range of levels of acquisition of literacy skills by students—many students have weaknesses in this

area but have not been identified as having a specific learning difficulty.

6. The recognition that there is, in any group, diversity in terms of learning style, cognitive style and abilities—such as the ability to develop schemata to structure and process information.

7. As academics and more experienced learners, in any field, we have a wealth of previously acquired information and skills. Recognising the way we use prior knowledge is an important evaluative tool in structuring teaching and also encouraging self-reflection on the part of the learner. The concept of the 'zone of proximal development',[5] basically knowledge that we have not yet acquired, but have the ability to learn based on what we already know, can inform thinking here.

8. The principle of 'reciprocal teaching'[6] was experienced as a possible strategy for those learners who need to bridge the gap between their current knowledge and new knowledge.

At the end of the day a consensus had been reached regarding the value of the focus day and the benefits that could be achieved from the project, and the way forward in terms of future research meetings was agreed on.

1. **Watch and learn visits**—It was agreed that Yvonne, lead educationalist on the project, would spend one day in the first semester with each of the prime participants (UCLAN, Lancaster and MMU), for the purpose of observing a current module in terms of lectures, seminars, suggested readings and proposed assignment titles. After this observa-

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[5] Vygotsky, L.S. *Mind and Society: The Development of Higher Mental Processes*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 1978).
[6] Burden, Robert L., 'Trends and Developments in Educational Psychology: An International Perspective', in *School Psychology International*, Vol. 15, No. 4, pp. 293-347 (SAGE Publications 1994).

tion, discussion with staff would follow to ascertain possible small changes in teaching and learning intervention that would be practical to implement. A second semester module would then be selected and adapted to include the identified strategies to enhance a variety of learning styles. Simultaneously a cohort of students studying the new module would be invited to take part in a 1.5 hour awareness training programme on self management/reflection as part of Personal Development Planning. This would be delivered during the second stage.

2. **Monitoring the implementation of suggestions and a session for students on self coaching and self reflection skills**—It was agreed that the second stage of the project would be for Yvonne to spend a second day with each of the prime participants after the adapted module had been running for three or four weeks. There would be a joint monitoring of the strategies suggested and a training session with students. Evaluation of the project could be tracked through the PDP process. The students would be asked to reflect on their experiences as they learnt within the second semester module. The outcome would be evaluated qualitatively and, perhaps, against criteria such as a broader use of active learning strategies.

3. **Monitoring and reporting on success of interventions for staff and students**—It was agreed that the final stage of the project would be for Yvonne to spend a third day with the prime participants at the end of the second semester. This would be in workshop format, bringing findings from the different participants together. Participants would then devise a report format that describes procedures, outlines expected outcomes and summarises actual results from this brief initiative. It was also envisaged that data from PDP would contribute to an overall assessment of the interventions, in terms to be

negotiated by the participants. Although the focus was to be on the needs of learners with diverse needs, it was hoped that the interventions would be of benefit to all.

A brief report would then be written jointly by participants and Yvonne for general circulation.

UCLAN – Central Lancashire Centre for Professional Ethics

Observation of lecture and seminar within the module, 'Thinking about Bioethics', a module offered to foundation or access level students.
This initial visit was made with the objective of providing the SEN specialist with a snapshot view of the teaching and learning process within the module. Notes were made on various aspects of the course and teaching, commenting on good practice where observed, and giving suggestions of where and how improvements could be made.

The module guide

- The course outline given in the guide immediately gave details of the tutor's availability during the semester and the tone sought to reassure students that if they were experiencing difficulties it would be possible to arrange a mutually convenient time to meet.
- The aims and learning outcomes were concisely presented. The suggested reading materials required for the lectures and seminars were presented within four key texts, available from the library. Two were in the form of anthologies or a companion text giving a collection of writings on a series of topics. In addition, the students were encouraged to browse the newspapers and the web for material that might be relevant.
- The way the course was structured was helpful in terms of developing central bioethical concepts and distinctions. The

material was rooted in contemporary issues, but it was made explicit that the students' response would be increasingly logical and analytical rather than emotive or based on hype, (the acknowledged style of some sections of the media).

• The expectation was set within the guide that participants need to take part in discussions because that process allows clarification of our reasons and ideas. It was made explicit that challenges are not meant personally and it was expected that some people will be more confident than others about speaking in the group. Simple guidelines to safeguard the discussion were given as examples of good practice, for example not speaking while someone else is expressing their ideas.

• They were encouraged to use Web CT to give them access to module handouts, and also a discussion forum where they could discuss the material with other students.

• The main potential issue arising from the module guide, for students who have a specific learning difficulty, was that they may avoid or fail to engage with reading as a means of preparing week by week unless they are confident in searching the web and the library for relevant texts. The students were not given set readings that were to accompany the question posed for each week's lecture, but rather expected to think through their own reasons and responses to the question. Most students with dyslexia take longer to read and process information so it was suggested that the booklet could be improved by providing more guided reading, questioning of texts and outlining access arrangements to sources—all principles of good practice in meeting a diversity of learning needs.

Lecture observation—could human genetic engineering ever be morally acceptable?

• The session was the first one of the module and no handouts, apart from the module guide, accompanied the lecture.

• Some time was spent working through the questions: 'What is Philosophy?' and 'What will the course cover?'

• A riddle was set that demonstrated the importance of asking the

right questions and guidelines for good communication were made explicit.
- Bioethics was explained, and the structure of the module, and the first question of the module was raised for discussion—an issue from medical ethics.
- A fictional account of an argument for and against genetic engineering was presented by watching a short extract from the television programme Star Trek: Voyager.
- The lecturer gave a short verbal account of the storyline and some of the details about the characters and their opinions.
- During the television clip different characters opposed a mother considering intervention for her child and challenged her reasons. The mother appeared to be giving health reasons for the intervention but it was clear to all the students that she was primarily concerned with her daughter being teased and stigmatised, as, if she was not altered, she would have the appearance of a Klingon.
- A core observation clarified by the lecturer was that the mother had residual feelings, that were very painful and powerful, about being teased as a young girl because she herself was easily identified as a Klingon.

Seminar

- After the clip in the seminar the students were divided into four groups in which the observers participated. Two groups worked on reasons for and against genetic alteration that were pertinent to the programme, and two considered broader disability issues as a reason for or against genetic engineering.
- The use of interactive groups of four or five was obviously well received by the majority of students who were well engaged with the task.
- Each group discussed the material in detail and a representative gave selected points as feedback that was written up by the lecturer.
- The use of a white board with only the lecturer scribing altered the pace of the session. Energy during this time seemed to drop and some students were less engaged.

- The summarising and identification of common concepts within the opposing viewpoints was excellent and once the writing had finished the majority of the students were fully engaged with the whole group discussion.
- The students offered feedback on issues of control and racism, diversity and equality as part of their reasoning for both sides of the argument. The assumptions within these imagined relationships were further drawn out by the lecturer asking questions that clarified terms such as 'quality of life' and 'unnatural'.
- The process of sharing their thoughts seemed to be relatively easy and enjoyable for the students and the session finished amid a buzz of interest and anticipation of the following week.

Possible strategies that may be of use

- The students are currently on an Access course and may be very inexperienced in thinking critically and identifying their reasoning strategies. It may be a useful strategy to map out or name some of the concepts and distinctions that were used, as a follow-up activity after a session like the discussion in the first seminar. Flawed reasons can be identified by challenging generalisations or stereotypes, and, for students with specific learning difficulties, identifying the structural components of less sound reasoning is really helpful. Many students are not able to identify these, and therefore continue to take global solutions rather than serial ones, which are perhaps less effective in philosophy than in other disciplines. This suggestion does not mean that the reasoning given should be prescriptive, but rather that the thinking process itself should be unpicked in terms of structure and key concepts, implications and assumptions. Given that the students responded so well to a multimedia presentation using several sensory channels, perhaps PowerPoint would be an effective medium for talking through the unpicking of an argument.
- Some dyslexic students have difficulties with working memory (also referred to as short term memory), and, for these students, following the discussion and taking notes are difficult tasks to

complete simultaneously. The seminar leader summarised and progressed ideas and did provide a written summary on the white board when receiving feedback from each group, but none of the students took notes of the discussion. In terms of recall and later processing of the information a brief written record is often helpful to some students. A lack of triggers, whether written or verbal, or visual imaging, may mean that content and the concepts of the discussion are not remembered, and that the potential of the seminar as a learning opportunity is not fulfilled. Maybe each small group could make their notes available to provide hangers for recall between sessions that could facilitate skills building.

Follow up visit

The suggestions from the first visit were put into practice in the fourth week of the module when the question being discussed was, **Should we allow a trade in human organs?**
- Using slides in PowerPoint the lecture question was unpicked to demonstrate the distinctive ways it could be interpreted.
- Students were given a copy of the presentation to add in their own notes and follow the structure of the lecture.
- Explicit examples were made of how to think philosophically, such as exploring options and the rationale that guides behaviour. For example: 'Either sales of duplicate organs while seller is alive, *or* the seller gets money now for organs to be used after his/her death, *or* if seller's organs are to be used after her/his death the money goes to his/her estate'.
- Students were invited to detect the reasons against organ sales from a radio interview with John Evans of the British Organ Donor Society.
- Students discussed in groups the quality of the reasons that John Evans gave.
- The lecture highlighted the value of identifying flawed reasons and misplaced assumptions—the philosophical skill of evaluating arguments.
- Cognitive processes were made explicit through use of factual data.

- Distinctions were made about thinking through problems when knowledge is not factual but more attitudinal, or experiential—the philosophical implications of this were discussed.
- Conceptualising and structuring an argument against a position were discussed; using concepts such as risk, equality, a negative impact on altruism, exploitation, and commoditisation to provide foundations on which to structure arguments.

Staff and student feedback session

A lively discussion about the benefits of the project took place. Overall, both staff and students felt that the strategies suggested had improved the learning experience. Some comments made by students and staff were:

- The handout that covered the PowerPoint helped me to think about it afterwards. There wasn't masses of detail but it was there to work with in terms of triggers for your memory.
- I learn more if they are asking questions and there is time to think about things.
- I think it works really well because the informality of it makes it a lot easier to interact with everyone. You didn't feel as if you'd be shot down if you made your opinions known.
- I liked having the sheets that go with the PowerPoint with a big gap underneath. When you've been talking about what goes up on there you can write your own notes—that's really helpful.
- PowerPoint made it more structured. I could go back and read it three or four times and clearly understand what we were debating about.
- (About course materials) Not as formal as a lot of course booklets…You didn't feel as threatened.
- Given the sort of course it is, an introductory one, not to make a sharp distinction between lectures and seminars meant people could chip in to discussion at any point.

MMU – Department of Politics and Philosophy

Observation of lecture and seminar in the module 'Existentialism, Literature and Style', offered to first year students taking BA (Hons) Philosophy or BA Combined Studies in Humanities and Social Sciences.

Again, this initial visit was made with the objective of providing the SEN specialist with a snapshot view of the teaching and learning process within the module. Notes were made on various aspects of the course and teaching, commenting on good practice where observed, and giving suggestions of where and how improvements could be made.

The module handbook

The module literature could be adapted by making small adjustments to make it more accessible and helpful:

- Present the information in an A5 booklet rather than on A4 sheets. The students require a week-by-week log of requirements so this format suits the purpose and is easier to use in this way. Information should be very concise, comprising the general information at the beginning and then weekly requirements set out clearly.
- In the general section make expectations clear. For example, students are not expected to read everything, but there are certain module textbooks, so set the minimum very explicitly, for example one textbook from those listed, and give an indication of whether they are held in the library.
- Availability of staff could usefully be written in the general section of the module handbook. Although it is clear in the present documentation that students may email tutors, it is more difficult for those who are less confident about their written skills to use this medium. Staff workload may make it difficult for staff to be available at regular times on a weekly basis but this information may encourage students to seek help if they are struggling or just want some clarification.
- Similarly the support officer's availability could be usefully

included in the general introductory pages.

- A calendar of course requirements and dates for submission could all be usefully accessible in the general section.
- A week by week course outline is fine, but the seminar reading could be put in a box with the accompanying study questions.
- Try to have a short attention grabbing title/question to the lecture that will also provide a structure to the reading.
- Give web references where appropriate for supplementary reading as they are often presented interactively and enable students to select certain aspects for study that interest them. The language used on the web is easier and more familiar to the student than original texts. Reference to these sources isn't enough information in itself, but it can enable the student to form a scaffold/structure before attempting the more difficult texts.
- Once they have structured some of the information in their pre-lecture reading this will form a scaffold for the more complex detail that is presented in the lecture.
- Compile a course reader, copyright permitting, that students can buy as well as being held in the library for reference only. Access to these resources would enable students to pace their reading and anticipate as well as catch up if they fall behind week by week.
- It is helpful that this level one course is entirely assessed by essays. This enables those students who are struggling with the work at the drafting stage to discuss problems with their seminar leaders.
- Verbal discussion with the faculty student support officer, Vivien Lee, about structuring an essay is an additional source of support to supplement the discussions the students may have with their tutor. Both are able to encourage the student to consider implications, the logical progression of reason and the making of comparisons. These skills will enable the student with a specific difficulty to impose some structure on their written work.

Lecture observation – Sartre and *Nausea*

The lecture that was observed was the first of three, which did not match the information in the module information. It was held in a traditional tiered lecture theatre, and presented in a standard lecture format. Suggestions were made about ways that other teaching and support methods could be incorporated.

- It was noted that the lecturer began by posing three questions that linked with previous material and provided a structure for the lecture.
- Comparisons between Plato and Sartre could have been supported by visual stimuli. Without this, an opportunity to underline the dissimilarities between the two philosophers and make them memorable may have been lost.
- Introduction to Sartre and his work relied on spoken information and could have been usefully accompanied by a photograph and some amusing personal details presented using PowerPoint. Some learners will appreciate this process of personalising and the image will be memorised more readily than extensive spoken details.
- Phrases such as "conscious of France", "existence is prior to essence" and "engaged literature" could have been useful memory triggers with accompanying bullet points to enable the listener to map his way through the information as it was delivered. Once again a presentation using PowerPoint would have been useful, as they could have been presented in coloured text to support recall.
- A handout was not available to support the lecturer's questioning process, so the three initial questions were not accessible to the listener as a way of categorising the supporting detail to the query.
- It was observed that the majority of students did not take notes. The ability to take notes for some students may have been impeded by limited summarising, referring and naming of the conceptual framework that the lecturer was using. The students are currently in their ninth week of study and the content is acknowledged to be very difficult for most first year students.

- The energy level dropped at around thirty minutes into the lecture. Although lecturers do have a pressure to complete a certain amount of information, it was observed that some students had clearly switched off attention. Rather than continue talking the lecturer could change the dynamics and focus attention differently. One strategy that will often inject some vitality is to invite students to talk together in pairs or a group of three. A brief discussion on "What can literature do that a philosophy text can't?" would have shifted the interaction and the students need only have five to seven minutes available to them for this kind of activity. Once again the feedback needs to be swift and need not be as detailed as in a seminar.
- The quotes such as the key phrases mentioned earlier are positive memory triggers that could be presented on a handout that could accompany a projected presentation.
- The level of participation and engagement could have been stronger. Most students had no queries to raise in their seminar group.
- The use of a PowerPoint presentation with an accompanying handout would enable the students to follow through the structure of the three questions that were posed. In addition, specific information about the different texts can contextually help their reading of Sartre's *Nausea*, but it must be presented in an easily accessible format, for example using a handout, preparing specific passages or having copies of the lecturer's notes or providing web addresses for easier reading resources.
- A PowerPoint presentation also needs to be segmented to encourage attention to one item at a time. Creativity and surprise in a variety of media can engage students when they find the act of listening difficult to maintain. Students with a specific learning difficulty will not distinguish text very readily on a PowerPoint slide especially if there are several lines to read through. The use of spaces, indenting and having parts in bold makes it easier for the student to navigate around the text when sitting at a distance in a large auditorium.
- A summary of the differences and similarities between the discourses of philosophy and literature could have been usefully

provided as a handout.

Seminar observation

- The seminar leader had attended the lecture but rather than reiterate the subject matter of the lecture, he chose to use the text itself.
- A group of twenty students was expected to attend but on this occasion there were ten in the first seminar and twelve in the second.
- The leader chose to introduce and acknowledge the observers to the students and to allow them to take part in the seminar discussions. It was noted that the seminar leader started by asking if there were any questions arising from the lecture but none were suggested.
- He then proceeded to the text but only three students had started reading the book so a handout was provided of the first page. The leader asked why we would keep a diary and specifically why Sartre's character was keeping his diary, which initiated a discussion.
- The seminar leader wrote the comments on the whiteboard and with the exception of two students everyone engaged in this activity. The second seminar group did not have this initial activity and went straight to a discussion about the first page of the diary.
- The leader had shared that he was keen for the students to identify certain themes in the text and he facilitated this process by summarising and paraphrasing what the students offered in terms that fitted into his more experienced understanding of the book. Much of his questioning of the students enabled them to clarify the nature of Sartre's discussion of nausea and think about the manner in which time can affect our sense of personal identity. Students shared from their own personal experiences and the leader gave anecdotal examples from his own life.
- The majority of the group contributed verbally but those students who remained quiet were either writing their own notes or listening with interest to others' contributions.

Frequently the leader would use an invitational tone to ascertain if anyone else in the group wanted to contribute. It is a possibility that some students were inhibited by the presence of the observers and in other circumstances would have been more forthcoming.

• The leader wrote brief notes on the whiteboard as reminders and summarised the discussion of different passages taken from the novel to support the theme of lack of mastery or the destructive sense of time that may form part of the nature of nausea.

Possible strategies

All that was observed was very good practice although there are a few suggestions that may be helpful.

• Some dyslexic students have difficulties with working memory (also referred to as short term memory). Following the discussion and taking notes simultaneously is difficult for these students. Perhaps a student could be designated to be a scribe for the session and a copy of their notes shared with the other participants.

• A lack of triggers, whether written or verbal, or visual imaging may mean that content and the concepts of the discussion are not remembered. Repetition of key points is important, particularly supported by an easy phrase to recall e.g. "Time affects our sense of personal identity". This will maximise recollection of content discussed.

Follow up visit

Lecture observation

Suggestions from the first visit were put into practice in the lecture 'Sketch For The Theory Of Emotions'.

• The lecture was delivered using PowerPoint incorporating recommendations made in the visit report.

• Cognitive mapping was much more explicit. Time was taken to

define the conceptual framework of the lecture, with introductory outlines given of the peripheric theory of emotions, no intrinsic significance, outcome of body's response.

- A slide supported the three important conceptualisations of emotions by Sartre.
- The purpose of the lecture was clearly defined in terms of three aspects of consciousness to be explored, again supported by a slide.
- Examples were given visually—e.g. a photograph of pen, paper and ink with arrows, a green banana—to illustrate the idea that the world appears through the context of the inter-relationships between objects. We know their nature through using them, but are frustrated by, for example, a green banana, as it is inedible.
- Links were made by comparing Sartre and Descartes to draw out distinctive understanding of existentialism, consciousness and thinking.
- The pace of the lecture was measured and incorporated humour by the use of certain examples supported by the lecturer's personal experience.
- A mixture of delivery was used, with some direct talking to students, and some use of PowerPoint to maintain variety.
- Each development and topic heading was made explicit by use of PowerPoint, although there was no supporting handout available.
- Each new idea was rooted in the student's experience whenever possible, for example for the role of the body in emotion—jump for joy, clap hands in excitement.
- Questioning, such as 'why does emotion require the body?' was invitational and gave time for a brief consideration by students.
- A conclusion drew together five main strands that were linked to the seminar that followed.

Seminar observation
- Written notes of the discussion were made and copied for students, as suggested, as students with dyslexia struggle to participate and take notes at the same time.
- A volunteer student acted as scribe so that the students might feel that they had more ownership of the small group learning

environment.
- The seminar leader modelled listening attentively to each contribution and encouraged responses from students to others' contributions.

Staff and student feedback

The students were shown a brief presentation that defined the learning process and identified different ways of learning and thinking. Discussion then arose to evaluate the impact of the perceived changes in lectures, seminars and, to a lesser extent, course materials, since the start of the project. The group comprised twenty students who were divided into smaller groups to feed back about one of the three areas. They recorded their comments on flipcharts, and as these were fed back to whole group, additional comments were added from entire group.

Lectures

Positive comments and improvements seen:
- The lecturer gets a lot of information across in an hour.
- Good use of PowerPoint with complex theories—slide sets are better structured.
- Use of examples you can relate to.
- Good handouts.
- Lectures are broken up with activities.
- Good use of visual aids.
- Clear aims.

Negative comments and suggested further improvements:
- Lack of structure.
- Unexplained technical terms.
- Needs more notice of important points, perhaps through pauses or repetition.

Seminar

Positive comments and improvements seen:

- Participants stuck to the topic.
- Everyone was involved in group discussions.
- Groups were a good size (8–12 people).
- There was an informal atmosphere, so you didn't feel stupid if you said something wrong.
- It can actually be fun!
- Having a laugh and a joke is good as it helps you relax and learn.
- It's good to have a mix of tutors and methods of teaching.

Negative comments and suggested further improvements:
- Sometimes it's easy to lose the thread when responding to questions.
- Teaching aims need to be made more clear.
- Sometimes it's hard to hear people's contributions.
- Goals and learning objectives need to be clearly linked to the seminar and made more explicit.
- Group work needs to bring back ideas to the seminar.
- There should be more of a mix between BA Phil and Combined Hons.
- It would be good to have handouts related to seminar, electronically available.
- There should be more structure to the seminar.
- More personal information needed—names not just of tutor but also students.
- Not enough IT in seminars.
- More variety needed in the establishment of small groups, rather than just using alphabetical order.
- Need to increase topical relevance.

Staff feedback

I've been using PowerPoint in the lectures and teething problems aside I think the students find it helpful: it seems to key them into taking notes.

Lancaster University, Institute for Environment, Philosophy and Public Policy

Observation of lecture and seminar in the module 'Philosophy of Science', offered to year two or three students.
Again, this initial visit was made with the objective of providing the SEN specialist with a snapshot view of the teaching and learning process within the module. Notes were made on various aspects of the course and teaching, commenting on good practice where observed, and giving suggestions of where and how improvements could be made.

The course handbook

- It was noted that students were provided with a clear course outline and the suggested reading materials required for seminars.
- In addition the students could purchase a course reader, which contains all seminar readings, but photocopies were also held in the library.
- The way the reading was structured was helpful in terms of developing effective reading strategies. The students were given set readings that were accompanied with questions for study that would enable them to recall and structure the texts they were reading.
- The handouts for each lecture were distributed at the start of the session to accompany the power point presentation, but are also available on the module web site.
- Access to information was very good for all students avoiding the frustrations of short-term loans and a lack of resources.

The implication for students who have dyslexia is that they are able to pace reading without the additional pressure of poor access to materials. Most students with dyslexia take longer to read and process information so guided reading, questioning texts and easy access are all principles of good practice in meeting a diversity of learning needs.

Lecture observation—Feyerabend

- It was noted that the philosopher was introduced with some personal details that were amusing and an accompanying photograph. Some learners will have appreciated this process of personalising and the image will be stored more readily than extensive spoken details.
- Secondly, very early in the lecture, the listeners were invited to frame this new knowledge within their existing knowledge by means of a comparison of philosophers who had been previously studied.
- A recap was made to a linking idea from previous lecture to draw out the demarcating aspects between science and non-science and this was detailed on the handout as points a-d.
- Each one was discussed in more detail but the progression and the information available on the slides, at times, was difficult to write up in own notes, as very little time was given to reframe in students' own written language.
- The use of a PowerPoint presentation with an accompanying handout enabled the students to follow through the structure of the first and second argument. However the PowerPoint could be further segmented to encourage attention to one item at a time. Variety and surprise will often engage listeners when they are finding the act of listening rather difficult to maintain. Students with a specific learning difficulty have problems reading texts that appears to them as dense (words in a block). It is a dyslexia friendly practice to use spacing well, with titles and indents, so the slide looks more appealing to read.
- An interactive exercise carried out in pairs or threes was obviously well received by the majority of students who were well engaged with the task. Of necessity the feedback was quickly acknowledged but the purpose was to further explore the issue of incommensurability in the seminar groups.

Techniques to try with PowerPoint:
- Indentation.
- Underlining and bold.
- Colour highlights of key phrases.

- Staged use of bullet points flying in as the lecturer is talking about that point.
- A handout of the presentation (3 slides to a page) will provide an order for lecturer and a reminder of the points to be discussed.
- Background colour on slides: a pastel shade such as light blue or green is more comfortable for readers with visual processing difficulties or syntopic light sensitivity as experienced by some dyslexics.
- The handout font preferred by dyslexics, again in terms of reading comfort, is Arial or Comic Sans. It is not that other fonts can't be read, but rather it is hard to maintain attention when you are struggling with the physical format of the words on the handout.
- Some students may use tinted overlays with white paper to increase the sharpness of the letters' edges and prevent movement of text and blurring of lines (some departments do provide coloured handouts but some students dislike being singled out).

Seminar observation

- The seminar leader had not attended the lecture as he already had a teaching commitment but he was familiar with the lecture content and used the handout to refer to the two main arguments.
- There are 12 students in the group but during this snapshot observation seven students attended and three remained silent throughout. The seminar leader confirmed that this was the regular attendance pattern with perhaps two or three extra students on occasions. The quiet students were still engaged, often making notes or as the observer was informed often requesting a discussion with the leader at the end of the session.
- The three students who participated verbally were very articulate but without encouragement were not always relating their comments to concepts that were covered in the lecture.
- At one point the seminar leader referred to a quote on the

handout that questioned the success of science. This intervention opened up the discussion further and a fourth student contributed.

- All students had their own copies of the course reading booklet and were using the detail from it in their discussions.
- Although the two arguments formed a backdrop for the discussion, it extended beyond material in this lecture and some students offered comparisons between the previous philosophers they had studied during the module.

Possible strategies

- In this small group seminar there were four individuals who were not speaking, including the observer. Some students, even those who were verbally participating, at times seemed a little uncomfortable with this imbalance. The seminar leader encouraged students to develop the idea of individual frames of reference and this discussion could have been located in an exercise in pairs or threes. This is a useful strategy to encourage the more diffident students to participate as long as the discussion content is accessible. One student was from overseas and others were studying different combination degrees so there was diversity among the group that could be analysed within the concept of frames of reference. The seminar leader has used this strategy in the past and has found it to be very helpful.
- The seminar leader summarised and progressed ideas, but only used a verbal medium for the majority of the time. Only one student took notes of the discussion, and she was participating verbally, and yet in terms of recall and later processing of the information a brief written record is always helpful. Some dyslexic students have difficulties with working memory (as discussed earlier) and following the discussion and taking notes are difficult tasks to complete for these students simultaneously. A lack of triggers, whether written or verbal, or visual imaging, may mean that content and the concepts of the discussion are not remembered. The seminar leader provided a short written summary on the white board at the end, but it was at a point when we needed to close the session quickly because of

time. Perhaps a student could be designated to be a scribe for the session and a copy of their notes shared with the other participants.

Follow up visit

Suggestions from the first visit were put into practice in a philosophy of biology lecture that was the second of a series on psychoanalysis, which addressed the attack on psychoanalysis, which labels it a pseudo-science.

Lecture observation:
  • The lecturer used a handout to support his PowerPoint presentation, which was clearly structured for students into three distinct parts (electronically available as a reference).
  • The use of Popper's critique, and then possible objections, modelled methods that the students could later apply in the seminar to Medawar's critique.
  • The presentation was used to integrate summarising after each section, so that students could associate what they were hearing with points or images on the slide.
  • References to the students' newly acquired knowledge from the previous lectures were used widely to encourage critical thought and comparisons and modifications of ideas.
  • Photographs were used to personalise details about Popper and Medawar and the lecturer conveyed his obvious interest.

Seminar observation:
  • In the seminar, the leader and participants moved around, with different students scribing for the group on the white board, which conveyed a sense of group ownership of the discussion.
  • At times, students were divided into pairs to discuss and feedback to the larger group, which seemed to maintain the energy level and facilitate increased participation.
  • The seminar leader posed questions that extended the discussions at times when it had become stuck and he facilitated a joint summary at the end of the session that was written up for the group by a volunteer.

Feedback

- I don't like lectures that have no additional aids when we are just talked to.
- Funny examples help me take it in.
- In seminars some students are scared to talk but some lecturers can encourage and others don't.
- It is better to have relatively brief notes to go with PowerPoint with blanks to complete at the lecture.
- It is better to have variety because the new style might cut out those who liked old method.

The way forward: participants' observations and preferred future approaches to developing academic literacy in philosophy

As the final part of the project, a dissemination day was held to bring together participants from different institutions, and share the findings of the project with staff from different philosophy departments. Among the universities that responded were Hertfordshire, Hull, Oxford and Manchester.

Academic literacy

A definition of academic literacy and its skill set was established.

A skills list was established that covered generic skills required at universities that describe academic literacy.

- Research
- Note taking
- Composition
- Editing
- Oral language skills
- Time and information management
- Revision, memory/recall

Skills specific to philosophy
- It was accepted that there are disciplinary differences that affect students.
- They need to be taught how to write philosophically, as it is not taught at school.
- Similarly, at the reading level, an analysis of an argument, and the logic and reasoning within that process, have to be critically evaluated. Philosophy demands deeper level reading, getting at the core of meaning.
- Students studying philosophy are also expected to be intellectually imaginative in the sense that they present new ways of thinking about ideas.

Sharing of key recommendations, feedback on the project and ways to further improve:
- In the project all participants were encouraged to take a more flexible approach to lectures. This meant relying less on one single sensory input, facilitating more group interaction, and altering responses to the environment if the energy level dropped, for example cutting short delivery or changing the focus from lecturer to group.
- Students benefited from accompanying handouts to PowerPoint and having access to these notes prior to the lecture would further enable them to be more familiar with the content and better able to participate.
- In the project the need for the lecturer to make explicit their cognitive processes was emphasised. Examples and strategies that indicated their own use of questioning, comparisons, assumptions and implications of the knowledge that has been internalised became an important part of the delivery.
- Staff felt that an important component of future courses would be a core element of study that prepared students for studying philosophy at university, providing explanations regarding what it means to write philosophically, to tease out the deeper meaning of philosophical text and apply reason and critical thinking skills to arguments both written and verbal. Reading and research are an important part of academic literacy.

In workshops during the dissemination day we used texts from Descartes and Hume to remember what it was like to first start to study philosophy. We explored the modes of thinking that are most productive, how to practise them, and how staff can put them in a context of exercises for the students, such as DARTs already referred to.

Another important component of the way forward was the need to encourage a variety of approaches to a student developing meta-learning. Below are some approaches that are currently being used:

- Students meet with their tutor and investigate the feedback sheets from all their modules. They attempt to identify certain patterns of weakness and discuss ways of developing compensatory strategies, for example exposition is good, argument is weak.
- Students offer peer assessment to one other retrospectively after they complete a specific task and they relate it to the marking criteria. They develop a better understanding from one another of the requirements of the task.
- Finally students take part in workshops geared at, for example, developing argumentative writing, embedded in their departments and related to a specific module task.

Further suggestions that were made:

- There is a need for a guide to PowerPoint so that the time spent in preparation can be minimised and copyright issues are clear. The Subject Centre is in the process of developing this resource.
- There is a need to clarify and experiment with teaching logic, effective reading and argumentative composition in philosophy.
- There is a need to clarify questions regarding intellectual property for lecture notes and handouts available on the web.

Summary

We believe that this study has illustrated at least some of the benefits of this way of working. The approach involved academic staff, educationalists with experience in diverse learning needs, and students, working together to deliver effective teaching and learning within the

study of philosophy. Through the project lifecycle this value was recognised to be beneficial to all students. Positive feedback was received, but in addition to this, we observed that students and staff were thinking about teaching and learning in a more involved and deeper way. Those participating have increased their range of strategies and now have the tools to develop further.

However, the project relied on qualitative data and could only depend on a small sample of students. To establish better empirical reliability, a further project based in one environment over a longer period with clear quantitative criteria for assessment was recommended.

Reflections on Collaborating with SEN Experts

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Introduction

At the beginning of the 2005/6 academic year I was invited by the Subject Centre for Philosophical and Religious Studies to participate in a focus group considering the possibility of running a project that would look at developing and implementing a range of pedagogic strategies that would help to meet the needs of students with special educational needs (SEN) studying philosophy in higher education. As it was initially conceived, the idea of the proposed project was to specifically address the issues involved in teaching dyslexic students. The aim was to allow philosophy lecturers and SEN experts to collaborate in developing and implementing dedicated pedagogic

strategies that would both enrich SEN students' educational experience and enhance their academic performance.

The initial focus group meeting was held at the University of Manchester in November 2005. It was agreed that the proposed project should be taken forward. The educationalists who were part of the focus group would work with academics from the lead institutions, myself included, in developing and putting into practice a variety of methods of teaching aimed at enhancing academic achievement. In addition, it was agreed that we would attempt to evaluate the effectiveness of the methods we devised in achieving this goal.

The experience of working closely with an educationalist was new to me, and from discussions I have had with colleagues, I believe it is not a common practice among academics. In what follows I offer some reflections on the process, which for this reason I hope will be of some interest and that will complement the report 'Enriching Academic Achievement among Philosophy Students with Diverse Learning Needs' also included in this edition of *Discourse*.

1. My interest in the project

My initial interest in the project and motivation for attending the focus group stemmed from the concern that my own teaching could better address the needs of dyslexic students. Moreover, I felt that were it to do so, this would not detract from, but rather improve, the experience of all students.

Certainly, like all universities, my university offers dyslexic students a comprehensive range of support. It has a Student Learning Support Unit that is able to assess the type and degree of dyslexia that an individual student diagnosed with the condition has, and that gives advice both to the student concerned and the academics who teach him or her. In addition, each faculty has a dedicated Student Support Officer who is available to help all students manage their learning.

Whenever a student is diagnosed as dyslexic the academics that teach them are provided with a report, which advises on the best practice for teaching and assessing the student's work. However, whilst I have never discounted such advice, I frequently have the feeling that the advice is not subject specific but generic, since it is not specifical-

ly addressed to philosophy lecturers, but to all lecturers whom the student will be taught by. For example, the advice will frequently stipulate that it is necessary to place less emphasis on correct spelling, punctuation and the articulation of an argument when assessing the student's work than would otherwise be the case. Whilst it is obviously possible to disregard the former elements when marking a philosophy essay, the organisation of an argument is an integral element of doing philosophy, and it is difficult to see with any ease how to place less emphasis on this aspect of a philosophy assignment and still make a fair judgement of the work's merit.

The same can be said of the positive advice that is frequently made concerning teaching and learning strategies. These too are often generic in nature and my concern as a philosophy teacher is to implement strategies that are tailored to teaching philosophy. Again, the university frequently offers academics a number of courses which aim to promulgate best practice in teaching students with special educational needs. It is probably best not to generalise here, but I have not attended such courses in the past since at the time my part-time contract with the university effectively precluded me from attending, as it was necessary for me to meet other obligations outside of my academic work.

What was different about this project, and what led me to want to attend the initial meeting and then to participate in the project itself, was that it offered both the opportunity to work with a SEN expert to develop subject-specific learning and teaching strategies and with other academics working in philosophy at different institutions, sharing their own experience and best practices.

2. The focus group meeting

The focus group meeting took place at the University of Manchester and was attended by myself, lecturers from the University of Central Lancaster and Lancaster University, two SEN specialists and two members of the Subject Centre for PRS. Underpinning the day's activities and discussions were a number of key principles, detailed in the companion article to this, concerning the definition of dyslexia, the understanding of teaching and learning as a process with various component aspects that should be utilised in pedagogic practice, and the

recognition that, as practising academics, we have an acquired range of learning skills, which, because they are deeply sedimented, we are prone to take for granted. As a result, it was generally agreed by all those present what we should seek to do was develop ways of improving dyslexic students' reading and writing skills. In this section, I want to reflect on two aspects of the meeting that I found particularly instructive, one practical and one theoretical.

To take the latter first; one of the most important insights was furnished by what the SEN experts referred to as the shift from a descriptive definition to an operational definition of dyslexia and the consequent change in the approach to the condition on the part of educationalists. The shift is important and instructive, in as much as it entails a corresponding shift in the approach to teaching dyslexic students. As I understand it, although descriptive definitions of dyslexia have been of many different varieties, classically, common to all such descriptions was the attribution to the individual of a learning deficiency. Beginning from this definition, these deficiencies have been seen as the root cause of inhibited learning and failure of achievement. An operational definition of dyslexia, however, focuses on 'the operations or procedures by which the construct of learning disabilities can be recognised and measured'.[1] Adopting an operational definition of dyslexia has, consequently, encouraged educationalists to look at the way in which dyslexic students are taught, and identify specific pedagogic practices and strategies that will improve the educational experience for such students. Moreover—and this is why I personally find the shift important—by focusing on effective teaching strategies, e.g. providing a clear statement of the objectives of a lesson, setting guided reading tasks for short extracts from texts, using visual supports in lectures to provide orientation and memory triggers, it is not just dyslexic students who stand to benefit, but all students.

Certainly, as I remarked above, there is perhaps little question as to the benefits provided by such an approach in terms of improving the learning and teaching experience for students. However, if there is a problem, in the first instance it is in the perhaps implicit supposition

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[1] H. Lee Swanson, 'Operational Definitions and Learning Disabilities: An Overview' in *Learning Disability Quarterly*, Vol. 14, No. 4, *Operational Definitions and Learning Disabilities* (Autumn, 1991), pp. 242-254, p. 242.

that an improvement in this area will be met by a corresponding improvement in performance in typical philosophy assessments, such as the essay or written exam, on the part of students. To put this another way, such measures may indeed help to encourage all students to prepare for lectures and seminars and participate in seminar work, and I doubt that there is any academic who would not welcome this. However, whilst such preparation and participation may indeed form a precondition to the student performing successfully in assessments, in so far as they will have a better understanding of material they have read before and discussed in a seminar than material they have not, it was not so clear to me at the time of the meeting, how such a precondition would be translated into success.

Of course, this is not meant as a fatal criticism, and not only because I recognise the intrinsic value of adopting and continually refining such pedagogic strategies. However, in so far as I am concerned to help my students realise their academic potential, then it was this potential problem that interested me. Accordingly, it was just this matter that I hoped would be clarified in practice by the collaborative project that emerged from the initial focus group meeting.

The second aspect of the meeting that was of interest is connected with one of the first practical exercises that we were asked to undertake by the SEN experts who also attended the meeting. For this exercise we were asked to partner one other person. One of the team was provided with a set of written instructions that he or she read to the other, directing them to move in a certain way, e.g. 1) turn to your right and take two steps forward; 2) turn anti-clockwise 90 degrees and take two steps in the direction you were initially facing at the start; and so-on. The person reading the instructions was also provided with a map, illustrating the movements the other person should be making. It was necessary to complete the whole exercise within a fixed period of time; let us say two minutes. The aim of the exercise, I take it, was to draw our attention to the difficulty, in certain contexts, of understanding information and instruction relayed in auditory form, as, for example, it might be in a philosophy lecture.

If that were indeed the purpose of the exercise, it worked, and I think everyone who was present gained a concrete appreciation of the point. However, beyond that, what struck me was that among people I did not know, the task was made much more challenging. I was nervous

and felt inhibited in case I made a mistake, particularly since as an academic—and a philosophy academic at that—I supposed that the expectation generally would be that I should be able to quickly comprehend abstract instructions. Whether or not it was also an aim of the exercise, it led me to appreciate that as teachers, we not only have to attempt the difficult task of either recalling the difficulty we had engaging with the same material ourselves when we were undergraduates or, if not, imagining what the difficulties might be of encountering such material with little or no knowledge of philosophy. We also have to appreciate that often we are in a familiar environment and surrounded by colleagues we know well, and even if that is not the case, we have been in education for a long time, and are familiar with the ways and demands of higher education. For me, in this instance, the displacement was slight, but in itself that was enough to make the task more difficult for me than it would otherwise have been. For new students, the displacement is much greater, and it is necessary to keep that in mind not only when planning lessons and activities, but generally when we ask or expect students to talk in seminars.

3. The watch and learn visits

After the initial focus group meeting the two educationalists involved in the project visited MMU and observed teaching in a lecture and seminar on a first year course, 'Existentialism, Literature and Style'. The purpose of the visit was to recommend possible strategies to improve teaching and learning, including the structure and format of both lectures and seminar as well refinements to the supporting information such as the unit document supplied to students.

I met with both educationalists prior to the lecture and provided them with the unit documentation, discussed the overall aims of the unit, the type and extent of the material taught and outlined what I thought were some of the demands that the course made on students. In particular, the course requires students to read a relatively large number of texts in the first term, although the reading is staged in terms of length and complexity, beginning with a short, introductory essay on existentialism by the Spanish philosopher Ortega Y. Gasset and concluding with three weeks spent studying Jean-Paul Sartre's novel,

Nausea.

After our discussion, the educationalists sat in on a lecture and two seminars. As an aside, it is perhaps worth remarking that in contrast to other times when my teaching has been observed, I did not find their presence particularly inhibitive, since I did not feel as if I were being assessed or judged in terms of my competence. Rather, what was at issue was the actual process of teaching and learning and how it might be improved, and this was something that was to be arrived at by a process of discussion between myself and them. Following the observational sessions it was decided that the most radical improvement in teaching for dyslexic students would be to adopt the use of PowerPoint in lectures, with the aim of making the structure of the lecture itself more transparent to students and to intro- duce pictures and diagrams in addition to written slides. In seminars, it was suggested that the use of a scribe would help dyslexic students, who sometimes find it difficult to follow a discussion and take notes simultaneously.

Despite discussion about these recommendations, I was initially sceptical about employing PowerPoint in lectures. Certainly, like most, if not all academics, I have long been aware that lectures have the potential to be somewhat boring. In January of this year the Guardian reported that Oxford University was considering requiring students to sign a legally binding contract that would compel them to attend lectures,[2] and followed this news by asking notable academics what they thought of lectures. As I recall, the responses were, if not of one voice, at least nearly so, most of the respondents recalling with dismay their own experiences. And it is not that I regard the traditional lecture format of one person discoursing on a particular topic for an hour, leavened only by him or her occasionally turning to the board to write in not always legible script the name of a particular philosopher or philosophical text, as a rite of passage, a torture that I had to endure and that my students should endure in their turn. If I had doubts about using PowerPoint it was principally because I had: a) never attended a lecture in which I found its use to be of any benefit to me and b) as a conse- quence I had, in fact, always found it to be extraneous to the process of

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[2] See *The Guardian*, 31st January 2006, 'Oxford Lecture Attendance Could Become Legal Requirement'.

following the lecture and thus at best a bit of nuisance and at worst a complete distraction.

However, the experience of using PowerPoint confounded my expectations. That is not to say that my PowerPoint lectures were particularly expert; quite the opposite was the case. Nevertheless, I followed the educationalists' advice and prepared slides which made explicit the structure of the lectures, which incorporated pictures or photographs of the philosophers I was discussing, and used visual images to illustrate points I wanted to make. The majority of students on the course responded favourably to the use of PowerPoint, saying that it facilitated their appreciation of the lecture. Moreover, I was able to observe how the slides would act as a trigger, encouraging students to make notes of what they now saw to be key points (that is not to say that they did not write down what I would have written on the board, but that I had no way of seeing whether they were doing so or not). Furthermore, using PowerPoint gave me greater flexibility to develop points, since as the structure of the lecture was clearly set by the slides, I felt that I could elaborate when I needed to, without losing track of where I was.

I have concentrated on reporting my experience of using PowerPoint not because I have suffered a Damascene conversion, renouncing my former hostility to technology in order to embrace it with a corresponding zeal; rather, I have had to do so, because at the time, of all the recommendations that we agreed should be tried, this was the one that at the time was practical to implement and which did have a quite dramatic effect on teaching and learning. Certainly, before the project, I would have striven to avoid telling students about the biographies of the philosophers they were required to study, limiting myself to mentioning their dates of birth and death and the names and dates of their important work, lest I was overwhelmed by essays that began by relating the same biographies back to me. I am still reluctant to indulge in biographical excursions, but I do see the benefit in showing students a PowerPoint slide of a portrait of Descartes. This is not only because such a picture may act a visual reference point for those who find it easier to learn through a mix of visual and auditory stimuli, but also because seeing a portrait of Descartes is a relatively quick and striking way of bringing home the historical distance between him and us, a difference which, in my view, it is necessary to

appreciate in order to understand parts, if not all, of *The Meditations*.

4. Follow-up

In preparation for this academic year, I have, however, been able to introduce more of the changes that the two educationalists and I discussed during their visits. I have decided to make mention of this here because not only does it indicate that I found participating in the project to be of value, but also because some of these changes touch upon a matter that I was not really able to address through the changes I made last year.

As I said above (see section 1), one of my initial motivations for participating in the project was to investigate the ways in which subject-specific initiatives could be developed to help dyslexic students not only in teaching and learning but also in writing essays. As I have also said (see section 2) whilst attention to the various methods of teaching and learning may indeed form a condition for an improvement in students' performance in written assessments, it was not clear to me that it would of itself lead automatically to such an end. In addition, what I felt was needed was the development of more direct ways of teaching reading and in particular writing skills. I have always maintained that teaching such skills requires practice, for just as one does not learn to swim except by swimming, one learns to read by reading and to write by writing. At MMU we have always placed great emphasis on reading texts with students, and this is something that I do spend time doing in seminars as a matter of course. Teaching writing skills, however, seems to be much harder, at least at a practical level. The problem is that unless seminar groups are small, doing this would appear to be a particularly time-consuming task and would lead to yet further increases in work loads for lecturers.

This year, I have developed WebCT areas supporting the courses that I teach. This is, in part, a result of the discussions that I had with the educationalists. However, it is also in part a consequence of the success that I have had using PowerPoint, since I am now more confident in the pedagogic value of IT based resources. In addition to presenting unit information, a list of reading sources and web-based materials on the WebCT course areas, I have composed a number of model

essays, which are accompanied by a plan and commentary explaining how I have structured the essay and built up an argument, selected quotes and made use of secondary sources. This I hope will provide students with a resource that they will be able to use, and not copy, to develop their own writing skills. In addition to this, I now require one student from each seminar to keep a record of the seminar, which I then post on the WebCT site. This exercise is not assessed, and in addition to forming a record of what was said in the seminars, it allows me to look at a small example of a student's writing on an individual basis, week by week, and advise them on how to improve the structure of their work.

I have yet to determine whether and to what degree this will impact positively not only on students' experience but on their level of attainment. However, I intend to monitor and compare attainment this year on all the courses that I teach against attainment last year on the same courses, in order to develop some idea of the impact these developments have. Doing this is facilitated by the ability to see which sites students use on a WebCT area. Thus, in addition to the usual surveys monitoring student satisfaction, I hope to be able to gain a reasonable indication of the impact of these measures on student performance.

5. Conclusion

Undoubtedly for me the process of working with SEN experts has been informative and beneficial. It is something that I doubt I would have undertaken on my own, for despite the fact that the university at which I teach frequently offers such help, given the constraints on my time, I was sceptical as to the value of what I supposed would be generic advice for tackling the difficulties specific to the discipline of philosophy. Certainly, some of the advice offered by the educationalists attached to the project was generic, and amounted simply to a reminder of what constituted good teaching practice. However, beyond that the process of working closely with them has allowed me to think about the way in which I teach in different ways and made me aware of the value of using different approaches. Whilst I was not able to address directly the specific problem which underlay my initial interest in the project concerning the development of writing skills within the time frame of

the project itself, it was nevertheless an issue that was recognised as important by all those who attended the final feedback meeting and one which I hope I have begun to address through the changes I have introduced into courses this year.

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Successful e-Learning Applications:

PRS Funded Projects Report

Danielle Lamb

Subject Centre for Philosophical and Religious Studies
University of Leeds

The Subject Centre for PRS is currently funding several projects on e-learning. The projects are designed to:

- encourage a culture in which innovative developments in learning, teaching and assessment are valued and acknowledged at a national level;
- promote good practice in the development and evaluation of innovative methods of learning, teaching and assessment;
- disseminate within the wider community innovative methods or materials originally developed for use within a single institution.

The abstracts listed here will hopefully give you an idea as to the content and scope of some of the individual projects we are currently funding.

This tranche of funding is now closed, but look out for future opportunities on our website at **http://prs.heacademy.ac.uk/grants/**.

For further information about the projects currently underway, please contact Danielle Lamb at **danni@prs.heacademy.ac.uk**.

Subject to debate: an inter-departmental VLE for religious studies students

Brian Bocking, SOAS

The project uses developments within VLE technology to enable students pursuing introductory courses in three departments of religion in the UK to debate topical and methodological issues in the study of religions. The project will assess the extent to which local student learning is enhanced by mentored participation in an on-line inter-institutional forum. The universities involved are deliberately widespread: in central London, the North-West, and rural Wales. The project embodies a pilot scheme that, if successful, will provide a viable model of good practice for implementation by other institutions and at other levels, both in the UK and internationally.

Mind mapping project

Victoria Harrison, University of Glasgow

The mind mapping project seeks to provide an interactive online e-learning environment that will become a permanent resource for teachers and students of philosophy of religion and related subjects. The seed of the project will be a series of mind maps charting the material covered within the Senior Honours philosophy of religion course taught in the Department of Philosophy at the University of Glasgow. Collaborators will be sought who wish to link their own mind

maps, representing courses within related subject areas, with the philosophy of religion mind map to form a network of interrelated maps.

Pushing the boundaries: using and reusing electronic learning objects in TRS

Alison Le Cornu, Oxford Brookes University

Building on initial work in the creation of Reusable Electronic Learning Objects (RELOs), this project seeks to push the boundaries by: a) exploring new pedagogic techniques in the presentation of electronic material; b) incorporating these into further and new types of RELO; and c) constructing a module-based infrastructure in which RELOs can be used. The project also engages with the challenges of the presentation of content in the primarily content-focused disciplines of TRS when adopting a highly student-centred pedagogic approach. A particular emphasis is placed on the reusability of electronic learning objects within each of these three areas.

Interactive mapping for teaching world Christianity

Sara Parvis, University of Edinburgh

The project team will design and create an original set of interactive animated scholarly maps and timelines illustrating Christian history from c. 1500 to the present in Africa, Asia, Oceania, Europe, North and South America. The maps will be tailored to demonstrate the key diachronic and synchronic themes of a first-year religion course, History of Christianity as a World Religion 1B. The maps will be integrated with other digital elements of the course and will be designed to be reusable with different technology platforms.

Automated assessment and out-of-class small group discussions: taking WebCT forward in philosophy

Julia Tanney, University of Kent

This proposal uses special features of WebCT for an in-depth study of two aspects related to e-learning and philosophy. First, the project will assess the suitability for automated, or semi-automated assessment; taking into account, for example, its capacity partly to replace assessments that are ripe for internet plagiarism and weighing this against the reluctance within the profession to move away from essay-style assignments. Second, the project will assess whether student learning is enhanced by mentored participation in small-group out-of-class on-line discussions. The project is intended to address specific concerns and to flag up valuable features associated with WebCT. If successful, it will provide a viable model of good practice for implementation by other HE and non HE institutions, both in the UK and internationally.

Development and implementation of St Andrews philosophy online distance-learning programme

Lisa Jones and Peter Clarke, University of St Andrews

The project is to research, develop and ultimately implement a brand new online distance-learning programme in philosophy. The distance-learning programme is envisaged to deliver philosophy modules via an e-learning vehicle (most likely WebCT), leading to an award of Diploma in HE in Philosophy from St Andrews University (120 credits at SCQF levels 7-8). The development of this online programme is proposed in response to a perceived need for such an e-learning opportunity in philosophy amongst secondary school teachers (particularly due to the new requirement for secondary school teachers of philosophy in Scotland to have achieved a certain level of credits in philosophy). By offering an online distance-learning Diploma, we would be enabling secondary school teachers of philosophy to amass the philos-

ophy credits they need and, more importantly, build their confidence in teaching the subject at Higher level.

Knowledge and power in the Neo-Assyrian empire

Eleanor Robson and Karen Radner, University of Cambridge and UCL

In the seventh century BCE the Assyrian monarch was the most powerful human being in the whole Middle East. Hundreds of letters and reports show scholars advising the Assyrian royal family on matters ominous, astrological and medical, often with direct impact on political affairs. They give an extraordinarily vivid insight into the actual practice of scholarship in the context of the first well-documented courtly patronage of scientific activity in world history. This project will bring together on a single website translations and transliterations of all those letters and reports, and a wealth of material from our undergraduate lectures and seminars, as well as student work, to support our own teaching and to provide resources for colleagues in history of science and religion who do not have access to specialist libraries.

Development of an e-learning Master in Theology in Ecumenical Studies

Noel Davies, University of Wales, Trinity College

The Trinity College MTh in Ecumenical Studies is one of very few such courses worldwide. The project is aimed at developing an e-learning version of the course, currently being taught by conventional teaching and learning methods, on a part-time or full-time basis. The project will develop the current modular resources and commission new resources (including teaching materials from international scholars in the field) for e-learning. The course attracts considerable interest from overseas but potential students find the costs and difficulties of attendance at Trinity College prohibitive. An e-learning version

would enable UK and international students to follow the course from home or from other convenient locations where they would have access to e-learning learning, teaching and assessment.

Apocalypse now?

James Hanvey, University of London, Heythrop College

Climate change and depleted natural resources require drastic action. But how do we move beyond guilt and fear to sustainable motivation for change? This project will facilitate exploration by people from the major UK faiths of their traditions of stewardship of the environment and just distribution of the world's goods, and how these are lived by believers in the UK. In workshops and seminars it will model inter-religious dialogue and work towards increased inter-faith co-operation and a shared theological vision in these areas. With the aid of electronic media, its outcomes will include resources for study and debate among academics, students, schools, religious communities, inter-religious groups and other communities of interest.

Theology and religious studies: contributing to challenging the frontiers of electronic learning.

Angie Pears, Oxford Brookes University

This project will develop, pilot and analyze the contribution that Reusable Electronic Learning Objects (RELOs), developed specifically in the subject fields of religious studies and theology, can make to teaching and learning across traditional disciplinary boundaries and across traditional learning contexts and styles. It will design and develop 3 RELOs which will then be used in a variety of teaching and learning situations across disciplines. The effectiveness and relevance of the RELOs will be measured and analyzed according to the perceived effectiveness of these for both learners and teachers. The relevance of religious studies and theology for the contemporary HE cur-

riculum will be a key concern, as will be the contribution of religious studies and theology to innovative pedagogic developments.

Only connect : a web-based approach to supporting student learning in the philosophy of social science

Stephen Timmons, University of Nottingham

'Philosophy of Social Science' is a compulsory module for postgraduate research study in the School of Nursing. As philosophy is very unfamiliar to most students, they have difficulty with making the connections between the various philosophical concepts discussed in the module, and then further connecting concepts to their programmes of research. I propose to develop a website that will use the hypertextual nature of the Internet to help students understand those connections. The website will be integrated with the existing programme of lectures and seminars. It will elucidate how various themes thread through the material covered in the module.

An interactive web-based model of philosophical argumentation

Jonardon Ganeri and David Moffat, University of Liverpool and Glasgow Caledonian University
Traditional 'manuals of debate' offer rich and highly structured analyses of philosophical argumentation. They recognise various species of two-party argumentation, with a variety of goals, means of execution, legitimate moves and counter-moves, objectives, and defeat situations. These manuals were used in training novices in the art of philosophical debate. The highly codified analyses lend themselves to formal implementation in a language such as HTML. This project will develop a web-based resource, implementing the structures of one or more of the traditional debate manuals, in order to provide students with a facility to practise their informal argumentation skills.

TechDis: e-Learning, Accessibility and Inclusion

Emma Arnold and Sue Harrison

TechDis

The JISC TechDis service works to support and promote accessibility and inclusion, through technology for the benefit of the UK learning community, providing advice on policy and practice both directly, to practitioners and learners, and indirectly through government agencies, funding bodies, intermediaries such as the Higher Education Academy Subject Centre Network and institutions. TechDis offer a variety of web-based services and publications designed to assist staff at all levels in delivering an inclusive learning experience.

This article will:
- Outline the TechDis view on e-learning and accessibility.
- Provide simple techniques practitioners can implement and utilise within everyday technologies that can result in more

accessible learning environment.
- Look briefly at some of the other common technologies that can be employed to increase accessibility.
- Offer an overview of the services available from TechDis.

Introduction to accessibility and the holistic approach to e-learning standards

Accessibility is no longer something considered only appropriate for disabled students; accessible and inclusive teaching and learning can be of great benefit to a large majority of people, both disabled and non disabled. The use of e-learning resources can offer many advantages over more traditional alternatives; electronic resources can be personalised by individual learners to better suit their needs, and allow practitioners to broaden the range of learning experiences for students allowing many different learning styles to be catered for.

Over the past 18 months TechDis has been working with other key players in the sector, discussing the relevance of accessibility standards for e-learning object creation. Although a standards 'checklist-based' approach has its benefits within website accessibility (where the user-base is essentially unknown) it can be detrimental in the realms of e-learning and the creation of e-learning objects.

The use of standards in an e-learning context can be very inhibiting to staff who are just starting out in educational development or using technology in a very iterative way with students. The application of these standards and guidelines can be at best a discouragement or at worst damaging, preventing staff from exploring the potential of e-learning.

The accessibility and usability of any resource is entirely contextual and will differ greatly from learner to learner; a drag-and-drop resource created using images in Microsoft Word would be wholly inaccessible and inappropriate for a blind user, but it would be very appropriate for a dyslexic (or other specific learning difficulty) learner. Not producing an interactive resource would be a great disadvantage to a much larger number of people than creating a 'web accessible' resource would benefit.

It is important to understand that e-learning is only one part of the learning cycle for a student—there are many different experiences a student will undertake, some of which will be enhanced by e-learning, others may not. For example in a course of study the following may be experienced by a learner: fieldwork, tutorials, library work, lectures, group work, problem-based learning, *viva voce*, examinations, assessment and work-based learning. Many of these will have little to do with e-learning. e-Learning is one of a number of tools a lecturer can have at their disposal, but they are unlikely to use only one technique.

For more information on the holistic approach to e-learning standards please see the following papers:

- *Holistic Approaches to e-Learning Accessibility* **http://www.ukoln.ac.uk/web-focus/papers/alt-j-2006/html/**
- *Implementing a Holistic Approach to e-Learning Accessibility* **http://www.ukoln.ac.uk/web-focus/papers/alt-c-2005/html/**

The issue of inclusive and accessible practice is of particular relevance with the Disability Equality Duty (DED) soon coming into force. This new legislation builds on the previous requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act, moving towards a whole-institution, proactive approach to accessibility. One requirement of the DED is the production of a Disability Equality Scheme by education institutions outlining how they plan to fulfil those duties set out in the legislation. Further information on the DED can be found in the TechDis Higher Education Conference Report (see below) and at **http://www.drc-gb.org/employers_and_service_provider/disability_equality_duty/further_and_higher_education.aspx.**

Making the most of what you have

Many of the technologies used by practitioners on a daily basis have features that, when used appropriately, can add greater accessibility and interaction to a resource. However, many of these techniques are not necessarily as widely used as they could be. To that end, TechDis are producing a series of publications entitled the *TechDis Accessibility Essentials*.

Each of the documents in the *Accessibility Essentials Series* is presented as a booklet containing step-by-step methods of maximising accessibility. Complementary to this, a CD is provided containing all the material from the booklet, available to be viewed and downloaded in a number of formats. Additional to the textual information a number of animations are included, designed to highlight and exemplify the techniques described.

The first publication in this series, *Making Electronic Documents More Readable*, gives step-by-step instructions allowing anyone reading a document or webpage, (using Microsoft® Word and Adobe® PDF, Microsoft® Internet Explorer and Mozilla® Firefox), to adapt the material to better suit their requirements. The second publication, *Writing Accessible Electronic Documents with Microsoft® Word*, is designed to outline the techniques people need to ensure the writing of accessible electronic information. This document contains information on the appropriate use of fonts and styles, structuring techniques, image and hyperlinks.

The above documents have already been published and are available from TechDis or as a download from the TechDis website. Please visit **http://www.techdis.ac.uk/accessibilityessentials** for further information, including links to an order form for the publication.

The Microsoft Office packages of Word and PowerPoint are two of the most commonly used packages in education. Below are some of the key points and guidance practicioners should be aware of when utilising these technologies.

The accessibility essentials of Microsoft® Word

In addition to the general guidelines for creating accessible print documents, there are many features of Microsoft® Word that can be used to make documents more accessible in an electronic format.

Best practice with font styles

There are a number of good practice techniques which should be implemented when writing any documents. For example:

- Use a minimum size 12, Sans Serif font e.g. Verdana or Arial.
- Avoid excessive use of capitalised, underlined or italicised text.
- Ensure all text is left aligned not justified, as justified text can lead to some users focusing on the 'rivers of white space' between the words rather than the words themselves.

Best practice with structuring documents

Microsoft® Word has an inbuilt structuring system which should be used when creating any document. Heading tags can be used to denote headings and sub-headings thus providing an intrinsic structure. When creating a document use the Styles and Formatting toolbar to create appropriate heading for your document. From the 'Style' box in the formatting menu a user can choose an appropriate heading and style for the structure of a document.

The ability to navigate a document by structural headings will benefit all users but give exceptional benefits to a range of disabled people. For example:

- Visually Impaired users may rely on a screen magnifier for reading. A long document can be awkward to navigate through a screen magnifier, requiring much horizontal and vertical scrolling. A properly structured document can be navigated via the Document Map.
- People with poorer English skills (for example, British Sign Language users or others for whom English is a second language) can extract the key concepts before negotiating the dense text.
- A motor impaired user can access the whole document with minimal keyboard or mouse movement.

Once users have created a document using the styles and headings options there are a number of resulting accessibility benefits both for those reading the document and also those creating them. Microsoft® Word has an inbuilt navigation system (*View > Document Map*) which can enable users to navigate an appropriately styled long document. Clicking the Document Map will allow the user to expand and contract headings or jump to the relevant section of a large document.

Best practice with images

Documents containing images are often viewed as inaccessible. However, although images can produce difficulties for some users, for many more they can improve the understanding of the text. The intelligent use of images to support learning objectives has benefits for most learners, especially those with the following needs:

- Users with print related difficulties may find well labelled images much more meaningful than paragraphs of text.
- Users with strong visual learning styles can benefit greatly from an image rich resource.
- Users with poorer English skills (for example, British Sign Language users or others for whom English is a second language) can benefit from explanatory images.

Best practice with hyperlinks

Hyperlinks and meaningful screen tips can provide additional information with the potential to benefit many learners. All users can benefit from access to additional materials that hyperlinks can provide, as well as from a screen tip embedded within a hyperlink which describes the linked resource enabling the user to decide whether to access it. There can be particular benefits for some learners with specific needs, for example:

- A motor impaired user can have access to a variety of material more easily than would be possible if they were handling physical resources.
- On a well designed document a screen reader user could browse by hyperlink title, giving the user the ability to 'skim read' the resource to find the next level of information.
- Print impaired users requiring more graphical materials can be directed to alternative resources.

Microsoft® Word can be a very powerful learning and teaching tool when used effectively. Users should be aware of the inherent and intrinsic accessibility benefits of using heading styles, images and hyperlinks. When used appropriately, all of these can add interactivity and exemplification to a traditionally inaccessible document.

The accessibility essentials of Microsoft® PowerPoint

Microsoft® PowerPoint is one of the most commonly used presentation tools within education. There are many simple steps that can be taken to improve the accessibility of a PowerPoint document both during delivery and as a learning resource away from the context of the presentation. Making the presentation available before it is delivered can be useful for many learners, as it allows them to gain a broad understanding of the topic beforehand and therefore obtain greater benefit from the additional information provided by the practitioner which may be missed by a student who has difficulty with the pace of a lecture, and pinpoint any areas where further clarification may be required. The presentation can also serve as a useful interactive resource after delivery as it allows students to revisit the material at their own pace.

- Write no more on a slide than you would on a postcard. Over-wordy or complicated slides will be more difficult for an audience to read. Placing too much information on a slide will result in the audience not listening to the presenter as they try and follow all slide information.
- Ensure images and animations are used appropriately. A continuous animation will only serve to distract the audience from the information portrayed. Any images used for exemplification of concept should be explained by the presenter, for the benefit of anyone who cannot see or interpret the visual image.
- The colours chosen for the text and slide background should provide adequate contrast—dark blues and creams have been shown to be particularly legible. If presenting in a light room, display dark coloured text on a light coloured background. Conversely, if presenting in a darkened room, ensure the background colour is dark and the text light. If using a dark background ensure the weight of text is increased (e.g. bold).
- Use the inbuilt notes field within Microsoft® PowerPoint. The notes field can be located beneath the slide area within the edit view and is an ideal place to add additional notes explaining the slide text. Not only will this act as an aide memoir for presen-

ters, but will ensure the context of the presentation is understood when not being delivered (for example if a presentation is uploaded onto a website or Virtual Learning Environment).
• Use the inbuilt slide design options within Microsoft® PowerPoint wherever possible. The slide design options can be accessed from *Format > Slide Layout*. By using these slide layout options all text inserted will appear within the presentation outline and will thus be accessible when the document is exported.

Best practice with presentation technique

When physically presenting a session there are a number of tips and techniques which should be used to ensure that you are able to engage as many members of the audience as possible. The right delivery will ensure listeners gain the most benefit from the presentation.
• Face forward at all times when speaking, you may not know whether there are any lip readers in the audience.
• If available use a microphone, it may be connected to an induction loop and your voice may not carry as far as you think it does!
• Ensure you vocalise everything which is present on the slides, a visually impaired learner (or one sitting at the back of a large auditorium) will not be able to access the material on the screen. Stating 'this slide explains the concept' is not adequate.
• When taking questions from the audience, repeat it from the front, enabling all participants to hear the question.

Assistive technology

Traditionally assistive technology has been seen as hardware or software specifically designed to enable a user with a particular disability to improve or facilitate their access to computers or electronic resources. However, many commonly available technologies can be used to increase accessibility and usability for disabled learners as well as providing a benefit for all learners.

Mind mapping

Mind mapping can be a useful tool for many students, particularly those with dyslexia or other learning difficulties who may find it difficult to organise their thoughts and ideas, or those who prefer a more visual learning style. Mind maps can be used for note taking during lectures or research, in preference to a more linear style of recording, and to organise ideas and materials in preparation for an assignment, essay or presentation. Mind maps can be created by hand, however there are also many software packages ranging from free programs such as Freemind to proprietary software such as Inspiration and Mind Manager which offer additional advantages.

The functionality of these software packages varies, but in addition to the ability to quickly and simply create and edit mind maps many allow the user to export mind maps into various formats. Exporting to a Microsoft® Word document keeps the hierarchical format of the mind map and translates it into the appropriate structure, giving an outline of the assignment for the learner to complete and allowing both the user and reader to use the Document Map for effective navigation. Some mind mapping software also allows the user to export to Microsoft® PowerPoint, creating the basic slide show which can then be edited as appropriate, and into navigable web pages using hyperlinks to represent the structure. This can be especially useful when creating learning resources as it allows the mind map to be used in an interactive way by students. It is also possible to export a properly structured document from Microsoft® Word into a mind map.

The use of audio

The most obvious way in which audio can be used to support learners is in allowing them to record lectures and workshops. If a student has issues with note taking, recording lectures can allow them to fully engage with the material rather than concentrating solely on making notes, which may result in the student missing important information or not gaining sufficient understanding of the subject matter. Having the lecture material available in an audio format allows learners to review the lecture at a later stage with the ability to pause and return to

particular areas, allowing them to make more detailed notes at their own pace and revisit points for further clarification. This would be of benefit to all learners, but particularly those with visual impairments, manual dexterity issues or specific learning difficulties that make hand writing notes problematic.

It is possible for learners to make their own recordings using a digital voice recorder or MP3 player with a recording function, however this is obviously only of benefit to an individual student. Another possibility is for the lectures to be recorded by staff and made available to students in a downloadable format such as a podcast. This would allow students to transfer files to a portable MP3 player and review the material while travelling or in locations such as libraries, to give a starting point for research.

Learners with visual impairments and those with reading difficulties may also benefit from the use of text-to-speech software, which converts text based resources to an audio format. This function is available with Microsoft® Windows using the built in narrator, however there are other pieces of software available that offer greater functionality such as more natural voices and the ability to record the output as an MP3 file, allowing it to be divided into chapters enabling greater convenience for listening. Material can also be transferred to a portable MP3 player or burnt onto a CD so that students can listen at a time and place appropriate for them.

The TechDis HEAT scheme

TechDis have been working with the Higher Education Academy Subject Centre network on the Higher Education Assistive Technology (HEAT) scheme, with the aim of raising awareness of the potential of technology to encourage inclusive teaching and learning and developing and disseminating good inclusive practice to the wider HE sector. Through this scheme staff members working in Higher Education were given the opportunity to bid, through the relevant Subject Centre, for some technology or training to develop inclusive teaching practice. The first tranche of bids has been received and is currently being assessed. Successful bids will result in a number of case studies which will be disseminated throughout the sector. Further information about the

scheme can be found at **http://www.techdis.ac.uk/getheatscheme**.

Further TechDis resources

TechDis Online—http://www.techdis.ac.uk
The TechDis website contains sector and role specific advice covering a range of accessibility and inclusion issues, articles on a variety of key topics including e-learning, web accessibility and assessment and case studies outlining best practice. All TechDis publications are also available for download.

**The TechDis User Preferences Toolbar—
http://www.techdis.ac.uk/gettoolbar**
The TechDis User Preferences Toolbar has been designed to provide people with a simple way of imposing their accessibility preferences onto any web page. Within the toolbar users can zoom to increase or decrease text size, amend the font and background colour and choose between a variety of different serif and sans serif fonts.

TechDis Staff Packs—http://www.techdis.ac.uk/staffpacks.
The TechDis Staff Packs are a series of self-supporting staff development materials designed to allow institutions to run their own staff development sessions on a range of accessibility related topics including e-learning, web accessibility and the accessibility features built into Microsoft® applications among others. Each pack contains the relevant background materials, exercises and presentations necessary to run a presentation, and can be used by those with little previous experience in this area. The Staff Packs can be embedded within a institutional wide staff development programm or delivered independently as stand alone modules.

The TechDis Higher Education Conference Report
TechDis held a Higher Education conference in October 2005, aimed at highlighting aspects of disability in education that will have an impact on any organisations providing services or materials to a wider audience. Following the success of the event a conference report has been published providing material from both keynote presentations

along with a précis of each of the workshops delegates had the opportunity of attending. The report is available in hard copy from TechDis or to download at **http://www.techdis.ac.uk/getheconfreport**.

TechDis helpdesk

For more information on the TechDis service or any of the issues raised in this article please visit **http://www.techdis.ac.uk**, or email **helpdesk@techdis.ac.uk** with any specific enquiries.

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Workshop on the Future of HPS:
Report on the Learning and Teaching Panel

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Introduction

On 16th June 2006 at University College London (UCL) there was a national workshop to discuss the current standing of history of science and philosophy of science as academic disciplines. The workshop was organised jointly by UCL and the University of Leeds. The aim was to explore the complex relationship between these two subjects, discover factors that are motivating change in that relationship and chart possible future collaboration in a more explicit way than has been done for some time. Future meetings will occur annually and will be organised around specific topics.

At the initial meeting the Subject Centre for Philosophical and Religious Studies ran a panel session to look at learning and teaching. Many topics arose from issues of identity of the disciplines and from the papers presented during the rest of meeting. Identity is particularly relevant for history and philosophy of science (HPS) because many staff will be working in departments alone, maybe not even in philosophy or history units, and will have very close connections with their wider research communities to provide the impetus for their research and teaching. Four experienced teachers were invited to give their considered opinions on current educational issues and then discussion was opened up to the floor of the meeting. The invited speakers were Joe Cain (UCL), Geoffrey Cantor (Leeds), Grant Fisher (UCL) and Graeme Gooday (Leeds). I chaired the panel session.

The panel

Graeme Gooday began by noting how pleasant it was to have a jovial and good-humoured meeting on the relationship between history of science and philosophy of science, because, within the community, there had been some fears of a 'divorce' from about 1992 onwards. His visits to institutions where students were better at integrating their philosophy and history learning than the staff were, had shown him this is not the case, and that students may hold an important key to future dialogue and pedagogic development. Integration is already present in ways that are not immediately obvious and there is plenty to be optimistic about. And in dialogue with history teachers in the past he had been struck by the high level of argumentation, of conceptual clarity and rigor, which goes into HPS teaching, where the philosophy has had a clear input.

For Graeme the central point is that the role of the HPS teacher is to bring students to be able to explain and understand science. Things go wrong in teaching when this is forgotten. History can become too focused on the minutia of historical exegesis and philosophy on the abstract exposition of metaphysical and epistemological laws and an obsession with structure. Turning to the use of case studies, another danger in teaching is to become too focused on one's own area of research expertise, such as the history of technology, in order to use the

teaching merely as an exercise in 'honing weapons of historiography', to forward only one mode of expertise. Graeme highly recommended Hasok Chang's work on the history of chlorine as a tremendous exercise in bringing a range of historical and philosophical skills together on a topic that wasn't a case study designed to prove an already existent sociological point, but a genuine account of all aspects of explaining and understanding science. Chang's chlorine project included exploration of metaphysical and epistemological issues, alongside ethics (use in warfare), hygiene, industrial applications and manufacture. This gave students a great deal of material that is extremely useful in a wider context than most other case studies usually provide.[1] Where case studies and teaching are properly explored in this way, education of a very high quality, and that truly demonstrates the strengths of integrated HPS, can occur.

Geoffrey Cantor recalled a 'golden age' of HPS (that may or may not have existed), when he was taught by Lakatos, Laudan and Feyerabend. Geoffrey admired the teaching of Larry Laudan 'who exemplified the history *and* philosophy of science'. Laudan, in some ways, was reacting to his mentor, Thomas Kuhn, and was attempting to properly fully integrate history and philosophy of science. Geoffrey asked whether it was possible to recreate a similar module that was a genuine marriage of the disciplines at the beginning of the twenty-first century, when many departments deliver separate courses at undergraduate level. He explored an example from his own experience of teaching on a second-level philosophy of science course as a historian, where he had attempted to use the historical background to construct a framework within which the philosophy could be explored. However, in his own estimation this had not been a successful approach, because many of the students were oriented to philosophy and found the mode of presentation unfamiliar and Geoffrey's stress and enthusiasm for the historical episodes did not deliver the structured epistemological framework they were expecting. The challenge is therefore to bring creativity to the creation of an integrated HPS course so that students can see the value of multi-modal approaches to addressing the issues HPS raises. A real challenge to doing this is that we lack text books that

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1 See also, Chang, H. 'Turning an undergraduate class into a professional research community' *Teaching in Higher Education* Vol. 10, No. 3, July 2005, pp. 387-394.

genuinely address history and philosophy of science together. We need more than historical introductions to the philosophy (or vice versa), but a reconceptualisation that gives 'history and philosophy of science—an introduction'. Finally, Geoffrey noted that, having seen many applications for research funding from graduate students, the historiographical benefits of studying HPS were enormous, HPS graduates being much better able to articulate the underlying principles of their research after having studied philosophy of science, in comparison with historians who had not.

Grant Fisher also welcomed the congenial nature of the day. He too had faced challenges in integrating teaching styles, with a research background in philosophy of science and having then taught history of science too. The multidisciplinary nature of HPS is exciting and challenging for students and gives them many opportunities to develop and grow. He had studied HPS at UCL as an undergraduate, not primarily as an historian or philosopher, but with an interest in science itself, and had learned a great deal about himself, his preferred learning styles and his skills in doing so. However, philosophy of science brings issues to HPS from the historical perspective that may create a tension around the issue of nature of history itself. How does consideration of explanatory power in a case study impact on the aspects of social and institutional history more recognisable to a straight historian, for example? Are the philosophers plugging gaps? These kinds of tensions need to be brought to the surface in teaching and the construction of modules.

Joe Cain stressed that in real science practice the borders and boundaries of disciplines and areas of activity (laboratories and field work) are fuzzy and uncertain. He said his key message for undergraduate learning in HPS was that borders and borderlands are all fuzzy, between scientist and citizen, between philosophy and history, between science and non-science. 'Everything's fuzzy!' Borderlands are also 'zesty', full of conflict, mixtures, hybridisations and innovations. Capturing this zest is crucial. A great deal of satisfaction can be gained from living in these fuzzy spaces. However, there are those students who find this fuzziness and uncertainty uncomfortable. This is why there is a tension with some students' and teachers' models of what they expect from HPS. Undergraduates who do well are those who can manage with border spaces intellectually. But we do need to ask whether we should be in such spaces at all. Does it offer anything of

value? This is the kind of question we can also ask students. It offers a broad commitment to a multi-cultural experience in intellectual terms that serves to promote wider and deeper understanding of each other: HPS has a civic function.

Discussion topics

There were a number of themes in the ensuing discussion and it was clear different views on the nature of HPS teaching existed, all feeding into a diverse picture of the requirements for a good education in HPS. The following is a summary of the main points made and is presented to inspire further debate.

Most participants agreed that the interdisciplinarity of HPS meant that it could take more time and effort to properly acquire the skills and learning required to excel. But this interdisicpliarity, the fuzziness of HPS, was appreciated by the students precisely because it played a civic function and made them critical consumers of science.

A large part of the discussion was concerned with how we balance HPS with science itself, questioning the kind of background knowledge in science that might be required for students signing up to HPS courses and some of the expectations of a science background HPS lecturers had. Some wondered 'what's so special about science?' Do we need to have 'internal-to-science' knowledge? One can be a historian of sewage handling without 'getting down in the muck'. However, others felt that the dynamic that drives people to study HPS comes from science itself, from being aware of what science is, or at least how it is generally presented. Geoffrey Cantor thought that HPS should be 'X-rated' because of its potentially subversive nature for those who have some existing science knowledge: it causes a shift in perspective and understanding around the activity of science. Others felt that students are neither scientists nor philosophers coming to HPS; while they are (generally) enthusiastic they lack the context to readily grasp the important issues—which can be seen as too abstract and difficult——and at least a background in science helps to fill in some of this context. It was also pointed out that there are problems in studying science, particularly physics, from late 19th century onwards without some understanding of statistics. All these views can be seen as com-

peting ideas about where you belong in an interdisiciplinary subject—in both countries with dual citizenship, or doing something different, innovative and original in the borderland?

A comparison was suggested between the institutions of physics and HPS. Since the end of the Cold War physics has been contracting; physics departments have been questioned and have needed to justify themselves. Their position requires greater supporting argumentation because an ideological grounding has been removed. Similarly there have always been folks asking stories about the bigger picture of science, but also since the Cold War the need for humanities to question the nature of physics has been falling away. So HPS needs a new justification too. Counter to this model Graeme Gooday argued that HPS has always been interstitial in the university and has re-invented its purpose at different times. It was also pointed out that being liberated from ideological constraints was a positive aspect of current HPS research and that, in any case HPS generated its own institutional purposes.

Joe Cain rounded off the discussion by noting that students come away from HPS with a bigger picture of science and that picture consists of four important ideas: knowledge isn't just a collection of facts accumulated over time; context, be it historical, social, institutional and so on, is important for knowledge; identities are fluid both for the student as philosopher/historian and for the nature of science; and that 'going somewhere else' is enlightening in itself—spatially, temporarily, and intellectually journeys of discovery and exploration are exciting and worth doing. History and philosophy of science has a crucial role to play, therefore, in defending the humanist tradition in education.

There will be future events in the UCL-Leeds programme, where specific HPS topics will be explored. To find out more, please contact Steven French at Leeds, or Hasok Chang at UCL.

To find out what the Subject Centre for PRS is doing to support history of science and philosophy of science, please contact me at **david@prs.heacademy.ac.uk**.

AAPT and APA Conference 2006:

Report on Graduate Teaching Seminar

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Introduction

The American Philosophical Association and the American Association of Philosophy Teachers jointly support a biennial graduate seminar on teaching philosophy, as part of the AAPT workshop conference. The 2006 seminar took place at Washington and Jefferson College, Pennsylvania, on 2nd August. The seminar aimed to equip graduate students new to teaching philosophy with the requisite pedagogical skills of the profession, with particular focus on those skills that are peculiar to the teaching of the discipline of philosophy. More information about the conference can be found on the AAPT website, **http://aapt-online.dhs.org/**.

This report is split into four sections that correspond roughly to the four graduate seminars. At the end of each section is a brief bibliography from which thoughts were drawn in the discussion in the seminar, or which might be turned to for further information. The primary aim of this report is to highlight the learning that took place at the graduate seminar; much of this will no doubt be second nature to more experienced philosophy teachers. Hopefully the report will prove a useful starting point for graduate students new to teaching, but perhaps it may contain some useful reminders for those who have been teaching for longer. Much of the material in the report stems directly from the seminar itself, either from the seminar leaders, Martin Benjamin and Betsy Decyk, or from the 14 other graduate students at the seminar. In addition, David Schrader was present for the first day's seminar, and George Macdonald Ross was present for the first part of the fourth seminar.

1. Philosophy and philosophy teaching: an overview

Many students studying philosophy at university will not have studied the subject before; and in addition philosophy is methodologically distinct from other disciplines. These factors combine to present teachers of philosophy with a number of concerns over and above the pedagogical issues that apply across disciplines. Principal among these concerns for the philosophy teacher are that: they must help students see the relevance of philosophical questions; they must not only teach philosophy but also meta-philosophy; and they have to consider their attitude towards procedural neutrality.

To the outsider, and, more pertinently, to the new student of philosophy, the subject matter of the discipline can appear to range from the arcane to the irrelevant. To cultivate in students a disposition to learn philosophy one must instil in them the desire to have philosophical questions answered. It is generally not sufficient to simply provide answers to philosophical questions that students do not have; and students are unlikely to have philosophical questions unless they see the relevance of those questions. A successful approach to teaching philosophy (particularly to new students, but also to experienced students who have not encountered the specific sub-discipline that one is

teaching) is likely to include a certain amount of groundwork—enabling the students to appreciate the importance of the questions that will be grappled with. Instead of teaching free will by launching into the distinction between compatibilism and incompatibilism one might first ask *prima facie* oblique questions that will lead students to an interest in the freewill debate. As an example: one might ask students whether a 13 year can be held to be accountable for a crime that they have committed. Through Socratic dialogue or group discussion, questions about the nature of freewill will be quickly reached—yet now there is an obvious connection to 'real-world' issues that students care about. Students have demonstrated to themselves that they care about these issues by caring about the initial question that led them to these issues. While it is often obvious to professional philosophers why they should care about philosophical issues it is rarely so obvious to students; this becomes more so as one moves from subjects such as applied ethics to *prima facie* more distant subjects such as metaphysics. It may instead be that caring about philosophical issues has become the default position for those who have been immersed in the subject for a number of years and that why these issues are important is not reflected on. Either way, it is fruitful to spend some time at the beginning of a course or topic fostering in students a passion for the subject they are about to study. This will be repaid by an improved motivation to learn as well as placing the subject within a framework that is less abstract and so potentially easier to comprehend.

Meta-philosophy is a vast discipline in its own right, and the boundaries between it and philosophy *simpliciter* are frequently blurred. However, some understanding of the nature of philosophy as a discipline, and the methodological techniques that it employs, is vital if students are to be properly equipped to engage with philosophical questions. Ultimately one may take the stance that one can only fully understand the philosophical endeavour through observing the practice of philosophy. But there is at least some merit in providing explicit instructions and directions on how the subject differs from other disciplines and what it is that makes 'good' philosophy. This is not to exclude the possibility of teaching meta-philosophy through showing examples of good philosophy, but clearly this will be more effective if the aim of showing these examples is made explicit.

Frequently philosophy is perceived as lacking rigour. The prevalence of this perception is higher in those students who study more obviously axiomatised or systematic disciplines such as mathematics and the sciences. It is incumbent on the teacher who wishes to show the distinction between philosophy as it ought to be practised and philosophy as it is often perceived in society at large, to examine, with the students, the norms of rigour within philosophy. One might highlight that while there is no agreed upon answer to many philosophical questions this does not mean that all answers are equally acceptable, that there are answers which are demonstrably wrong and that there are arguments for answers which fail to be suasive when held up to philosophical scrutiny.

It is similarly valuable to appreciate the different forms of question that one might encounter in philosophy. Explicit instruction on the distinction between objective, subjective and normative questions provides students with concepts that illuminate the purpose and methodology of philosophy. By demonstrating the sorts of appropriate answers to the differing types of questions one can show something of how philosophy is marked out. Objective questions require factual answers; subjective questions require sincere reports of personal states; normative questions require coherently reasoned answers. It is normative questions and the mode of answering that provides a paradigm of the philosophical method, and through proper appreciation of this and the difference between what counts as an appropriate answer to normative questions that one can come to learn much of the nature of philosophy as a discipline (Warren, 1998, 262-264).

Kant's approach to teaching philosophy can provide a useful guide to teachers when considering meta-philosophical issues as well as the specific skills that are being imparted. Kant distinguishes between three stages of learning in philosophy, as elucidated by Ladd (1982, 5-6):

> [T]he first stage involves developing the understanding through penetrating judgements based on experience and concepts derived therefrom; the second stage uses reason to connect these concepts to their grounds and consequences; and the third and final stage consists in putting all of these together into a well-ordered whole as a science.

This structure can provide a useful framework for considering the developmental stages of those learning to do philosophy. Furthermore, as both Ladd (1982, 6) and Macdonald Ross (2005, 70) have pointed out, the third stage is not necessarily one that all students will reach. The third stage is more directly of use to those pursing a scholarly interest in philosophy, whereas the first two stages are more clearly transferable to the non-academic world. The key point though is that these stages are just that, one must progress through them in order and as such it is sensible to teach in a way that explicitly acknowledges this framework.

The allied Kantian ideal of inculcating autonomy (if that is not oxymoronic) in students when teaching philosophy leads to the necessary consideration of one's stance on procedural neutrality. The balance that needs to be struck is between unduly influencing students on one hand and giving the incorrect impression that anything goes or that one has no firm views on the other hand. If one is teaching ethics and continually reinforces the impression that one is a consequentialist, both by explicitly affirming this and by presenting the arguments for it more strongly than arguments for other ethical theories, then one runs the risk of undermining students' autonomy. Consequentialism will be seen as the right answer and as a result students may fail to appreciate the arguments for other theories. Furthermore their approach towards philosophy as a discipline will be skewed for fear of engaging in contrary arguments in the paradigmatically philosophical manner. At the other extreme complete procedural neutrality, where one gives no clue as to one's philosophical disposition, may alienate students. One may inadvertently give the false impression that one does not have an opinion on the matter; if the teacher has no opinion then it is difficult to see why the student should have one. Additionally students may come to believe that the discipline is concerned merely with exploring arguments in an almost historical manner, without the need to formulate ones own opinion and arguments for that opinion. It is natural to wish to steer between these two extremes, however exactly how one goes about this will depend in part on one's own teaching style, the level of the course, and the students one is teaching. Two approaches one may take: to make explicit one's views and how one arrived at them, while explicitly acknowledging that other views well argued for will be no less favourably looking upon when marking; or to state that one has a

reasoned opinion on the issue but that it is felt this may unduly influence students and so will not be discussed. Both approaches have the merit of reinforcing the awareness of autonomy while making students more aware of the pedagogical process and so fostering a feeling of inclusion.

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2. The first day of a course, the student-teacher relationship, and assessment and marking

In the first day of a course a teacher has the competing aims of conveying essential information about the administration of the course; conveying the subject matter that can be expected; and enthusing students to study the course. The latter two aims have a certain natural symbiosis, but this symbiotic relationship does not so obviously extend to advising on the administrative matters of the course. How the balance between these aims is struck will in part come down to institutional policies and procedures. There are, however, considerations that apply

regardless of one's institution. An awareness of students' needs and desires to pass a course and their consequent anxiety about assessment criteria and deadlines should inform one's attitude to the dissemination of such information. An anxious student who is concerned about how the course is to progress is unlikely to be able to concentrate as well as one who has been appraised of this information at the outset. This is not to stipulate that administrative information ought to be disseminated in the lecture itself, it can be done beforetime (for example by web based syllabi). However it is unrealistic to assume that all students will have read such information beforehand; and equally unrealistic to assume that, despite the elegance of one's legalistic prose, everything will have been fully understood in the manner intended.

Enthusing students and conveying course information can be naturally combined. As is highlighted in section 1, one needs to enable students to reach the point where they are genuinely asking the philosophical questions that the course will help them to answer. There is perhaps more explicit pressure to enthuse students in American institutions where there is greater freedom for students to choose between different courses. However, it is equally important in all institutions that students are keen to learn and can see the relevance of their learning if they are to succeed at their chosen course of study. As such the pressure to motivate students should be felt equally by all who teach the discipline.

One makes an explicit and implicit contract with students about the expectations one has as relates to matters such as the quality of work and their contribution in class. When conveying these expectations the more they can be made explicit the greater the benefit for the student and the student-teacher relationship. But while explicit expectations are laid out at the beginning of a course one ought to be mindful of the way in which ongoing behaviour can undermine the explicit contract. A teacher with a particularly relaxed approach may give the false impression that they will mark generously. Students may feel betrayed when they do not get the marks they were expecting from the implicit messages conveyed by the teacher. It may be necessary then to restate the explicit contract if there is a concern that one's actions may have been interpreted as conveying an unintended implicit contract (Wolcowitz, 1982, 14-17). As well as explicit contracts being undermined by implicit contracts one may also directly undermine the

explicit contract by one's actions. If students are advised to read the set text before the lecture each week but one then presents a précis of the reading each week students may interpret this as a signal that they do not need to do the reading. There is little point in setting aims and then providing a disincentive for those aims (or at least no disincentive to not achieve the aims).

When negotiating the explicit contract with students, much can be done to foster a good relationship. An open and positive student-teacher relationship can be formed by making clear to students the criteria for assessment, as well as making clear that it is your aim to enable them to perform as well as possible. The relationship between student and teacher will influence the learning process. A positive relationship will encourage students to ask questions and help to motivate them to learn. A teacher who has an understanding and an awareness of her students will be sensitive to the learning styles and outside influences that may impact on their learning-teaching styles and approaches can be tailored accordingly.

As with expectations of students it is an advantage to be open and explicit about the method and aims of assessment and marking. Wolff distinguishes between three distinct aims that marking may have: criticism; evaluation; and ranking (Wolff, 1969, 59-62). The purpose of criticism is to enable students to learn how to improve their philosophical reasoning through highlighting areas where they have done well and explaining why, as well as showing areas for improvement. Evaluation as conceived here is understood as Scriven's notion of 'summative evaluation' (1973); it provides students with an indication of how well they have performed in the assessment. Typically evaluation will include some kind of explicit mark or grade. Evaluation and the mark that students receive is of importance in so far as it will dictate their overall degree classification and all that goes with that, however the pedagogical aims of evaluation are less obvious. Well structured criticism will often carry with it a strong indication of the overall evaluation, however this need not always be the case. The particularly able student who receives lots of suggestions for how their work could be developed might perceive this as indicating a low evaluation, when in reality the paper is of a high standard and the criticism is of a level that one might provide to a colleague. Evaluation will iron out such ambiguities but should not been seen as a substitute for criticism. Ranking,

the putting of students' assessments in order of evaluation, appears to serve little pedagogical purpose. Highly ranked students may become complacent while lower ranked students become disenfranchised, but the evaluative difference between them may be slight.

Well structured criticism is an important pedagogical tool. The criticism need not come solely from teachers. By encouraging students to criticise each others' work students will receive more feedback. Additionally students providing the feedback will learn to recognise those features of philosophical writing that are to be fostered and those that are to be avoided; enhancing their own philosophical writing. The value of criticism (both student and teacher) can be further enhanced by encouraging students to reflect on their feedback; too often feedback is ignored by students, but if a response to the feedback is encouraged then there is greater chance that the purpose of the criticism will be achieved.

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3. Ethical relativism, the introductory course, and critical thinking

Frequently students studying ethics for the first time will take a rela-

tivist position. While this often may be a philosophically unsophisticated position, asserting little more than universal moral tolerance, it can be instructive to discover the reasons motivating the adoption of this position. Momeyer (1995, 302-305) distinguishes between six reasons why a student may adopt a relativist position; the appreciation of these differing positions can help inform one's teaching practices. As example: should students be relativists because they are concerned about offending others in the class who hold differing opinions, then this affords an opportunity to elucidate the nature of philosophy. The teacher is in a position to enable students to appreciate the power of suasive and reasoned argument; that holding a different philosophical position to others can be justified if backed by argument. This ought not to offend others but rather invite reasoned response if they wish to maintain their differing philosophical stance. Similarly, if students hold a relativist position for fear of having their long-held views challenged this will be a prime opportunity to make clear the distinction between the nature of subjective beliefs, and philosophical opinion that is to be arrived at through reasoned argument.

Concerns raised in section 1 carry over to concerns about students holding unreflective relativist positions. Students do not come to their first ethics class as amoral individuals—many may have strongly held ethical beliefs. If these beliefs have been clung onto in a dogmatic fashion then ethical relativism may seem a natural position to switch to. If the teacher takes time stressing the arguments for and against differing ethical positions then there is the concern that students may simply adopt a relativist position either through inability to discern between the arguments or through the belief that it is not the job of philosophy to discern between the arguments. An appropriate approach towards procedural neutrality should have some impact on whether or not ethical relativism is adopted for these reasons.

Finally it can be noted that ethical relativism is not without its proponents, although generally those proponents will adopt a form of relativism that is different to that adopted by students new to ethical theory. Momeyer suggests though that there can be pedagogical advantage to assuming that students do hold a well thought out relativist position (1995, 302-303). One can then draw students to fully realising that position, the philosophical intricacies of it, and how it can be defended as well as argued against. The point is that even if one is not

a relativist there is still much philosophical mileage in exploring it as an issue, particularly given that many students take it to be a position that they hold.

The introductory course, the 'Philosophy 101', has greater popularity in America than in the UK. Despite the absence of a specific stand alone, 45 hour, introduction course in the UK many of the considerations that apply to the construction of such a course will carry over to first philosophy courses that students take. Cahn has distinguished between four styles of introductory course (which need not be mutually exclusive): taking readings grouped by topic; studying major historical works as a whole; studying the history of philosophy; and using a single-authored textbook (Cahn 1986). To this list we can add the single topic course advocated by White (1996), where different areas of philosophy are considered by relating them to one theme (White gives the example of freewill).

All styles of course have their advantages and their disadvantages. Taking readings grouped by topics gives an overview of many areas of philosophy but may fail to give a coherent narrative to the history of philosophy. Studying major historical works may fail to inspire students who cannot see the relevance, but if done well can provide a thorough bedrock on which future philosophy courses can build. Studying the history of philosophy gives a sense of the development of the discipline but may fail to grapple in sufficient depth with the philosophical issues if done badly. A single-authored text book (if well written) will provide a flowing treatment of a number of philosophical issues, but may be biased towards the author's particular stance of the issues discussed. The single topic course will aptly illustrate the interconnectedness of the discipline but it requires skill in its construction to hold the interest of students for the duration of the course.

The style that one adopts will be a largely personal choice, reflecting one's preferred teaching style and strengths. However consideration will need to be paid to the makeup and size of class that one is teaching—for example, experience may have taught that a particular class will fail to respond to a historical approach no matter how well it is delivered. In addition to the style that one chooses, there are other goals of an introductory course in philosophy. Section 1 considered some of the issues that need to be grappled with when instructing

students new to philosophy. Other issues that ought to be covered, are how to write philosophically and how to read philosophical papers. The latter can be easily overlooked by those who have been reading philosophy professionally, but the reading of philosophy is a new skill to many students, and as such, time spent on it will have a positive impact on students' learning. Even what seems like obvious advice to the veteran philosophy reader can help students new to the discipline-advising that it takes a long time to adequately read a piece of philosophy will encourage students to spend more time reading while allaying fears that they are not understanding the reading quickly enough. By the same token time needs to be spent making explicit the skills and strengths of good philosophy writing; echoing section 2 of this paper—make clear the method of assessment and why that method has been chosen.

Instruction in critical thinking, either as part of an introductory course, or as a separate, standalone course, can suffer from being too abstract and from using stale and uninformative examples. Work done on the concepts associated with category membership (see Mervis and Rosch, 1981, 95-100 for an overview) suggests that there are certain paradigmatic examples that people associate with different concepts. When asked to think of a bird, many think of a robin but few of a chicken or ostrich. By considering non-paradigmatic examples of concepts when teaching those being taught can gain a fuller understanding of that concept. This thought translates naturally over into the field of critical thinking, often staid examples (such as those that discuss Socrates and his mortality) are used without embellishment; but by fleshing out the area being taught with unusual examples the students have a broader range of examples to draw on when forming the concepts necessary to critical thinking. By extension, while paradigmatic examples of reasoning involved in first order symbolic logic are simply given by formally written first order symbolic logic there are considerable gains to be made by teaching using examples that involve constituents other than letters and the symbols for logical connectives.

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4. The use of paraphrased philosophical texts; plagiarism; continued professional development

Jonathan Bennett has paraphrased a number of important philosophical texts as an aid to student learning and understanding. The paraphrasing goes beyond the mere replacement of archaic words and phrases by also making explicit the structure and goal of the piece of philosophical prose in question. For example, the argument for the possibility of a malevolent deceiver at the beginning of Descartes' *Second Meditation* is introduced in Bennett's paraphrase by explaining the nature of the dialectical technique that Descartes is using. Bennett points out that Descartes is conducting an internal dialogue and both voices of this dialogue are made explicit as if written as a play (1994, 267-268). It seems clear that as an introduction to Descartes' argument Bennett's paraphrase is simpler to understand than even the most contemporary of straight English translations. (Although there may be points of divergence with Bennett over exegetical accuracy.) What is less clear is whether such an aid is indeed beneficial to students in the

long run. The analytic reading of philosophical texts is a skill that students will need if they are to continue studying philosophy as well as teaching the more obviously transferable skill of analytic reading *simpliciter*. If students are only presented with extreme paraphrases of texts then they will clearly get no practice in this skill. But if students struggle to find the argument within dense philosophical passages as they originally appeared then not only are the skills of analytic reading not being fostered but neither are the skills of comprehending philosophical arguments in whatever form they are presented. As with much of the material presented in this paper the approach to adopt will depend on the makeup of the class, and the goals of that class; if students have difficulty in comprehending the original text then one might introduce an extreme paraphrase, but not at the cost of ignoring the original text altogether.

George Macdonald Ross joined the seminar for the plagiarism discussion. Plagiarism in student essays is more common than it ought and needs to be. Plagiarism can be reduced through clear explanation to students of the expectations of them; setting questions that are inherently difficult to answer with a plagiarised answer; and by demonstrating that plagiarism is likely to be discovered.

Students coming from sixth form/FE and from disciplines other than philosophy are likely to have an unclear picture of the expectations about plagiarism. At school students are often encouraged to paraphrase and restate textbook facts; similarly in the more science-based disciplines the standard for plagiarism is very different to that in philosophy. A first step in disabusing students of the justifiability of plagiarism is to make clear that paraphrase (even very radical paraphrase) is not considered to be the writer's own work and needs to be appropriately referenced. It ought to be also made clear that it is not only print and electronic media that can be plagiarised, but that one can also plagiarise notes taken from a lecturer if not appropriately referenced. One ought also make clear that plagiarism is looked for, and if detected will incur penalties for the writer.

Much can be done to prevent plagiarism in addition to simply making students aware of what it is to plagiarise. The questions used in assessing students can have considerable influence on the likelihood of plagiarism. If an essay question is asked, either as coursework or in examination, that can be answered by paraphrasing directly from notes

taken from the lectures then it should be no surprise if many of the essays will be such paraphrases. If students have a pre-prepared answer in their notes it will be natural to many to use the structure of those notes for their essay. Furthermore, it may not be considered plagiarism by those doing so. Similarly, if questions are asked that are easily answered by existing print and electronic media then this too invites plagiarism. One might set an essay question that has been asked on many different courses at different institutions. Such an essay is likely to have answers either in textbooks or available over the internet. While the plagiarist who makes use of such sources is more likely to be conscious of the nature of their act this is no argument against not preventing such opportunities arising. Setting questions that have not been asked before, or that make reference to current events, will mean that students are less likely to have prepared sources to plagiarise from, forcing them to write original material. Given that plagiarism is notoriously difficult to spot it is sensible to adopt an assessment strategy that reduces the opportunities for plagiarism.

There is always scope for improvement in one's teaching. The changing and updating of one's courses and teaching style if done well will not only improve the teaching through improved content, but the teaching itself will remain fresh and inspiring for students. It is important to reflect on how well particular seminars or lectures have gone and revise accordingly. Equally student feedback should be solicited as a means of gauging which aspects of one's teaching are successful and which aspects need improving.

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Included in the bibliography for this section are a number of resources that can be drawn on throughout one's teaching career to assist when reflecting on one's teaching practice and to provide ideas for new approaches to teaching.

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Reflections on the conference

The majority of delegates at the AAPT conference were from the US, and it was instructive for someone with little prior knowledge of the US system to observe the differences between the US and UK. In particular the amount of freedom to alter course descriptions and content as well as assessment methods struck me. Many of the conference workshops, as well as the graduate seminar, discussed innovative methods of assessing students that aim at improving the student learning experience. The ability to be proactive as well as swiftly reactive to student learning needs seemed to be superior within the US system to the UK system.

With students in the US having far greater freedom over which courses they take in any semester there seemed to be greater pressure on teachers to innovate in order to compete for the student share. This innovation need not always be beneficial for student learning, there might be the worry that courses are aimed at the lowest common denominator in order to attract more students. But if there is a need to innovate while retaining high academic standards then one would expect that generally the learning experience will improve.

The opportunities for graduate teaching experience in the US are greater than in the UK. Based on anecdotal evidence it seems it is the

norm that a graduate student can expect some teaching experience while they are a student. This experience will not be just the equivalent of UK tutoring—graduate students will also have the opportunity to lead and lecture on their own courses. The result is that graduates are able to convincingly demonstrate that they have requisite lecturing skills to prospective employers. But graduates also gain valuable experience in lecturing in an environment that is likely to be more nurturing than when one is a full member of a faculty with all the additional administrative and research pressures. As a graduate student running a course one is likely to have access to other graduate students in a similar position that one can learn from, confident that they are at a similar stage in their lecturing career. In part this opportunity in the US must be down to larger universities and longer PhD's.

Attending the AAPT graduate seminar and the afternoon and evening sessions proved a valuable experience. As with any conference it provides the opportunity to pool knowledge with other delegates, but the range of professionals and students at the AAPT conference is wider than is to be found at many research conferences. By meeting with people from both the continental and analytic tradition and from a spectrum of different institutions I gained a wide selection of insights into teaching best practice. Insights that will hopefully be carried into *my* teaching practice.

Articles, Discussion and Practical Teaching

The *Discourse* Interview

3. Professor Steven French

University of Leeds

Interviewed by: David J. Mossley

Subject Centre for Philosophical and Religious Studies
Higher Education Academy

Continuing our series of interviews with noted academics, David Mossley, History of Science and Philosophy of Science Subject Co-ordinator for the Subject Centre for Philosophical and Religious Studies, talked to Steven French about his international teaching career, his views on the interaction between history and philosophy of science, and his feelings on the changing state of higher education. The interview was conducted in Leeds on 20th July 2006.

Mossley: **I wonder if we could begin with a little bit about your academic career to date, and how you got to where you are.**

French: Like most people, I always think of my career as non-standard, but I think almost every person I meet in philosophy of science has had a non-standard career. Like many people working in this area, I came

from a science background. I did a physics degree at Newcastle, which was very much applied physics oriented—their speciality was geophysics; Professor Runcorn, who taught there, was one of the big guys who did a lot of work on help and support for tectonic plate theory. As I was doing my degree, I became more and more interested in broadly philosophical, foundational issues. I had a really excellent tutor in quantum physics, we did stuff on high energy physics and all kinds of things, and he said, 'Go over to the philosophy department and talk to someone over there, and they might be able to tell you which way to go if you're interested in this stuff', so I did.

I spoke to this guy in philosophy, and he said, 'Well, there's Michael Redhead, he's really good in the philosophy of quantum mechanics, at Chelsea College, London, it's really the happening place, so you should apply there, do a PhD'. The PhD interview was completely bonkers! It was like nothing I'd ever experienced before—they had the whole department there, and they sat around me in a semicircle. Heinz Pose, Moshe Machova, Michael Redhead and John Dorling were there, all these people in history and philosophy of science, and they all just fired questions at me. John Dorling in particular paid no attention to whether anyone else was speaking, so in the midst of a question from one person, he'd fire another question. You'd have to spin around in your chair, answering all these questions. At the end I just thought, 'well, that's it, I've got no chance', but to my surprise they admitted me.

There were only two of us on the PhD programme that year, and it was an odd department because it was graduate-only, and it only accepted people with a degree in science. We had to spend the first year taking catch-up courses—basically a three year philosophy degree compressed into one year. We did classical logic, epistemology, philosophy of quantum mechanics, foundations of relativity theory—working eight hours a day on these courses for a year. That put us a year out of kilter with the research funding, which was for three years, and that meant at the end of the three years I hadn't finished my PhD. So we did the usual thing: I got jobs, firstly through Simon Saunders, who was also on the programme but a couple of years ahead of me, teaching in crammers for the sons and daughters of the rich and stupid, and also further education colleges in South London, basically doing whatever teaching I could to support me while I finished the PhD.

As I was coming to the end of the PhD, I started thinking, 'well, what next?' One afternoon, I got a phone call from Harvey Brown, who's now Professor at Oxford. He had finished his PhD the year I arrived, and had married a Brazilian woman and moved to Brazil, and he called up and said, 'Hey Steve, hope you remember me, it's Harvey Brown, how do you fancy working in Brazil?'. My wife and I just thought this was crazy, but he persisted and he called again, and he convinced us that this would be a really interesting experience. We were young, and we had no kids, so we thought 'yeah, ok'.

So we packed up our books and bits and bobs—we didn't have very much—and we moved to a town in Brazil about 100 km West of San Paulo, right on the tropic of Capricorn, called Campinas. I had a lectureship at the State University of Campinas, which was set up as a science and technology university, but had a great philosophy department, and a centre for logic and epistemology.

The physics department had a lot of applied research going on, they were doing early work on cosmic rays, for example, and we would get a lot of sort of refugees from physics, students who were interested in foundational problems, so we got these really bright, enthusiastic students, with a physics background like me, who'd come to do philosophy of physics.

Also, it was a very interesting time in Brazil, because the military government had just stepped down in favour of the first civilian president. He died under mysterious circumstances, and the vice president, José Sarney came in, so politically it was very interesting. When we got there, they had some elections, and the campaign for the elections was bizarre, they only showed a mugshot of the candidates on TV, with a short description and vague promises underneath, and that was it, and people were allowed to vote. Then they had local elections, and they had state elections, and within a year it was full of American-style razzle-dazzle electioneering, with money splashed over huge campaigns. Economically it was insane; in the second year we were there I think inflation reached 1000%, so it was a very odd cultural situation for us.

We made such good friends there, and if they hadn't screwed up our visas, requiring us to do this bizarre trip down to Paraguay, which was like the Wild West, to get new visas and come back in, we probably would have stayed there, because it was a very good university, very

good students, and we had very good friends and neighbours. By the time we left, the economy was getting more balanced, and I thought Brazil would be a great place to live.

It was interesting philosophically, too, because Campinas and Sao Paulo were really the only two departments of Philosophy that were really analytically oriented in the whole of South America. All the others were really continental, so that meant we got a lot of interesting students from Venezuela, Mexico, and Argentina, who wanted to do analytic philosophy. There was an interesting mix of students, all post-graduates, post-docs, which made it a very exciting and fun place to be. We had seminars under these huge plane trees, talking about foundations of quantum physics, or philosophy of science, it was brilliant.

So after that, when it looked like we were going to have further visa problems, we decided to head back to the States, where my wife is from, and I did the round of APA meetings, trying to get a job. Meanwhile, I was teaching again, everything from high school physics to English to Vietnamese refugees, which was a lot of fun. I got offered a job at South East Missouri State University, which is a small, teaching only university, a very small department of only four or five people, but very committed and very bright. It was the only job I was offered, so basically I took it, and we moved to Missouri, where our son was born. After about three or four years, we began to feel like we'd like to move to a bigger city, we just felt that it was a very small town, only 35,000 people, outside of university circles and very conservative, and so I started looking for jobs again. I did the whole round again, got a bunch of interviews, thought I did fairly well and then every single position that I was in the running for was cancelled due to cuts in state funding, or at least that's what they told me, so it wasn't clear what we should do.

Then I saw an ad for a position at the University of Leeds, in fact in that year they were advertising five positions, and I decided to apply, on the off-chance that I'd get something, or at the very least I'd get a free trip back to England, and to my surprise they offered me the position here. That was in 1992, and I had to work out a year in South Missouri, so I arrived here in 1993.

So you came to philosophy of science with a physics background and an interest in quantum mechanics. What do you see as the rela-

tionship between philosophy and science, then, how do they fit?

When you're dealing with something like the foundations of quantum mechanics, or foundations of special relativity, you're dealing with something really deep and basic about our understanding of the world. Even if you're not a realist, you're dealing with something very profound about the kind of story we tell about how the world is, and it's absolutely crucial, if we are to have a true understanding of these theories, that we have a metaphysical and philosophical understanding of them. In some cases, some aspects of both theories, we're forced to—it's unclear, in the foundations of physics, sometimes, where the physics ends and the philosophy begins. Some physicists are tackling essentially philosophical questions, and some philosophers are tackling essentially physical questions, so some of my colleagues do very technical work that gets published in the physics journals. I'm more interested in the metaphysical issues, and in order to be able to answer questions like, 'What are quantum objects like?', or, 'Can quantum particles even be considered as objects?', you have to have some understanding of the metaphysics of objecthood, for example, you have to have some grip on philosophy. There's quite a complex interplay between the physics and the philosophy that's going to inform our understanding of the theory, so that's a relationship at that level.

In terms of the philosophy of science in general, I think the fundamental question in the philosophy of science is, 'How does science work?'. Here you have this cultural phenomenon that determines so much, so many aspects of our lives, and from this basic descriptive question, 'How does it work?', you can then go normative, and ask, 'How should it work? Is the way it's working the best way? Best for whom? Best for scientists, society, whatever?' But you need to get some grip on how it works, and to do that, that's where the philosophy of science comes in, you need to think about things like the science of discovery, justification, and how theories relate to evidence. I think that one of the most significant things about philosophy of science in the last 50 years is that we've moved away from quite simplistic pictures of how science works, where it's all to do with verifiability or falsifiability, we now recognise it's much more complex. Even the kind of picture you get from Kuhn, who I think is just so confused and obscure, is apparently simplistic, and we now recognise that there are much

more complex relations between theories and evidence.

Some people have characterised the post-war period, as, in the words of a colleague of mine in Brazil, decadent—he thought that philosophers of science had become decadent, and were doomed to either splinter into a myriad sub-groups or cults, or just disappear entirely. I actually think it's more interesting, I think that philosophy of science has now recognised how complex science is, there are questions about whether one size fits all, whether one kind of philosophy of science fits all kinds of theories about physics and chemistry, and there's all kinds of interesting issues coming up.

So I think that it's a more interesting time to be doing philosophy of science, certainly than when I started. I think there are more interesting views out there, and a lot of good work has been done, from general philosophy of science down to foundations of quantum mechanics.

You say that there's a great cultural importance to understanding the foundations of physics, particularly. Would you like to say a little more about that, in terms of wider culture and so on?

I guess the usual story is, if there's one standard world, then we need to understand what physicists are telling us about the world, and we need to understand what quantum physics and space-time physics are telling us about the world, and that understanding has to be philosophically and metaphysically informed. Physicists may try and say that it's not, or it doesn't have to be, but it's impossible, they're going to use terms like 'objects', 'space' and 'time', all these sorts of questions come up, 'What are these points of space and time? Can they be individuated in some way or another?'; all these sorts of metaphysical questions. So insofar as understanding physics is important, the philosophy of physics and the philosophy of science in general is going to be important.

You've spoken about the change in the nature of philosophy of science over the last 50 years. How do you now see the relationship between philosophy of science and history of science? Because in a university context, they're becoming detached and separated, and this perhaps is returning to an earlier model of how the subjects work in university life, but how do you see the relationship?

As you know, we've held a workshop on the future of HPS , and there are going to be some international conferences at Pittsburgh and Notre Dame, which Hasok Chang, Don Howard, John Norton and I are involved in, looking at how history of science and philosophy of science interact; how they relate to each other. We've periodically returned to the nature of this relationship, perhaps without ever really resolving it.

There is a feeling that perhaps the history of science has become either aphilosophical or even anti-philosophical; that it's become heavily influenced by a certain kind of sociology that has pushed out philosophy and has even seen philosophy as somehow inimical to the history of science. I don't think it has to be that way, and I don't think it should be that way. I think the relationship is quite complex. I think that at one level, it's clear that the philosophy of science does use the history of science, or episodes from the history of science, as a kind of confirmatory data—it's hard to get away from that. If you have a theory, or you have a view of how science works, how are you going to defend that view? One way to defend it is to say, 'Well look, here's an example…', and you'll go to the history of science.

Then you come to the interesting issue of to what extent you're choosing the examples to fit your theory, to what extent are those examples infected already with a particular view of the philosophy of science? You can't get away from that, but I think in a sense you need to acknowledge that somewhat skewed relationship, and then move on. I think, although colleagues will probably disagree with me, history of science is probably better done when it's philosophically informed, or if not, at least when historians have an eye on some of the philosophical issues that arise. Particularly methodological issues, such as 'How does science progress?', or 'How were models constructed from these theories and how do they relate to the data?'. If history of science is to be more than a kind of low level, naïve kind of positivism where you just present the historical facts, it's going to have to at least touch on those kinds of questions.

So there is clearly a complex relationship between the two, and how that relationship works, without, say, the philosophers of science saying, 'Right, you historians, you're just there to provide me with data'. It's an interesting question: how does that relationship need to develop? The nature of what philosophy of science needs from history

of science, and what historians of science might need from philosophers of science, has to be acknowledged, but we need to move on and, in my own view, the way to go forward is to focus on the idea that what we're doing here is representing scientific practice, and that there may be different modes of representation. There might be a historical mode and a philosophical mode, and these can be, as Hasok Chang puts it, complementary to one another, and they can be mutually supportive. I would like the professions to start focusing a little bit more on where they can be supportive, rather then emphasising where they diverge. Of course they do diverge naturally, but that doesn't mean that there aren't areas where they can converge and benefit both areas.

So how do you think that can that be reflected in teaching?

Well, it's a very sensitive topic. I think it's naturally reflected very crudely at introductory levels. In these post-Kuhnian times, every philosopher of science accepts that you have to present case studies, you have to present examples, and at level one those are always going to be crude, and probably will make historians blanch. There's not much you can do about that, you've got to get into the philosophical topics as well, but you can try to be minimally sophisticated about it, and as you go up to level two and three and so on, you can be more so. I would certainly hope that this is true of the HPS degree at Leeds—as you go up levels, the extent to which there's a mutual dependence between history of science and philosophy of science will become apparent to the student. I would hope that our students would not come out of a philosophy of science course with a very crude and naïve understanding of history of science and its relationship with philosophy of science, but rather, thinking, 'Well this is actually quite sophisticated, and quite complex'. It's not enough to say, 'Right, here's my theory of scientific progress, and I'm just going to give you these examples, from some crude and simplistic popular account of the history of 19th century physics', it's got to be more sophisticated than that, but we can't get into all the detail that historians of science might want to, because, frankly, some of those details are part of a representational mode that just isn't relevant to us.

A lot of your papers and books are co-authored or co-edited. This

is a way of working which is quite common in the sciences, but isn't particularly common in the humanities. Are there any particular benefits you perceive from working in this way?

Yes, it's fun! One of my first papers was co-authored with Michael Redhead, but that was more a supervisor/student deal. Nevertheless, Michael came from a physics background, where it's much more common to do collaborative work—you do tend to find this in the philosophy of physics. Look at Harvey Brown's papers, or Chris Timpson's—quite often they're collaborative. It may be part of the nature of the subject that the best work is done when you're talking with someone and working through problems, sometimes quite difficult technical problems. Not everyone works in this way, there are colleagues in philosophy of physics and, obviously, in physics too, who work solo, but I think many people find that talking through a problem with someone else is beneficial. You get new insight, and then suddenly the issues start to shift and both of you has contributed.

It is also, in part, a simple matter of being in the right place at the right time. When I was in Brazil, I met this Brazilian logician, a very famous logician called Newton da Costa, and I had the honour of participating with him, collaborating with him, on a number of projects and papers. Newton da Costa is just a force of nature, one of these very charismatic individuals who can interest someone else in almost anything and everything, philosophically, scientifically, and logically. When he heard I was coming to Campinas he sent me a paper on a notion of pragmatic truth, a pre-print, briefly saying, 'You might be interested in this'. I sent him a note back, saying, 'Well actually this is quite interesting, it could be tied into issues in philosophy of science in the following way…' —I suppose it was because I was interested, but also because I thought it was the courteous thing to do—anyway, I got the feedback that he wanted to meet me. One day I was in a room in the centre of logic, and I heard this commotion down the hallway, a huge sort of noise, it sounded like a crowd of people. I was talking with an Italian logician, Diego Marconi, and I said, 'Jesus, what is that?', and he looked at me very solemnly and seriously, and said, 'That is the da Costa train, it is heading your way. And now Steven, you have a choice, you can choose to step back from the platform, and let the train sweep past you, or you can choose to get on board, but if you get on board,

there's no getting off.' At that moment, dramatically, the doors burst open, and Newton da Costa came in with his entourage; (he always had an entourage of students) they poured into the room, and he said, 'Where is this Steven French, I must meet him!'. rushed over to me and shook me by the hand, and that was it: the next thing I knew I was collaborating with him. Every couple of weeks I'd get on the bus, get off in Sao Paulo, and go and spend a day with da Costa in his office, just talking about logic and philosophy of science, and each time it'd seem like we'd sketch out 10, 15 different papers, and I'd have to go and walk around San Paulo for a bit just to decompress. Then I'd get on the bus, come back, and we just started writing papers together, and I think that mode of working collaboratively, it's not for everyone, but if you have two enthusiastic, imaginative people willing to slightly, at times, subsume their own interests, but to work together to tackle a problem, to develop an idea, then it's just the best thing in the world—the greatest fun.

Do you encourage students to work collaboratively?

Yes, as I said it's not for everyone, some students do better than others, but I always try and do it with my students. This last couple of years I've had less time, because of admin stuff, than I used to, but I've worked collaboratively with Octavio Bueno, who was a student of Newton da Costa, and came here when I was here; with James Ladyman, I've continued to work collaboratively with him, writing papers together; with Angelo Cei, a current PhD student, we're just working on a paper together, and it's more fun.

I think sometimes in philosophy you might feel trapped with your own thoughts, you're running round and round about a particular problem, and just to have someone else contributing is fresh, and it's interesting. You have to be flexible and perhaps give up on some thoughts that you have, or move in a slightly different direction to the one you had anticipated, but I just think that's more exciting, because quite often I look at the direction I'm going in and I know where it's going to end, and it's exciting to work with someone else who bumps you off that path and makes you go in a completely different direction.

Do you think undergraduates should work in this way?

That's an interesting question. I mean, that really depends on issues to do with psychology that I'm not really competent to look at. You have to be fairly secure in your own views, I think, to work this way, if it's to be a true, really equal partnership, and you're not just going to get swamped. The danger is that if you've got someone with a very strong will and very strong ideas, you just become the junior partner. I've seen that happen, in some cases, and it never works out well. One person is just really the junior add-on, and then resentment and hatred sets in; the next thing you know it's a crime scene. I think for final year undergraduates it's an interesting thing to try, and if we had the right kind of pedagogical framework, it would be interesting. Hasok Chang, for example, has done some interesting work at UCL with more collaborative group projects, and it would be interesting if we could do something like that in Leeds, I just don't know if we're set up to do that.

Right, and there are issues of assessment then, aren't there?

Yes, exactly.

So what do you think are the key abilities that a student needs to bring to a philosophy of science programme?

They need to have a critical stance. There are too many students who come into philosophy of science who either are positively in love with science, or have an axe to grind about it, and in both cases are unable to take the necessary step back and adopt a critical view of science.

I don't agree with the policy that I was brought up under, which was that you had to have a degree in science—a number of people now don't have backgrounds in science—but what you do have to have is a real enthusiasm for science, a willingness to learn it, and then a kind of feel for it, for what science is about. Here's a slightly extreme case: Dean Rickles, who did a philosophy degree, with no background in science basically taught himself the technical details of quantum gravity, and is making a name for himself in the philosophy of physics. Now, Dean is remarkably energetic and tenacious, and spent hours and hours studying the technical details. Not everyone is like that, but you have to have something of that engagement, I think. I mean, the worst kind of HPS in general, or sociology of science, is done by people with only very superficial understanding of science, they look at something

and think, 'Oh yes, that confirms the following kind of picture …' and that's it. You find professional people doing things like that, and it does everyone a disservice. You really have to have a love for science, and want to really understand it, and roll up you sleeves and get to grips with it.

OK, do you think the philosophy of science provides any particular abilities or skills? What particular skills do students develop during the course of studying philosophy of science?

The obvious thing that everyone is talking about, one of the current buzzwords, is interdisciplinarity. Philosophy of science is interdisciplinary by its very nature—you're looking at sometimes quite hard technical issues, but from a historical or a philosophical perspective—so you've got that ability. I know, from talking with students who have graduated in HPS, that employers, for example, value that. Here's someone who is not going to be fazed by difficult mathematical or technical details, but also has the kind of philosophy skills, including critical thinking skills, ways of representing and ways of constructing arguments, and also criticising arguments, that I think are extremely useful and valuable.

I agree, indeed. You've described how the context of your teaching has been quite diverse. How far do you think that your teaching itself has changed over the duration of your career, and has the nature of philosophy teaching changed within the university context?

In the philosophy of science it's changed here at Leeds, in that we used to teach what I rather dismissively called the history of the philosophy of science, and many people still teach it that way. If you taught the philosophy of science, you began with say the positivists, or maybe back further, Compte, Mach, then Popper, but in a very historical way, and I think there's been a bit of a shift towards more problem-oriented teaching, problems or themes, like theories and observations and so forth, and I think that's a good thing. Personally I want to get away from this idea that there's a canon, that these are the good books, these are the good philosophers. There are good philosophers, but my worry

is that some people become hidebound and instead of thinking about the issues that actually need to be tackled, think about what Carnap would think about the issues that need to be tackled. There's been a lot of very interesting work done in the history of philosophy of science, and I think that's good if that's what you want to do, but that's not the philosophy of science. The philosophy of science is you thinking about the issues, and hopefully coming up with a new philosophy of science, so I think there has been a change in that way.

There has obviously been pedagogical change in how we deal with the students; how we try and improve the students' experience through tutorials. Although we all find the quality assessment procedures burdensome, I think it has to be admitted that in many cases, or at least in some cases, they have improved the quality of teaching. We're much more aware of how to teach more effectively and how to engage the students more effectively. In the old days, I can remember one teacher who would stand with his back to the class, facing the chalkboard, and mumble as he wrote up equations. When I did my physics degree, I was one of the students who marched down to the head of department's office to protest about a particular lecturer who was dreadful. I think those days have gone. I think there are far fewer incidences of bad teaching, thank goodness. We have a much more engaged approach, and I think that's all to the good.

What do you consider to be the most pressing factor driving change in philosophy of science? Not just in the UK, but internationally, both in teaching and research.

What sort of factors do you mean? External or internal to the profession?

Both.

We have the same external pressures as anyone else, particularly in this country, of producing papers for the RAE and of making sure our teaching's up to scratch with quality assurance. It's different internationally but they also have their own pressures.

I think internationally, worldwide, there are interesting things happening. For example, we're starting to see more and more interest in the philosophy of science in China. Everyone's talking China at the

moment. China is the next big global economic power, and everyone, from OUP to the British Society for the Philosophy of Science, is talking about what happens when these Chinese universities get up to speed. I mean many of them already are, they're starting to produce good work in philosophy of science, starting to contribute to the journals and to produce their own PhD students, so it'll be very interesting to see how that will happen. You know, we talk about Anglo-American philosophy, Anglo-American philosophy of science, and there is quite a difference between the sorts of things we're interested in in the UK, and in the US, and even more so in say Germany or France, so what will it be like in China and India: what differences will we see? I think that's actually going to be very interesting.

Internally, I think there is pressure to do something about the divide between history and philosophy of science. If that is addressed appropriately there could be some very interesting things resulting from that, and there could be a shift from both sides. We might see a whole new, relationship, or relationships, that have been hidden for too long, uncovered and brought back into the limelight.

Within the philosophy of science and the philosophy of physics, there are the usual pressures. Things have changed slightly in, say, foundations of quantum mechanics or space-time theory. I get the sense in some cases, not that it's exhausted, but that we're running pretty short of things to say about, say, the measurement problem, so the interesting issues are things like what for example Chris Timpson's working on, on quantum information theory, and quantum computation, quantum gravity.

This is a bit of a naked plug, but there's a book that Dean Rickles and Juha Saatsi and I are editing, where we've got philosophers of physics, and physicists, and a mathematician, John Baez, and Lee Smolin writing about the foundations of quantum gravity. Now some people are saying, 'Well, it's just too early to talk about the foundations of a theory that hasn't even been constructed yet,' but from Lee Smolin's point of view, and Baez's, it sounds a bit arrogant, but maybe we can shape the foundations of a whole new discipline, or contribute to the shaping of those foundations.

In quantum mechanics, say, the physicists did their work, and it's not true that they did that unphilosophically, if you look at Bohr's work, or even Heisenberg, but nevertheless, there's a feeling that they

did their work in the '20s, and then philosophers came along afterwards and tried to make sense of this. Eddington had this famous quip about putting a sign up outside the physics department, 'Quantum theory, still under construction, no admittance to philosophers'. Now I can see that the last thing a physicist wants is a philosopher going, 'what about this equation?', but nevertheless, I don't think philosophy of physics should accept this position of coming along later, trying to make sense of what the physicists have done—I think there's an opportunity there for a very useful, mutually beneficial relationship between philosophers of physics, or certain kinds of philosophers, and certain kinds of physicists and mathematicians, where we contribute to the shaping of the foundations of, say, quantum gravity.

One last question, what would you say has been your greatest achievement as a philosophy teacher?

Ok, here are some achievements, not just in philosophy teaching but in teaching in general. When I taught at South London College of Further Education in Putney, I had to teach mostly kids who were out of work, or who had been out of work and were coming back to get some qualifications. I had to teach a remedial maths class to a bunch of kids who had no interest in maths, and these were pretty rough kids and they were very hard to teach, and I had to teach them basic stuff like long division. The one time I couldn't teach them, it was in the evening and I was giving a paper at the BSPS, so I left the class with a more experienced colleague, and a fight broke out and a student was knocked unconscious, chairs were smashed, it was like the Wild West, so I'm kind of proud that all the year that I taught them, there were no fights! Some of them were hopeless cases—teenage girls can be the hardest cases going, if they don't want to learn something—but a guy came up to me at the end of the course, and just thanked me, because as he put it, he was mathematically illiterate, but at the end of it, he wasn't scared by numbers, and I thought that was extremely touching. I just felt like I'd actually done something.

Likewise, I taught O-level physics to, again, teenagers who were out of work, and they went away, and then came back and got their O-levels, and I don't want to make it sound like I'm some kind of saint, but there was a huge sense of satisfaction in that. In the same kind of

way, I taught Vietnamese refugees, and it was easy teaching, because they were so willing to learn, and we had so much fun. It was helped by the fact that they had a huge respect for all of us as teachers, that was part of the culture, but it was massive fun, and at the end of it, they took us all out, cooked us this fantastic Vietnamese meal, and gave us all presents, and then they went out into the wide world, so those are the ones that I remember.

In terms of philosophy of science teaching, I think we've changed the way philosophy of science is taught, at Leeds, and I'm proud of that. I think I've got students now who I remember coming in during the first year, really not having any idea how science works or what the module was going to be about and just getting really turned on by the philosophy of science, and going on to do an MA. That gives you a great sense of fulfilment. Likewise with MA students, they write a dissertation, go on to get on a PhD programme somewhere, get jobs. PhD students like James Ladyman, now a reader at Bristol, or Dean Rickles, post-doc in Canada—it's fantastic, that's what it's all about.

Thanks very much Steven.

Thank you.

Interdisciplinarity and Philosophy:

the Strengths and Weaknesses of the Scottish Liberal Arts Institution

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This paper is a heavily modified version of an essay written for the collection *Below the Belt: The Founding of a Higher Education Institution*, a *Festschrift* collated to mark the retirement of the first director of the Crichton Campus, Professor. Rex Taylor. It was written in conjunction with Stuart Hanscomb and Stephen Harper.

This article describes and defends the interdisciplinary model of the Liberal Arts degree,[1] set up at the Crichton Campus of the University

of Glasgow in 1998.[2] It describes the structure of this Scottish under-graduate MA, placing it within the wider context of contemporary debates concerning education, but does so in order to clarify and promote a particular view of interdisciplinarity: namely integrated interdisciplinarity.[3] In doing so this paper aims to show both the role of philosophy in constituting a significant element of the content of the courses and, more importantly, its role in framing the structure that allows fruitful interaction between the disciplines. Overtly philosophical issues (principally, but not exclusively those from epistemology, meta- and normative ethics and informal logic) provide a set of themes and questions by which to structure potentially disparate courses from separate disciplines and assist them in interacting. Philosophy thus plays a vital role in integrating interdisciplinary study, especially within a contemporary liberal arts degree, yet this is a function that is often overlooked when documenting the merits of this academic specialism.

Background

The University of Glasgow opened a new campus on the grounds of the former Crichton Royal Institution (a mental health asylum) in Dumfries, in Southwest Scotland, in 1998, and enrolled its first students in the following year. The new institution was charged with developing a high quality, innovative programme of study, using the American liberal arts college as its model, a paradigm, which as Sean Johnston and Carol Hill note was:

> not [...] an 'imported model' as the US educational schema was based on the Scottish educational tradition of philosophy [...] exported to America in the nineteenth century, and is based on a traditional complement of subjects extending back to the medieval

[1] The higher case 'Liberal Arts' is used to identify the formal degree, lower case 'liberal arts' for the more generic form of study.

[2] Although there have been modifications in the last seven years, the undergraduate MA in Liberal Arts still remains the format of degrees offered followed by the overwhelming majority of the students.

[3] Boden, 1999; Johnston and Harvey, 2002: 131.

period when the University of Glasgow was founded (1451).[4]

There are significant differences between the liberal arts degree at the University of Glasgow's Crichton campus (henceforth referred to as 'the Crichton') and that practised in North America, not least, the differences in the economic imperatives structuring HE institutions in Scotland as opposed to those in North America and the prior educational experiences of students and academic staff. Another significant difference is that in the UK a liberal arts degree is largely unknown, and therefore, in-keeping with the conservatism[5] of the age, viewed with suspicion by academic colleagues and potential students.[6] Fear of the unfamiliar has led to some recruitment problems, a structural flaw that US colleges, largely, do not face.

Nonetheless, there are deliberate parallels between the curriculum and pedagogy of the Crichton model and those of North American liberal arts colleges. The liberal arts degree at the Crichton is structured around four compulsory courses (referred to as 'cores'). This set of four cores (which are described further below) consciously draws upon the Scottish generalist model of higher education which informed the American Liberal Arts tradition. As well as these four core courses, students can select electives from environmental studies (with a special emphasis on the natural sciences), the humanities (primarily literature, philosophy, sciences studies and history) and social sciences. However, even within the more discipline-specific elective courses, the concentration is on developing subject competence within the context of the particular specialism's relationships to other disciplines.

Liberal arts

Ascertaining a precise definition of liberal arts and thereby determining its appropriate basic ingredients has, historically, been a matter of much dispute. Despite the disagreements, some degree of common

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[4] Johnston and Hill, 2005: 1; Ward, 2005: 169.

[5] See Anthony Quintin's description of conservatism being based on the disposition 'to love the familiar and to fear the unknown' (Quinton, 2000: 245).

[6] See Ward, 2005.

ground within the liberal arts can be identified. Saul Sack gives a lucid account of it's origins, starting in ancient Greece, with its priority of providing education suitable for a Free Man to the development of liberal education in American Colleges of the post-Independence period of creating citizens of good character.[7] This 'democratic' aim was also embodied in the Scottish generalist tradition and the original concept of promoting well-informed citizens capable of critical reflection continues to flourish in the liberal arts. Liberal arts has, as a consequence, an implicit political bias towards the non- (or anti-) hierarchical. It promotes democratic political engagement (in the broadest sense of 'democracy'), and sees the role of education as extending beyond the elite confines of academia to influence the social realm of civil society and the state. Even in an era of extended access to tertiary education, the majority of Scotland's citizens will still not be university graduates; liberal arts recognises that a successful education is as much about the types of relationships that graduates build between themselves and non-students as it is about reaching particular learning targets in relation to a standard curriculum.

It was with this broader socially-progressive end in mind that the curricular content of liberal education was developed, especially within the nineteenth century Scottish generalist degree.[8] It was wide-ranging, including a variety of sciences, languages, arts, mathematics and philosophy.[9] Philosophy was a significant feature of the Scottish generalist 'liberal arts' education, as George Davie, a historian of the development of Scottish tertiary educational, explained in *The Democratic Intellect*.[10] This discipline was viewed as essential for both its practical, vocational outcomes (what is now referred to as 'employability'), but also in terms of education's social role—how the university and its education intersected with the rest of society. Development of analytical, critical, creative and reflexive skills, rather than just professional competencies, was viewed as playing a vital role of developing the 'democratic intellect'. The 'democratic intellect' was the creation of autonomous learners, able to participate in Scottish public life, and

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[7] Sack, 1962.
[8] Anderson, 1992: 71-72.
[9] Anderson, 1992: 71.
[10] Davie, 1982.

because the curriculum was cheap to deliver, it was available to all parts of the public rather than the privileged classes of traditional English higher education.[11]

Those who regard the academic in elitist terms can feel threatened by the Liberal Arts pedagogy and curriculum. It is for these reasons that liberal education has drawn the ire of educationally-minded philosophers from the English, conservative tradition, such as Anthony O'Hear and Roger Scruton, or from America by critics like Harold Bloom. Anglo-American conservatisms prioritise the traditional canon of authors, with a strict division between the disciplines, which reflects these theorists' commitment to the hierarchies of the social realm. As Davie indicates, the development of the democratic intellect requires critical reasoning and student participation can undercut some of the unchallenged privileges of the educators.[12] This potential for critical subversion is not always welcomed by more exclusive academics, or other authorities.

Philosophy

This is not the place to resume the battle over the correct meaning of 'philosophy'—for such debates often rest on the unfounded assumption that there is one correct interpretation, applicable to all social and historical contexts. The battles within the academic discipline (what I shall refer to as 'scholastic philosophy') have concerned its curricula, appropriate canon, and in more contemporary times, formal benchmarks which mark out its priorities, the inclusions and exclusions.[13] The term 'philosophy', however, has been more widely applied (and occasionally misapplied) to a variety of subject areas, techniques and beliefs. More vulgarised uses of the term have seen its application to collections of popular, practical advice or unreflective (and occasionally contradictory) commonplaces.[14]

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[11] Carter and Withrington, 1992: 9-10.

[12] Davie, 1982: 15

[13] Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, 2000.

[14] See for instance the actress Teri Hatcher's book *Burnt Toast: And Other Philosophies of Life*.

Some of the more rigorous uses of the term have come from those working within separate disciplines and other professions, to refer to the abstraction of principles, laws and rules which underpin a discipline, and their analysis and conceptual reapplication. This wider understanding of 'philosophy' is, nonetheless, often tied back in with the tasks of scholastic philosophy. For instance, a particular field of study often requires students and practitioners to explore its epistemology and/or metaphysics (such as the philosophy of natural sciences or jurisprudence). Specialisms increasingly insist that practitioners critically examine the codes of behaviour that constitute its major practices (for instance medical ethics or the ethics of social research). The texts of the philosophical canon are often used in these ethical and epistemological tasks.

Scholastic philosophy, although having a reputation for insularity, provides particular techniques or tools that, as the QAA recognises, are vital for other disciplines.[15] Formal philosophical training provides a study in such areas as formal logic and critical thinking, and these, as Peter Milne identifies, are crucial in providing the terminology of argument-assessment and evaluation used beyond formal reasoning.[16] So whilst someone engaged in scholastic philosophy might increasingly specialise on the discipline's own particular discourses and specialist texts, there are also philosophical themes, practices, questions and techniques that appear in other fields of study. These concerns and techniques, formally claimed by scholastic philosophy, are also essential to the formation and function of other academic disciplines, such as their distinctive claims to knowledge (epistemologies) and accounts of appropriate behaviour (ethics). As a result some key texts and thinkers viewed as canonical by philosophy departments are similarly viewed by other disciplines as central to their specialisms (for instance, Karl Marx and Adam Smith, are shared by philosophy and social sciences such as economics and sociology, Michel Foucault with philosophy and history, and Aristotle is shared across the humanities, social sciences and natural sciences).

Additionally, as Nigel Warburton in his introductory guide to philosophy reminds us, there are other professional applications to our dis-

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[15] Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, 2000: 1.
[16] Milne, 2004, 137: 145-46.

cipline, both to the professions and to the creative arts.[17] Thus, philosophy is found across the disciplines, but this does not, in itself, lead to interdisciplinarity, or at least not in a defensible form. Nor is it just in academe and the instrumentalism of the working life that philosophy assists. As Simon Blackburn remarks, the canonical thinkers look at the major questions, 'the big themes' of freedom, the good life, the nature of knowledge, reason and justice.[18] These larger themes interest individuals and groups beyond the institutional setting of academe or business and assist in maintaining or creating social values that underpin and shape social relationships. In particular disciplines, there are modes of address, forms of conduct and identifiable boundaries to types of enquiry; for interdisciplinary activity, new types of relationship are sought, and boundaries of enquiry are sometimes transgressed.

Interdisciplinarity

There are a number of misconceptions surrounding the term 'interdisciplinary'; for instance, as Margaret Boden points out, some mistake a collection of sub-disciplines for interdisciplinarity. The existence of molecular biology, genetics and ecology within a standard Biology degree, for example, does not make that degree interdisciplinary, as these are subsections of the biological sciences. These sub-disciplines share an established epistemology with similar theoretical assumptions, central concerns and a shared canon. As such they are consistent with a singular disciplinary approach.[19]

Interdisciplinarity is not necessarily present simply because courses' key texts emanate from different sections of the library, written by authors who inhabited separate departments within academia. These authors may all share the same theoretical commitments to the gathering and categorising of knowledge, be committed to the resolution of certain pre-defined problems and constitute a clearly defined canon; yet the strength of interdisciplinarity is that through the combination of epistemologies and the introduction of techniques from

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[17] Warburton, 2004: 4.
[18] Blackburn, 1999: 1-2.
[19] Boden, 1999: 13.

different areas of study, it can bring to light new questions, which could not have been predicted.

Interdisciplinary pedagogy is a key characteristic and one of the main strengths of the liberal arts. Yet there are different forms of inter-disciplinarity. These vary from those of *encyclopaedic* interdisciplinarity, in which there is no requirement for modes of integration between the discrete courses; one simply provides a range of courses and leaves it up to the student to choose at will, as if selecting from a pick and mix confectionary counter, so that any educational sweetmeat can be consumed next to any other. An alternative to this is *reductivist* inter-disciplinarity. This form of interdisciplinarity regards all modes of knowledge to be generated from one singular meta-discipline. A good example of this form of supposed interdisciplinarity is the Marxist journal *Historical Materialism*, which maintains that all forms of knowledge generation are merely a subset of economics.[20] It would be equally absurd to make a similar claim for philosophy. Just because every academic subject, in theory at least, could generate a field of scholastic philosophical enquiry ('the philosophy of X'), does not mean that philosophy is the ultimate ground. After all, every academic study has its own history (and geography and language); but this does not make history (or geography or linguistics) the reductive meta-discipline.

Integrated interdisciplinarity is distinct from these alternatives, and avoids the absolutist and totalising claims of reductivism or the potential incoherence of the encyclopaedic approaches. Whilst pre-scribing no set outcomes, nor boundaries of study, it instead promotes techniques of amalgamation between the distinctive disciplines con-structing the degree. Highlighting the search for areas of similarity between the different forms of knowledge and accenting areas of conflict within the differing epistemologies, it thereby promotes original insight and innovation.

Especially relevant is the contextualising function of the core

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[20] Historical Materialism, 10: 1; Boden refers to a similar phenomena of generalis-ing interdisciplinarity in which 'a single theoretical perspective becomes applied to a wide range of previously distinct disciplines'. Her example is of mathematics dominating the theoretical approach of computing, psychology, physiology and anthropology in the area of cybernetics (1999: 19-20).

courses. Here philosophy, in its narrow and broader senses, plays a particularly important role in assisting in this co-partnership of disciplines. The aim is that different disciplines can be integrated into solving new problems utilising a variety of techniques and 'contributing theoretical insights' that can inform each other; this, for Boden, is the cornerstone of effective, integrated interdisciplinarity.[21]

Structure of Interdisciplinary Studies

Liberal arts recognises that such a goal requires knowledge of multiple disciplines. Integrating these plural approaches is one of the fundamental features of a successful Liberal Arts degree that distinguishes it from students merely nibbling at a dozen disconnected courses. The aim is to broaden the horizons of existing disciplines, by bringing to bear the epistemologies and concerns of other modes of knowledge, as two of my colleagues, Sean Johnston and Mhairi Harvey, describe in their account of developing and teaching an Environmental Ethics course. They brought together the multiple viewpoints adopted in cultural studies and philosophy to the issues addressed by environmental science. As a result, the course broadened the concerns of environmental science, extended the interests of students, and helped to develop the discourse of critical debate.[22] In keeping with the generalist tradition, this reflected back on to the activities of participants who reconsider the ecological issues in their own, home environments.[23]

For some, interdisciplinarity carries an enormous, and unjustifiable risk, namely that it blurs the very boundaries that are necessary for the creation of identifiable forms of knowledge.[24] But interdisciplinarity does not rule out discipline specific courses and routes of study. The requirement of rigour, depth and clearer boundaries, which as Weingart indicates are the characteristics of a discipline,[25] are also characteristic

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[21] Boden 1999: 21-22.

[22] Johnston and Harvey, 2002: 131.

[23] Ibid: 137.

[24] For a discussion of this view of disciplinary study and the dangers of its elimination see Frank Furedi, 2004: 96-97.

[25] Weingart, 2000: 29. This is a theoretical definition of disciplines, which is

of integrated interdisciplinarity. Disciplinarity is a prerequisite for integrated interdisciplinarity, just as internationalism is posited upon the existence of discrete nation states, and is not synonymous with anti-nationalism. But the boundaries, limits and problematics that distinguish disciplines become apparent when students have experience of other disciplines, with their corresponding distinctive epistemologies, methodologies, canons and aligned pedagogies. Making students sensitive to the different claims to knowledge, approaches to texts and audiences, and underlying ontologies that demarcate disciplines, is a task to which philosophy is particularly well suited.

Students may then, as a result of identifying particular forms of knowledge, pursue a specific and specialised approach. However, because of the broader context of the Liberal Arts degree, they are also aware of the wider context that their chosen discipline operates within, its limitations and lacunae, something that participants would miss out on if they had opted for singular disciplines from the outset. The four core courses provide this broader contextualising dimension.

Core courses

There are four core courses at the Crichton Campus of the University of Glasgow. In 2006-07, two will be taught at Level One: *Text and Communication* (T&C) and the aforementioned *Science: History and Culture* (S:H&C). Two will be taught at Level Two, *Issues in Contemporary Society* (ICS) and *Argument-Rhetoric-Theory* (A-R-T). T&C draws texts, both literary and visual, from a range of sources (academic, scientific and cultural) to analyse the complex interrelationships among texts, authors, audiences and cultures. The early part of the course provides tools of textual analysis such as linguistic and stylistic features of language; narrative structure, authorial intention, problems of translation and ideological bias. These are then applied in subsequent lectures and seminars on news texts, advertising, fiction, film, science texts and political texts.

S:H&C draws attention to the evolution of scientific knowledge

favoured over the sociological analysis preferred by Stephen Turner who describes disciplines in terms of institutional structure and operation (Turner, 2000: 47-49).

and how its functions, applications and status alter according to the social, political and economic factors that interact with it. About half the course traces the history of science from pre-historic times to the nineteenth century (with special focus on the scientific revolution and science's cultural impact in the Victorian era), and the other half explores sociological and ethical themes from the twentieth century (and beyond) such as the World Wars, nuclear power, the Cold War, medical controversies and the public perception of science and scientists. This course also has a section on reasoned thinking.

ICS investigates the ethics at the heart of many contentious issues. From 2007 it will likely be divided into five sections that cover medical ethics (consent and organ donation, resources, euthanasia), politics (civil disobedience, democracy, liberalisms, feminisms); relativism and conflict (relativism and virtues, just war theory, terrorism); environmentalism (vivisection, global warming, deep ecology), and education (principles of selection, free schools, self-development and educating the emotions). At the beginning of the course there is a grounding in ethical theory and continued work on argument recognition and construction.

A-R-T looks at the links and tensions between rationality and processes of persuasion. It begins with the nature and elements of arguments (introduced in S:H&C and ICS) and moves on to an in-depth analysis of some common, alleged, fallacies (for example *ad verecundiam*, *ad populum*, *ad hominem*). To this extent it has much in common with informal logic or critical thinking courses familiar to philosophy curricula. It then looks at the nature of rhetoric and its dangers and advantages (the focus here is on Plato and Aristotle and on the modern psychology of persuasion). The final section explores the limits of argumentation and rationality via pragma-dialectics and post-modern critiques. Throughout the course students practise argument and persuasion skills in debates and persuasion dialogues and, particularly in the middle section, they build on prior learning about communication and ethics gleaned from the other core courses.[26]

The four core courses complement one another in pursuing three main objectives in support of the Crichton Liberal Arts degree and its

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[26] Glasgow University, 'The Core Courses',
http://www.cc.gla.ac.uk/layer2/core_modules.htm

commitment to integrated interdisciplinarity. These three objectives are:

1. In the tradition of Liberal Arts, they enable active citizenship, not just in promoting an understanding of formal democratic participation, but in the creation of relationships with others in the wider community.[27]

2. More specifically, they socialise students into good academic practice. The core courses emphasise both formal and summative assessments, extensive feedback, and have been at the forefront of experiments in referral for writing skills and study skills.

3. The cores encourage students to become reflexive learners who are able to think beyond the confines of any single discipline. They enable students to think critically and creatively about their educational learning. As a result the four cores provide techniques for integrating their studies. That is to say, the cores do not provide the key skills for any singular subject designation or discipline; rather, they support the framework for students to organise their learning and incorporate it into a coherent package.

In terms of curricular content the core courses are not designed to provide all the essential elements of any discipline. No set of four courses could provide the basic grounding to students for all the different specialisms a student might choose to concentrate upon as part of their undergraduate Master of Arts degree. Instead, these four core courses offer a way for students to integrate the courses they do undertake from a mixture of designations into a coherent learning experience.

What the four core courses also share, consistent with the liberal

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[27] This is sometimes addressed in terms of 'community service', but such a term is too limiting suggesting that the relationships that students and graduates develop with non-academic communities are formalistic and paternalistic. However, for a discussion of the role of experiential student activity to liberal arts higher education in the US context see Rhoades, 1998.

tradition, is an amalgamation of practical and theoretical skills. Competencies such as critical thinking, argumentation and textual analysis are mutually reinforced across the cores. To take ICS as an example: participants are introduced to contemporary political and social issues. Through these they are introduced to the theoretical debates that underpin them. The students come to understand the practical influence of these debates through the use of case studies, and this is enhanced by the talks delivered by practitioners in the field with whom they have the opportunity to debate. In keeping with the Scottish generalist tradition, scholastic philosophy in the widest sense of the term (including ideas from a variety of Continental schools, ethics, logic and rhetoric) is an important component of the core course; but it is by no means the only discipline covered. Ideas and modes of analyses drawn from gender studies, history, literary studies, media research, political science, social theory, social science and natural science also constitute the cores. They play important roles in illustrating areas of investigation, which inform the problematics of the other courses undertaken by the students and provide areas of linkage between otherwise discrete educational blocks. In terms of pedagogy, the students are also given opportunities to participate actively, through student-led tutorials and structured debates and to reflect on their own activities, ambitions and the educational process by analysing the functions of schooling, study and research.

These elements are supported and enhanced across the four core courses. The cores are designed not only to be free standing, and to work cogently as a four-piece educational package, but also to support other educational options. The cores, perhaps pre-eminently, foster a reflective, questioning approach. In part they raise issues and ways of thinking that encourage students to assess their own learning. They enable participants to make decisions concerning their own educational progress. Crucially, too, the cores are supported by the other courses. It is a mutually beneficial relationship. Skills and perspectives brought in from other disciplines are shared in class discussion, thereby broadening the opportunities for learning, opening opportunities for distinctive insights and highlighting the strengths and absences of a particular specialism.

There are other side-effect advantages to the suite of four core courses. Given the relatively small size of the University of Glasgow's

Crichton Campus and the division into separate designations (current-ly three, but likely to increase again in the near future), the cores provide a rare opportunity for students and staff to be involved in a large class atmosphere (sometimes class sizes have risen to 90 students). Students have a chance to socialise with colleagues, from other designations, with whom they might not otherwise have an opportunity to interact. Exchanges take place between students with distinctive academic backgrounds.

An additional advantage is that because of the large class sizes and the high numbers of students per academic staff member, the cores have been amongst the most cost-effective of the 50 or so courses available at the Glasgow University section of the Crichton Campus.[28] This criterion of economic-efficiency should not be confused with the stronger pedagogic justifications for the core courses and the liberal arts mode of study. However, it is a criterion which is increasingly being used to justify forms of study within the contemporary educational sector.

More pedagogically relevant, however, is that given the wide variety of students coming from such diverse backgrounds, finding shared examples by which staff can illustrate their points is relatively difficult. Arguably, the Crichton Campus has a more diverse undergraduate population than any other higher education department in Scotland, including students of all ages, backgrounds, and several different countries. There is often little shared cultural reference between the teenage Dumfries woman fresh from the local school and the retired industrial worker from Glasgow. However, in T&C every student reads a variety of texts as diverse as Franz Kafka's *Metamorphosis*, Karl Marx and Frederich Engels' *Communist Manifesto* and Jonathan Swift's *Modest Proposal* and is introduced to many key terms in critical and cultural theory. In S:H&C a large number of case studies are explored including those on the claims to knowledge of parapsychology and phrenology, the history of the local nuclear power-plant at Chapelcross and the Galilean Revolution. In ICS all students are introduced to the terminology of ethical debate (benevolence, rights, duties, virtues), and discuss the status of animals, the claims around global

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[28] Course list available at: 'A-Z Course Index',
http://www.cc.gla.ac.uk/level_2/course_index.htm

warming, and the key concerns in the euthanasia debate. Students participating in A-R-T explore the rhetoric and fallacies invoked in debates around ecotourism and drug legislation. As a result, by the more advanced level courses, staff and students can refer to key texts and examples with which all students have had acquaintance, in order to illuminate more complex material (or more complex readings and interpretations of the same material) without cultural exclusion.

Opposition

Opposition to the liberal arts comes from many quarters. It is not surprising, for example, that many specialist academics are wary of the notion, and its interdisciplinary underpinnings, given the overriding cultural tendency towards specialism since the Enlightenment:

Gradually during the nineteenth century, the ideal of the unity of knowledge—that a genuine scholar ought to be familiar with the sum total of humanity's intellectual and artistic output—gave way to specialisation. Humanity's ever-growing store of knowledge, and the fact that each person is bestowed with a unique set of aptitudes, left most scholars and artists stranded in ever-shrinking islands of competence.[29]

Our society needs specialists; yet a society of specialists may result in the kind of blinkered 'technism' that was feared by many twentieth-century philosophers and artists as wildly divergent in their political views as Spengler, Ortega y Gasset, and Orwell, or, less dramatically, in the increasing polarisation of arts and sciences feared by C. P. Snow.[30] As Snow and others have argued, a complex and hyper-specialised society needs thinkers who can work across specialisms. In a society in which the division of labour is increasing, we need to produce critical thinkers and actors who can apply their analytical skills across a range of subjects, from books, art and cinema, to politics, warfare and welfare, and to the pressing ethical conundrums thrown up by the controversies over genetic research and other new technologies. In short, we need citizens who can confidently participate in debates in these areas without fear of transgressing disciplinary boundaries.

[29] Cummings, 1989: 2.
[30] Snow, *The Two Cultures*.

Liberal arts education also promotes hostility from those who consider education to be more akin to technical training. Proponents of vocationalism regard any non-vocational course as empty scholasticism and ivory tower escapism.[31] This is surprising given the long-standing importance that practical training takes in the Liberal Arts curriculum. Practical skills alongside theoretical were and are regarded as essential to create a broad-based education for the modern citizen.[32] Placing knowledge at the service of the citizen is part of the Scottish generalist tradition. However, there are perhaps justifiable fears concerning the future of higher education, in which the main, over-riding objective is turning out the right sort of trained product for the twenty-first century labour market.[33] In addition, there have been escalating efforts by governments and business for the imposition of market relationships over scholastic ones within academia, such that students are expected to act like consumers of, rather participants in, learning.[34]

The type of interdisciplinarity developed at the Crichton is clearly in conflict with both anti-educational trends inflicting themselves upon the contemporary university. The empowerment of students to determine their educational path puts Crichton's liberal arts approach at variance with the more tightly defined human resource objectives of the employers. Philosophy, in particular aesthetics and ethics, whilst capable of articulating a case for economic efficiency, is also the home for other values that are not reducible to exchange-value. In addition, the skills that students develop through the Crichton Liberal Arts degree programme will have longer lasting outcomes than the shorter term, and often quickly obsolete, competencies demanded by employers looking towards quick returns on investment.

The pedagogic methods of the core courses in general and the contemporary liberal arts, which prioritise collaborative and dialogic

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[31] Baumann, 1987: 38.

[32] Sack, 1962.

[33] See for instance, the infamous remarks ascribed to the then New Labour Education Secretary, Charles Clarke, that universities exist to 'enable the British economy' and that subjects which are not market-orientated are merely 'ornamental' and should not be financially supported by the state, Q. Clarke, Baty, 2003. For other complaints about the restructuring of education primarily upon market relationships see Evans, 2004.

[34] Furedi, 2004: 116-17.

pedagogy, face a problem in these cost-effective times, for such pedagogy mitigates against producing identical teaching packages demanded by an education market geared to unindividuated mass consumption. Off-setting these costs are the large class sizes of the core courses and the economies of scale thereby achieved, and the use of new technologies to reach new audiences, and to facilitate staff-student and student-student dialogues. There have been remote video-linking of courses such as ICS and S:H&C to locations both within and beyond formal educational institutions, providing access to these courses to those otherwise excluded. This has meant that cores have been at the forefront of remote delivery whilst maintaining their pedagogic integrity (the core courses remain at the cutting edge of remote delivery— T&C, for example, is currently in the process of modification for partial delivery via an interactive web-based learning environment).

The extension of educational opportunities through these technologies, and the Liberal Arts degree's flexible modular structure, means that more people, especially those who had been formerly under-represented at universities, have benefited from the Crichton Liberal Arts degree. Educational reactionaries, like Kingsley Amis during his later, conservative period denounced the initial opening up of universities in the late 1960s with the phrase 'more means worse'.[35] In making such a declaration, Amis was assuming that resources and that new teaching techniques would be less effective than traditional methods, thereby creating debased educational experiences. To counter Amis's pessimism, Frank Furedi's example is useful. The expansion of provision by the hospitals under the emerging National Health Service in the post-war period did not mean that their standards fell as access to health-care increased. So long as the political will exists, at all levels, to grant resources, extended access need not lower standards, although Furedi, amongst others, fears that at present, in the UK, such political will does not exist.

Others oppose generalist education because they believe that their singular discipline takes educational priority. One cannot refute such a belief. The acceptance of interdisciplinarity demands a certain, perhaps unusual, modesty from academics, as a commitment to inter-disciplinary approaches admits that one's own specialism is but one

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[35] Q. Amis, Furedi, 2004, 99.

amongst many, with no special claims to pre-eminence or perfection, that it has absences and blind spots. It also accepts that other forms of knowledge can assist in the development of that specialism. However, interdisciplinarity also provides opportunities for new types of engagement and often surprising types of collaboration.

There is a third criticism that can be aimed at the core courses, which are essential to the Crichton model of integrated interdisciplinarity, namely that as compulsory courses they unjustly interfere with the autonomy of the learner. There are some standard defences of this type of educational imposition; after all, almost every university degree includes a substantial element of compulsory course, especially at the introductory stage, and the critics who wish to replace integrated interdisciplinarity, with the pre-eminence of their own subject, merely wish to enforce a different (and often more stringent) set of alternative compulsory courses. However, these defences, whilst true, are unsatisfactory; after all, if cutting down on student choice is bad practice, the fact that it is endemic, or used by one's opponents, is no justification. Nor can the other standard defence for compulsory courses—cost-effectiveness—be used to excuse bad practice. Ultimately, the validation of the four compulsory core courses can only be done through the same defence of any form of enforced requirement: that it ultimately extends the autonomy of those subject to the rule, so that those who have been subjected to the obligation can see the benefit of such a regulation. It is clear from the student feedback (both in formal evaluations and in informal discussion), that the overwhelming majority of students recognise the benefits of the core courses once they have participated in and completed them.

Conclusion

The Crichton Campus model of interdisciplinarity is supported by the four core courses, which provide a successful contemporary version of the Scottish generalist tradition. This Liberal Arts degree, with its democratic and student-centred approach, is anchored by the core courses embedded in philosophy (in both the wider and more scholastic interpretation). Whilst integrated interdisciplinarity faces hostility from a range of sources, its innovative and open approach to tertiary education

provides students with a range of educational options. This type of degree, which in the twenty-first century is innovative in the UK context (although drawing from older Scottish generalist traditions), provides another example of the pedagogic usefulness and pertinence of philosophy in both its broader and narrow (scholastic) sense.

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Learning, Teaching and Assessment with Deaf Students:

The Development of a Programme in Christian Ministry

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Introduction

The increase in numbers of students entering higher education (HE) has forced the sector to think creatively about new ways of including a greater variety of students through radical changes to learning, teaching and assessment (Biggs 2003: 1-4). This has been further focused for students with disabilities and specific needs through the widening access and participation agenda (cf. Equality Challenge

Unit 2006), the introduction of the Disability Discrimination Act (1995) and its application to education in the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Act (SENDA) (2001) (Cf. Disability Rights Commission, 2002). Though SENDA has required HE institutions to be more inclusive of students with disabilities and specific needs, many approaches to learning, teaching and assessment are, in my view, less than adequate. For example, pre-SENDA guidance from the Royal National Institute for the Blind, advises that a student with a visual impairment may be given extra time in an examination from between 25% to 100% (Hutchinson et. al. 1998: 266). This is not unusual practice for many students with disabilities and specific needs today. With examinations up to 3 hours in length, adding to that another 45 minutes can only have a negative impact and add to the distress of a student trying to meet the demands of such a long assessment. Similarly, Jarvis and Knight (2003: 59-76) provide advice on learning and teaching in the support of students with a variety of hearing impairments, but most of the suggestions are about small changes to current practices so that Deaf people can fit in to what is already in place. Universities cannot be blamed too much if the action they take is less then adequate if it is based on the advice they are given. This paper argues for more radical changes towards including one group, Deaf people, in HE, and outlines my attempt at achieving that inclusion. It is not perfect or necessarily transferable to every situation, but it does go beyond the usual mediocre attempts to facilitate the learning of many students with disabilities and specific needs.

The Deaf community and British Sign Language

It is estimated that there are between 50,000 (RNID 2003) and 100,000 (Alker 2000: 27) members of the Deaf community in the United Kingdom today, though Ladd suggests that figure may be as high as 120,000 (Ladd 2003: 33). Such a big margin between the lower and upper ends of this estimate demonstrates the problems of identifying who precisely is a member of the Deaf community. For example, there can be two people with precisely the same medical condition that prevents them from hearing, but one may be a member of the Deaf

community and one may not. This is because membership of the Deaf community is largely determined by the following four factors: the severity of the hearing impairment, usually profound hearing loss; the age at which a person becomes Deaf, usually before the acquisition of a spoken language; the person's ability in and use of British Sign Language (BSL) as their first or preferred method of communication; the person's participation in a community of other similar people who view and understand the world through what has become known as 'Deaf culture' (cf. Alker 1996: 178-9 and Ladd 2003: 35). The upper case 'D' for 'Deaf' is used to distinguish the Deaf community from other groups with a hearing impairment (approximately a further eight million people (RNID 2003)) who may be 'deaf' or 'hard of hearing' but who do not use BSL and are not a part of Deaf culture (Ladd 2003: 33). Most Deaf people, 90%, who are born with a severe hearing loss are usually not the children of existing members of the Deaf Community but rather the children of hearing parents. Participation in the Deaf community may or may not be encouraged by parents and so some become members as infants and acquire BSL and others do not (Gregory and Knight 1999: 4). Some come to the Deaf community as teenagers or adults having lost their hearing before acquiring spoken language and they go on to learn a spoken language with varying degrees of success and never participate in the Deaf community.

BSL is a full and complete language, as capable of the full range and complexity of expression as any spoken language (Pinker 1994: 36) and since 2003 has been recognised as an indigenous language of the United Kingdom—the third most commonly used after English and Welsh (BDA 2004). Despite many misconceptions, there is not one universal sign language but many different sign languages in most countries and many nations even have regional variations or 'dialects' (Sutton-Spence and Woll 1998: 29). They are languages that have no written format largely because of the way the language is constructed and the variety of different ways a phrase can be expressed.

Deaf education before university

The education of Deaf people over the last two hundred and fifty years

does not make enjoyable reading. Throughout this period the discussions and debates have largely focussed in primary and secondary education on the most appropriate methods by which to educate Deaf children and teenagers (see, for example, Lane (1989) Gregory *et al* (1998), Watson et. al. (2001) and Power and Leigh (2004)). The failure of Deaf educationalists, who are more often than not hearing, to find consensus on the best methods of helping Deaf children to learn, and the generally poorer levels of Deaf academic success compared to hearing people (Lane 1999: 130-1), has previously made any discussion of Deaf people in HE largely irrelevant because Deaf people have rarely made it that far. That is now slowly changing as will be discussed later.

The debate on whether Deaf students should learn through a spoken language or a sign language led to an international conference in Milan in 1880 of Deaf educationalists. At this conference an agreement was ratified that Deaf education should focus primarily on teaching Deaf children to speak, read and write and that sign language should be banished from use in schools in order to facilitate the learning of the spoken language (Lane 1989: 387). The implication of this decision was also that all other areas of learning, for example, the sciences and the humanities would take a secondary place to learning to speak, read and write. This approach to Deaf education has been known as 'oralism' or the 'oral method' and served as the predominant method of Deaf education for the following century. Only from the 1960s onwards, with the recognition that sign languages were full and complete languages (Stokoe 1960), did oralism begin to not only be questioned (this had always been happening) but to seriously be challenged. The oral method of Deaf education has been criticised on a number of levels.

The first criticism is that oralism as an educational method simply does not work. Woll has shown in studies conducted with Deaf infants that in the crucial years of language acquisition (under the age of five years) they learn spoken words at a much slower rate than hearing infants. He has also demonstrated that Deaf infants can learn sign language at a rate that is parallel to hearing infants' acquisition of spoken language (Woll 1998: 60-65). The oral method, even before school, disadvantages Deaf children from the very beginning because if it is followed, it is likely that their language competency will be

impaired in comparison to hearing children. Secondly, this method is criticised because in schools teaching Deaf children to speak, read and write takes up far more time than literacy does for hearing children so that other areas of learning are sidelined. Hearing children do not generally continue to have classes in basic linguistic abilities beyond the first few years. In addition, older Deaf people have many stories from their experience at school of the very cruel methods used to stop them using their hands to communicate. If one were to read any book or journal on the subject of Deaf education published even up until 2005 you will find them dominated by the same questions of what is the best method of Deaf education (see, for example, Lane (1989) Gregory et al (1998), Watson et. al. (2001) and Power & Leigh (2004) and any edition of *Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education*[1] 1996-2006). There is very little in any of the literature on how to teach Deaf children science, mathematics, the humanities, information technology and so on.

The oralists argue that unless Deaf people can speak, read and write, their ability to participate and contribute to society is impaired so oralism has to be the priority. This claim leads me to my third criticism of this model. Oralism, in my view, is largely about normalisation and is consistent with other Victorian and early 20th century approaches to difference: try to eliminate the difference in the person and if all else fails, hide the person away (Lane 1999: 26-8). It cannot be denied that it is easier for the rest of society if Deaf people can speak, lip–read, read and write. This can be argued to be advantageous to the Deaf person too as communication problems could become minimal. Teaching Deaf children to speak and read, however, is not straightforward, especially without another language by which the spoken language can be learned. However, based on research such as that by Woll above, if Deaf children learn BSL first, by the time they get to school they have a full language they can use through which to learn a second language and other skills (Swanwick 1998: 111). If they are discouraged from using BSL at first diagnosis and then taught orally, most Deaf children will not get a full grasp of any language, although there are some exceptions. It is all too convenient for society to expect all

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[1] *Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education* is published quarterly by Oxford University Press

Deaf people to communicate in the same way as hearing people. It is practically easier and economically expedient if Deaf people do not need interpreters and can communicate face to face with hearing people.

Methods of teaching Deaf children have over the past twenty years changed considerably so that no one single method of teaching is employed, but a variety of, arguably, fragmented methods. 'Oralism' continues to be the predominant method of teaching Deaf children, not least because of the increase in student numbers to 'mainstream' schools ((Hutchinson et. al. 1998: 68; Ladd 2003: 158; Duffin 2005: 6). Other methods now include the 'bilingual' method, which argues that children should learn BSL first and then use that first language as a tool for learning a second, English. The arguments for this method are gaining momentum globally, as the collection by Power and Leigh (2004) demonstrates, though the oralists are not letting go without a fight (Ladd, 2003, 158). Another approach to Deaf education is one of total communication (Baker and Knight 1998: 77-87). In practice, this means using every possible method to get the message across. In work with a school for Deaf children in Zimbabwe in 1999 I observed this method being used. The positive was that signing was openly and freely used in school. The negative was that teachers spoke and signed at the same time. Because sign language and English have different grammars, this method unfortunately ends up using a mixture of the two which ultimately inhibited complex teaching and deep learning because there was no real communication in any language. It is also worth recognising that a small but slowly increasing number of teachers of Deaf children are themselves Deaf adults. Teachers of Deaf children must today engage in a specialist teaching qualification at Masters level offered by a number of universities across the United Kingdom (e.g. Manchester and Birmingham) bringing a much needed level of professionalism to this specialist area of teaching.

Deaf people in higher education

In light of the changes described above, Jarvis and Knight (2003: 59) note that 'more and more deaf students are entering higher education and institutions and following courses alongside their hearing peers'. In HE, staff are usually specialists in research of their subject discipline

rather than having expertise in a particular approach to teaching, learning and assessment (Stefani, 2004-5: 51) and so there are few academics with the language skills to be able to support Deaf people in their learning in HE. Many Deaf people do not have skills in English to the level that would ordinarily be expected of hearing students in HE because of the reasons outlined above. Most resources for students are made available in the medium of English meaning that Deaf students who struggle with this language are disadvantaged from accessing these resources without support. These are very practical problems concerning the inclusion of Deaf people in HE. It is not practical for every member of HE staff to have BSL skills and not all would develop competencies to teach in that language. This problem has been overcome in one Deaf Studies department at the University of Central Lancashire where, a member of staff there informed me, Deaf students are assessed in BSL for some of their modules but, for the purposes of external examination, every assessment is translated into English. This is costly but it allows Deaf students to be assessed in their own language and overcomes any potential problems with quality assurance. Without more investment, however, it is questionable in the current climate whether Deaf people will ever be fully able to participate in the university sector on an equal basis with everyone else.

There are some useful parallels that can be made between Deaf students and international students. Ladd argues that Deaf people should be seen as a linguistic minority group with a unique culture more than as disabled people (Ladd 2003: 35-6). International students, like Deaf people, often come to education in the United Kingdom with a different first language and cultural background to their fellow learners. Biggs identifies three methods of inclusion that are adopted by staff within HE for international students: Teaching as 'assimilation', teaching as 'accommodation' and teaching as 'educating' (Biggs 2003: 138-9). Teaching as 'assimilation' means that international students must become like everyone else to fit in. Students will only succeed if they can behave and learn in the same way as home students and the responsibility for that lies with the learner rather than the teacher. Teaching as 'accommodation' is a method that tries to address individual problems students may encounter by accommodating them into 'normal' teaching practices. A student may, for example, be allowed to record a lecture or have individual tutorials, but teaching

and assessment methods are not reviewed in order to include international students alongside home students. Teaching as 'educating' involves the teacher working to teach better and they do so by engaging with the contexts of all their the students in order to try to understand them, and by so doing, the teacher works to apply their teaching to meet their students' needs. In other words, a teacher does not try to make students fit into their methods of teaching but works to fit their teaching around the needs of the students (See Biggs 2003: 138-9).

Deaf people will never be included by simply trying to make them fit into the same mould as everyone else by using the assimilation method. Their access to learning resources, including their tutors, will be inhibited because they are asked, in an assimilation model, to learn in a second language. If their learning experience is diminished in this way, so their assessments will also reflect that. Even if access to adequate learning and teaching were available to Deaf people, their ability to reflect their learning, skills, abilities, potential and achievement is diminished if they are assessed in the same way as hearing people. In contrast to international students, without hearing, Deaf people often struggle much harder in acquiring English, though if they have BSL, acquiring English is made easier.

Accommodating Deaf people into teaching and learning is also not a viable option that will enable the students to succeed to the best of their abilities. Some Deaf people who have a good use of English study for undergraduate and postgraduate qualifications and are supported by interpreters, note takers, voice recognition technology and other assistive methodologies (RNID 2006). Deaf people can often be assisted to some effect in this way. However, they will always be on the margins in HE if they have little direct contact with the teacher or their fellow students because their communication is always mediated by someone or something else. As with the assimilation model, if students are marginalised in their learning, assessments will reflect their diminished learning. When it comes to assessments, Deaf people are still often expected to deliver the assessment through the medium of English though RNID do, rather timidly, suggest in small print at the bottom of one of their advice pages that BSL might be used in assessments (RNID 2006) and this is not beyond the realm of possibility as the University of Central Lancashire demonstrates.

Deaf people are at worst expected to assimilate in HE or at best,

they are accommodated. It is important that Deaf people's experience goes beyond this so that they can participate in Biggs' educating model and experience real and deep learning. It must be emphasised that lower literacy levels should not be equated with a lower level of intelligence. Not having high levels of English does not mean that Deaf people are intellectually incapable of studying. It is not an inability to learn that has precluded Deaf people from studying in universities but the fact that Deaf people are a minority group whose language needs have not been dealt with effectively at school, because they do not acquire English easily, and for those who do get to HE, because academic staff usually do not have the right skills, enough time or resources to teach Deaf people in a truly inclusive way. The new legislation on disability pertaining to education and the recognition of BSL as a national language of the UK will soon, if not yet, demand that universities are more radical in their approach to the inclusion of students from the Deaf Community. Deaf people will expect it and challenge those institutions who are not prepared to engage with them to develop an inclusive approach to teaching, learning and assessment. Below are some reflections on my attempt to develop a course that is concerned with educating, deep learning and real inclusion for members of the Deaf Community.

Developing a programme in ministry in British Sign Language

The beginnings of the project

Toohey argues that, 'most models of course design suggest that a comprehensive needs analysis should be the first step in the process' (Toohey 1999: 21). Here I attempt to outline how this programme began and the research conducted to get the programme to be as good as it could be. I have already argued above why I think there is a need for the HE sector to looks at ways of more fully including Deaf people. My interest in this subject emerges out of work with the Deaf Community and academic research in theology and Deafness. I am also a member of the Church of England's Committee for Ministry among

Deaf and Disabled People (CMDDP) which, among other things, advises dioceses and the Archbishops' Council on matters relating to the ministry of and among Deaf people. Deaf people serve on this committee and, with CMDDP, had been trying to develop some training for Deaf people actively involved in Christian Ministry. It was in this context that the idea of a course in Christian Ministry began. A number of events had been successfully organised but there seemed to be a need and a desire for a more formal programme and more detailed study. In discussions with members of the committee I suggested seeing if there could be a way of formalising and developing training with the existing networks of CMDDP to produce an innovative programme in which Deaf people could be taught and learn modules relevant to their ministry using a pedagogical approach designed around BSL and the Deaf community. This idea drew support from CMDDP, University of Chester and the Subject Centre for PRS and from then work began on a programme in Christian Ministry that would be delivered through a collaborative partnership with CMDDP.

Those with professional experience of working in social work, teaching, counselling and ministry who have gone on to specialise in work alongside Deaf people invariably agree that you cannot simply carry on in the same way as you did before and only change your practice by using BSL. The work of the professional must be radically transformed if their work is to be effective with Deaf people and take into account Deaf culture and experience (e.g. Cromwell 2005: 3-5). Similarly, it was clear that developing teaching, learning and assessment methodologies that are fully inclusive of Deaf people and meet their needs would require more than simply adapting current practices. It needed new and creative ways of thinking about teaching and learning that does not involve words or text books or hearing culture, but uses visual communication and is relevant to a community and culture that experiences the world through sight, touch and smell and whose language is quite unlike English. This was to be no small task, but with the commitment of my colleagues at the University and on CMDDP, we have a programme that will begin in September 2006.

Initial research

Prior to beginning work on the programme, in addition to research into

Deaf education discussed above, some initial research was done into the kind of training Deaf people would be most interested in receiving. A video was recorded at a national conference of Deaf people who attend churches or are involved in ministry at which they were asked questions about the kinds of subjects they would be most interested in studying. Out of all those who expressed their views, many wanted more training to be made available in the areas of biblical studies, theology and doctrine, and liturgy and worship. These areas of study reflected the needs of the group at that particular conference, and it was probable that this group would be those who would be most likely to take up and commit themselves to a programme of study. The identified areas were written up as three twenty credit modules at level one and were tested out with CMDDP, representatives from Deaf Anglicans Together,[2] an ecumenical network of Deaf clergy, and Signs of God, a network of Christian interpreters. They were all in agreement that these modules reflected current training needs for Deaf people. A number of chaplains among Deaf people also tested the ideas out with Deaf people in their congregations.

Establishing a collaborative partnership

Staff at the University of Chester do not have the pedagogical or linguistic skills to teach Deaf people without the support of CMDDP and the organisations listed above. The Theology and Religious Studies Department has a long, established, and successful history of working collaboratively with the churches and providing and/or accrediting programmes in Christian Ministry. Together it was possible to see that the programme could work. A collaborative partnership[3] was set up between CMDDP and the University of Chester supported by the other groups. One condition of the partnership was that at least 50% of the tutors on the programme should be Deaf themselves. With nine Deaf clergy in the Church of England, with theological training and ministe-

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[2] Formerly, National Deaf Church Conference: an Anglican network of Deaf people supported by CMDDP and a national voice for Deaf people in the Church of England.

[3] The Collaborative Partnership was set up following QAA 2004 and University of Chester 2005.

rial experience, this condition was possible. It was imperative for this to happen not only for equality of opportunity, but also for Deaf people to be able to own the course and for some of the issues concerning the need to understand Deaf culture to be overcome.

Establishing systems for consultation

After establishing the collaborative partnership, because of the new nature of the course, learning from the experience of others who have been involved in delivering or participating in adult education with Deaf people and in ministry with the Deaf community was essential. At each stage of the process of writing the modules, the content was discussed with a small programme planning team consisting of representatives from the groups described above. This consultation proved to be invaluable in terms of not only the content on the modules, but also in terms of developing teaching learning and assessment methodologies that would help students to learn and show their learning in ways that used the strengths of the Deaf community, were relevant to the Deaf community and BSL, and did not impose hearing methodologies on to the programme. Again the involvement of Deaf people in discussions and planning was crucial.

Developing a Church Colleges' Certificate in Ministry

Because many Deaf people who would be likely to apply for the course would not meet the usual formal entry qualifications for undergraduate study, it was agreed between the CMDDP and the University of Chester that the most appropriate programme of study to begin this project would be a Church Colleges' Certificate in Ministry (CCCM). Church Colleges' Certificates are designed for those who wish to pursue any area of study in theology, ministry, biblical or religious studies. They also promote wider access and participation by stating that, 'The programme is open access; anyone who would benefit from the study may join the programme. This is assessed at interview. There are no formal entry requirements' (University of Chester 2006). For this programme of study fluency in BSL was made a requirement and an ability to 'navigate the internet' using English would be needed but not fluency in English.

The CCCM programme is made up of 60 credits at level one and is offered by all members of the church colleges and universities in England and Wales. Not only does this specific programme provide access to HE to students who may ordinarily be excluded, the programme can be delivered as a whole, usually within one year of part-time study. This makes the programme manageable for collaborative partners such as CMDDP, and for students new to the sector. Successful completion of the CCCM provides progression to a CertHe in Ministry and that in turn provides access to a BTh Honours degree. The programme would be held together and be developed holistically in order to support students not only in developing subject specific knowledge and understanding but also key and transferable skills that involve theological reflection, working as a team, and skills in information technology.

Designing the programme

Programmes of study in HE should not simply be random mixes of modules but rather they should provide opportunities for students to develop, and build on a variety of skills across modules (Toohey 1999: 68) and make links and connections between old and new learning (Nightingale and O'Neil 1994: 54-56). These principles were central to the design of this programme. The programme was given a framework for design within the CCCM and the university's modular programmes. However, in terms of this specific programme there were certain elements that were central to its design that needed to be embedded in the programme in order to design a programme that would meet the originally identified needs discussed above.

Subject knowledge and understanding

Students need to develop 'knowledge of the underlying concepts and principles associated with their area(s) of study, and an ability to evaluate and interpret these within the context of that area of study' (QAA 2001). The areas of study that would make up this programme were identified through the market research and put into a modular framework. Biblical Studies, Theological Studies and the Study of

Worship and Liturgy work together well in a programme designed to train students in skills in Christian Ministry. Biblical and Theological Studies are often core disciplines in any programme in theology and enables students to meet a number of the subject benchmarks in the discipline. (QAA 2006). Liturgy and Worship is usually an optional module in Theological Studies but fits well with the other two in a programme training students for ministry. The primary difference between this and any other programme in Ministry was that a pedagogy relevant to the Deaf community should be used that should be developed in such a way that students receive a comparable qualification to any other student with a CCCM. Ensuring that development of knowledge and understanding of students in the subject areas identified and finding ways of assessing that was key to the design of the programme.

Ensuring the programme was relevant to Christian ministry

Many of the students entering the programme will be involved in ministries such as preaching and leading worship, though not necessarily in the context of the Deaf community. If students do not have a ministerial context, they will work with their tutor to find one through a placement. One of the key disciplines of training in ministry is that of theological reflection: the creative engagement of theological and biblical studies with human experience, society, and personal practice (cf. Graham et. al. 2005: 6). It is also often used as the tool of reflective practice for those in full time ministry (Bennett 2004: 21). This discipline is the methodology that is at the heart of the programme and students are given opportunity in every module to apply their experience to the subject matter and their developing knowledge and understanding of the subject matter to their experience, each informing and enhancing the other in creative dialogue.

Embedding Deaf culture into the design process

Understanding the role of the Deaf community in the programme and the use of BSL as the primary language poses a number of challenges. All tutors need to be fluent in BSL and be able to facilitate learning in that language. The programme documentation thus states that all tutors

must have BSL level three in order to teach on the programme[4] or be Deaf people, fluent in BSL. In order for Deaf people to be able to apply their learning to a specific ministerial context, the students must have some understanding of that context and so must their tutors. To reflect this, each module contains content that works to develop knowledge and understanding of the Deaf community alongside subject knowledge and understanding. Using theological reflection, these two disciplines of ministry and studies in the Deaf community come together. Deaf individual and communal experience will also impact on the way in which Deaf people engage with the transmission of Christian traditions through different cultures, languages and experiences to their own. This implies also that Deaf people will engage with the tradition differently from their own experience.

It is well established in Christian theology, biblical studies and liturgical studies that experience can be a source and resource for the emergence of new ways of doing theology, liturgy or biblical study and for understanding and interpreting other traditions. Parratt (2004) gives a useful oversight of many theologies that emerge using this method. Black experience, the experience of the poor in Latin America, Dalits in India and those under the apartheid regime of South Africa all developed theologies and new ways of reading texts and understanding the nature of God in ways that come out of their experience, in these examples, of various types of oppression. That experience is the source and resource of theologies of liberation and freedom. This programme, by using theological reflection and models of reading the Bible and theology and leading and using liturgy and worship will help students to continue to develop theologies that emerge out of Deaf experience and are pertinent to their ministerial practice.

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[4] BSL Qualifications are awarded by the Council for the Advancement of Communication with Deaf People. There are four awards at levels 1-4 measured against the national qualifications framework. Holders of the level 3 qualification can work as communication support workers. Holders of the level 4 qualification can register as qualified interpreters.

Evaluating the programme design: theological reflection as a tool for reflective practice in theological education

Reflective practice is an increasingly common aspect of many professional roles and this is true in both education (Brockbank and McGill 1998: 108-126) and ministry (Bennett 2004: 21 and Ward 2005: 15-16). In 2005, I led a module in reflective practice for Christian youth workers at the University of Chester and we have a number of modules designed for people in Christian ministry that use theological reflection as a method of reflective practice. Theological reflection can be used as a critical tool for those involved in Christian adult education too, modelled by Hull (1991: xi) in talking of the need for a 'practical theology' in relation to adult Christian education and Bennett (2004).

Methods of theological reflection will be used as key tools not only in the delivery of the programme, but in the evaluation and enhancement of the programme by the programme team. Theological reflection is a tool for learning from experience and at each stage of the design process, experience of the Deaf community, educators and the issues that arise out of the design will be reflected on using this methodology with a view to initiating change. Using the experience of the programme itself as a starting point, we will use educational theory, practice and experience to inform our understanding of what we do alongside our understanding of Deaf culture and experience, and use theology to help inform the process in working towards future enhancement and development. Student evaluations will be especially important in informing theological reflection on the programme.

Learning and teaching

Forming students for ministry

'Formation' is often cited as a key aspect of many programmes preparing people for ministry (e.g. Church of England 2000). Formation is often understood as being different to academic study by providing opportunities for spiritual growth and development in such a way that prepares students to be alongside people in ministry (Church of England 2000: 30). In work I have done with readers and other lay

training programmes, some of the key ways in which students have valued formative experiences have been through working together, worshipping together, learning in ways that are embedded in the Christian tradition and informed by the student community's spiritual journey together. However, increasingly 'The intellectual dominance of a position that marginalizes faith commitment and its contribution to critical enquiry is now a matter of debate rather than simply a premise' (Oxford University 2006). Frances Young, however, a prominent theologian and Methodist minister speaking from personal experience argues that 'My whole being is shaped by theological searching, responding to God, yet revealed as one with us in Christ Jesus' (Young 2002: 1). Academic study and spiritual growth can be part of the same journey—each of these will be an important part of this programme of training and formation for ministry.

Methods appropriate to Deaf people

Students will engage in workshops, discussions, seminars, group work, tutor led sessions and student led presentations all using British Sign Language. Students will have access to performance texts (see later) pertaining to their module of study, accessed through the University's intranet. Most teaching will be done on residential weekends, though self-directed study will take place in between, supported in the first module by exercises completed and submitted online. As well as being important in training for ministry, group work is an important part of the learning process for Deaf students. The modules have been designed specifically to engage students in group work together because one of the primary learning resources students will use in the programme will be their own and others' experience. Every module includes teaching and reflection on issues surrounding the Deaf community. Each module then encourages the students to engage their experience with their learning about biblical studies, theology and liturgy.

e-Learning

e-Learning is increasingly becoming an important part of the HE sector

(Biggs 2003: 213). The Department of Theology and Religious Studies at the University of Chester also has a long history of delivering modules and programmes through flexible and distributed learning. Because the students on this programme will be studying part-time and living in various locations, it would be advantageous to students to be able to access materials on the internet. However, the internet is very word based and some knowledge of English is necessary in order to be able to use it—this poses a problem for Deaf users. During the consultations, I asked whether it would be appropriate to use the web to create a learning community through discussion boards in between central face to face sessions. It was felt that this was inappropriate because discussion boards operate using English. Discussion boards using BSL images meant that students would need sophisticated and expensive technology in their homes to be able to record their contribution and make it available on the web for other participants to view. The quality of signing on domestic 'web cams' is often very poor and so it was felt that discussion boards would not be useful as we did not want to use English.

The internet can, however, be used for research purposes. Again, because the internet is so English based, this has the potential to be problematic to Deaf students. However, in one of the department's biblical studies modules, students use the internet to find paintings and art that represent biblical stories or passages. Students then compare the artistic representations against the narrative of the text in order to reflect on the ways that different times and cultures interpret biblical narratives. The programme team agreed to look at adapting this for use with Deaf people and it was introduced as part of the assessment for a module in biblical studies. Some parts of the Bible have already been translated into BSL and these could be used alongside the artistic representations to look at how culture, place and time influence the interpretation of the narrative. This is intended to allow students to develop subject specific knowledge and understanding, transferable skills in using the internet and in basic research. There is also a growing number of resources for Deaf people on the internet whereby materials are signed and can be streamed to home computers. For example, there is a website that includes a short dictionary of Christian signs and a number of short personal stories of faith development produced last year (CDL UK: 2005). The other way in which it was decided that the

internet would be useful to the programme was through the development of resources to support learning called 'performance texts'.

'Performance texts'

Performance texts are an innovation of this programme designed to support student learning and resource students throughout their programme. Performance texts are an equivalent of text books and other scholarly works. They involve presentations, discussions and seminars on key areas of study pertinent to each module in the programme. So, for example, in a module such as biblical studies, a student may ordinarily use a text book to inform themselves about a subject such as biblical exegesis. They may be provided with an introduction to the method, some examples of how it works, and some exercises to try the approach it for themselves. They would then read more widely around the ways in which exegesis can be approached and enhance their understanding. They may be encouraged to think about the ways in which their own experience influences and shapes the way they approach biblical exegesis and the kind of personal 'baggage' they bring to the text (cf. Evans 1999). Performance texts will support what is delivered to students in the classroom by acting in a similar way to a textbook. The main difference will be that the material is available in British Sign Language, recorded using professional equipment, and then can be streamed to the student's home computer through the University's intranet site. These are being developed in order to meet the learning and teaching needs of the students. Performance texts, and face to face sessions, along with the use of mentors (discussed below) will also provide opportunities to ensure students are informed of the outcomes and standards expected of them.

Mentors

Because this programme is located at level C in the FHEQ, and students are to have significant periods of time between residential weekends and face to face sessions, it was thought that students would need to be able to have access to some tutorial support in between sessions. Students often need this kind of support when they begin

studying, particularly mature students who, in this instance, have been out of education a long time and have no experience of HE.[5] The CMDDP has a network of approximately 40 licensed chaplains in the dioceses of the Church of England, all with varying BSL skills, theological training and experience of ministry and in particular ministry among Deaf people. The programme team agreed that these networks could usefully be used to support students in their learning and understanding expectations of the students, by offering relevant pastoral support, being a local point of contact for any queries about their studies, being a critical friend, and supporting students in preparing for locally based tasks such as preparing a led act of worship Liturgy and Worship Module. Mentors will be inducted into their role by the university and their work with students will be monitored throughout the programme.

Assessment

Wakeford (1999:59) argues that 'effective assessment will reflect truthfully some combination of an individual's abilities, achievement, skills and potential'. Deaf people are clearly disadvantaged in assessment if they are not able to be assessed in their first or preferred language and are not given the same opportunities to demonstrate their abilities, achievement, skills and potential.

Reflective practice in assessments

As discussed earlier, the key methodology used in this module will be one of theological reflection. This is also the methodology underpinning the development of approaches to teaching, learning and assessment in the programme. It was clear that students will need careful induction in to this process through teaching and input from tutors, opportunities to practise the method, formative assessments to test their grasp of the method, and summative assessment to make this an integral part of the whole programme. In teaching this method to other

[5] Through the TRS department I have considerable experience of work with mature students. See HEM101 Critical Evaluation of Teaching Observations—discussion under the heading of 'General Observations in relation to my Context and Practice'.

students at level one, I have often found many struggle to grasp the idea early on unless I break down the process of theological reflection for them and support them through each stage. In my experience, students often get better at it through practice. They also enhance their ability to do theological reflection by understanding their own culture and context better, and by developing knowledge and understanding, and later at levels two and three critical skills pertinent to the discipline of theology. Tutors will need to model theological reflection for students as part of the induction into the method. Students will be supported in their use of it in assessment by assessment tasks breaking the method of theological study up into manageable tasks which has worked elsewhere in modules I have taught.

Group work

Because Deaf people's culture is one of vision and touch, the role of the Deaf community, engagement with other people, is an important part of what it means to be Deaf. In addition, because Deaf people use a different language from the majority of hearing people they often find themselves isolated in the wider communities in which they live. Being a part of a community and interaction with other Deaf people is a part of what it means to be Deaf and so as well as the teaching and learning strategy involving group work, that should also be understood as part of the formation of Deaf people, both for ministry and for summative assessment.

In a programme with Chester Diocese, Foundations for Ministry, accredited by University of Chester, one of the modules in this programme is entirely concerned with group work and an individual's contribution to group dynamics. This module was introduced to the programme in 2004 which is designed to help people discover their own ministry and begin training for a variety of licensed ministries. One the key characteristics of being in ministry is that individuals must be able to work as part of a team or group and yet students could write three essays on theology and pass the course with distinction but be unable to work with anyone. Again this re-emphasises the importance of assessment that examines skills and abilities that are 'fit for purpose' (Brown 2004-5: 81).

This element of being able to collaborate with others and work

together was a part of the design of the programme in ministry for Deaf students. They will work together on a biblical text, presenting it dramatically in a way that engages the text with Deaf experience. The two will engage in conversation with each other, an established method of biblical hermeneutics, to produce a new reading of the text. Students will be given a group mark based on the presentation, the quality of the biblical interpretation, and their understanding of the methods used to develop the presentation, assessed through a structured group discussion. Students will also be assessed on their contribution to the overall presentation.

The use of group work as a method of assessment in this context, therefore, is intended to form an integral part of all teaching, learning and assessment. It is part of teaching and learning because it prepares people for summative assessment and is a part of summative assessment, it is a key skill in ministry, it engages with Deaf culture and Deaf experience, and provides an opportunity for the assessment of a student's knowledge and understanding of, in one module, biblical hermeneutics and the ability to apply it in the presentation of the text. Deaf people often present biblical texts dramatically in liturgy and worship and this is an established part of many Deaf services. This particular assessment also provides students with opportunities to examine and enhance their own practice, therefore, and to have a deeper knowledge and understanding of how to use biblical hermeneutics in the dramatisation of texts in liturgy.

Work-based assessments: application to ministry

The other primary area of assessment proposed for this programme is that of applying skills and learning in real contexts of ministry such as in leading worship or in the preparation of a piece of communication to a church group. The University of Chester has a long history of assessing work-based learning and it is increasingly becoming a part of the HE sector through Foundation Degrees (DfES 2005). Students will be asked to preach and lead acts of worship with their congregations and to reflect on their learning to both demonstrate knowledge and understanding of what they are doing and in order to enhance personal ministerial practice. Again, theological reflection will be a key methodology here and this underpins this work-based element of the assessment methods.

Assessment criteria in BSL: ensuring parity of assessment

All assessed work at the University of Chester has been marked according to assessment criteria and learning outcomes which match criteria in the wider academic infrastructure such as QAA, FHEQ and subject benchmarks. The learning outcomes are obviously unique to the individual programme and modules. Much of the assessment criteria already in place was transferable to Deaf people, such as assessing knowledge and understanding, ability to structure arguments, and assessing skills that may be transferable. However, the assessment criteria that covered communication skills needed to be changed. This was fairly straightforward. Hearing students are assessed for the quality of their written work and Deaf students will be assessed for signing with fluency in BSL. This is a further reason why appropriately qualified tutors were needed for the programme. Tutors with relevant BSL skills will be asked to assess ability to communicate in BSL using comparable criteria for those used in written assessments. The use of sources and reference also needed adaptation so that students make 'appropriate references to sources' as hearing students do in oral presentations. Theological reflection means that personal experience is a key resource in learning. The performance texts, internet, tutor input and corporate learning would all be other sources that need appropriate referencing. There is much here in parallel with oral assessments and presentations where students do not necessarily reference in the same way as in a written piece of work but they do show they have used sources and are advised on appropriate ways to reference their sources.

Conclusion

This programme is important because its success or otherwise has the potential for ramifications and positive benefits for all of HE as it works towards widening access and participation for a greater number of people. The programme is also important because BSL is now recognised as a full language and it has the capacity for the full range of expression of ideas that is equal to English. That in turn provides Deaf people with new and exciting opportunities to learn and develop using their own language on a par with their hearing peers. That is a reality that has never before been available to Deaf people but that will, with

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An Educational Approach to Intercultural Teaching and Learning By Means of Black Theology:

Some Preliminary Reflections

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Setting the scene

The author of this piece is a Black theologian and Christian educator born in Britain. I was born in Bradford, West Yorkshire to Jamaican parents who came to this country from the

Caribbean in the late 1950s. As such, I am a second generation Black Caribbean British subject. I was born into and nurtured into the Christian faith from within the Wesleyan Methodist tradition. My development, as a Black religious scholar, has been influenced by a number of factors and concerns. Many of the enduring values in my life can be traced back to my formative years growing up in a Christian home but living within a predominantly White working, trade union and Independent Labour Party stronghold of East Bowling. In this context, non-conformism, trade unions and labour party politics went hand-in-hand.

Whilst my formative years were largely pleasant and affirming, what could not be disguised about our existence was the persistent reality of racism that affected the existence of all non-White people in the city of Bradford. To understand my subsequent development as Black British Liberation theologian and educator, one needs to be cognisant of the wider socio-cultural and political context that has exerted a pronounced influence upon my life. As Robert Beckford has highlighted in his seminal *God Of The Rahtid: Redeeming Rage*, Black people in post colonial Britain are struggling to exist in an environment that sanctions the casual disregard of non-White people.[1]

The Black response to racism in Britain

The majority of Black people living in Britain can trace their roots to the mass migration movement of peoples from the Caribbean and Africa in the years immediately following the Second World War. The story of how Black people came to Britain, many as communicant members of historic churches of the Protestant tradition, and were summarily rejected by their White brothers and sisters in Christ has been documented by scholars such as Wilkinson.[2] The challenge to maintain a critical voice against the racism of White Christians was undertaken

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[1] See Beckford, Robert, *God Of The Rahtid: Redeeming Rage* (London: DLT, 2001).

[2] See Wilkinson, John L., *Church in Black and White: The Black Christian Tradition in "Mainstream" Churches in England: A White Response and Testimony* (Edinburgh: St. Andrews Press, 1993).

by a number of pioneering Black ministers, throughout the 1970s. One can cite the work of the Revd Hewlette (Hewie) Andrew, a Black British Methodist minister like Milwood, who in arguing for Black self-determination and empowerment states:

> If it were not for Black churches that are able to hold the people together, to give some sense of value at work, and to make them feel that God is on our side, they (Black people) would all be in mental institutions. And when I myself as a Methodist minister feel very low, and I mean really low, I do not go to a Methodist church to uplift me. I go for spiritual upliftment to what I know I will never get from any white preacher.[3]

What is striking about Andrews' address is that he is clearly articulating an alternative, African-centred interpretation of Christianity that is wholly at variance with that propagated by the White hegemony. Andrews is clear that for Black people to achieve their existential liberation within a White dominated and White controlled context they must begin to create their own ecclesial and educational spaces in which to work out this innate quest for freedom.[4]

Throughout the 1980s, Black Christian mobilisation was supplemented by the presence of distinguished African American scholars. One such example can be seen in the presence of James Washington of Union Theological Seminary. Washington offers a detailed, Black Atlantic perspective on the need for collective, self-determined action by Black people, drawing upon the work of the Black Church in the U.S.[5] Washington draws upon the multi-dimensional qualities of Black churches in the U.S.[6] in the areas of education, economic empowerment, civil rights, and of course, spiritual renewal. Washington chal-

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[3] Andrew, Hewie, 'Developing Black Ministries', from *Account of Hope: Report of a Conference on the Economic Empowerment of the Black Community* (London: British Council of Churches, 1990) p.39.

[4] Ibid., p.39-40.

[5] 'Address by Dr. James Washington', from ibid., p.14-17.

[6] In this regard see Paris, Peter J., *The Social Teaching of the Black Churches* (Minneapolis: Fortress press, 1985) and Lincoln, C. Eric and Mamiya, Lawrence, *The Black Church in the African American Experience* (Durham and London: Duke University press, 1990).

lenges Black people in Britain to gain strength from the multi-dimensional nature of faith in order to empower and radically transform Black communities in this British context. Washington, and his fellow U.S. compatriots, Dr Iva Carruthers and the Revd John Mendez, offer the outsiders' contribution to this British conference, drawing on their own experiences as a means of speaking to this radically different situation.

The development of an indigenous Black theology in Britain began to take shape in the early 1990s. An important ecumenical, inter-racial approach to challenging racism can be seen in the work of Raj Patel with Maurice Hobbs and Greg Smith, who co-authored a report entitled *Equal Partners: Theological Training and Racial Justice*.[7] The report is an empirical analysis of the state of theological education in Britain. In the foreword it states:

> Some have short courses in 'Liberation theology' or 'Black theology'. The great majority, however, it seems from the survey, do not benefit from the kind of teaching about racism which enables them to see it as a profound social, cultural and economic influence in Western society which, invading the institutions of the church, is able, only too easily, to render the Gospel of little effect.[8]

Within the report, the most clear clarion call for the development of a Black theology of liberation comes from the Revd Wesley Daniel, another Black Methodist minister in Britain (now living and working within the UMC in New York).[9] Daniel states:

> I want to suggest that a serious look be given to what it means to be minister of and in a multiracial church. The area of preaching the Black tradition is important, pastoral care, music in the Black tradition, the importance of prayers in the Black tradition, Black people's

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[7] Patel, Raj with Hobbs, Maurice and Smith, Greg, *Equal Partners: Theological Education and Racial Justice* (London: British Council of Churches, 1992).

[8] Ibid.,pt.v It is interesting to note that at the time of writing my own institution (The Queens Foundation for Ecumenical Theological Education) is the only one which has Black theology as a mandatory part of the curriculum for ministerial training and formation. Most of the recommendations of the report are still not operational or discernible within the British theological educational system.

[9] 'Wesley Daniel—Personal Reflections', Ibid., pp.63-66.

social conditions and the relevance of that in relation to their approach to religion and religious practice.[10]

What is instructive about *Equal Partners* is that it begins to sketch out a role for Black theology within British theological education. Whilst it does not offer any formative content for this nascent theological enterprise (indeed, none of the aforementioned texts have done so, thus far), it does provide a much needed situational analysis of the White, Eurocentric complexion of the theological education system in Britain.

The importance of inter-culturality

Whilst the principle response to racism in Britain has emanated from Black activism, important contributions have been made by many White Christians, working in partnership with their Black brothers and sisters in Christ. Whilst I have highlighted the often neglected voice and presence of Black Christian activists in the development of anti-racist, counter-hegemonic practices, it would be wrong of me to imply this has been the only contribution. As I will demonstrate shortly, there has been a fine tradition of White clergy challenging racism within the body politic of British Christianity. Nor do I want to suggest that those from outside of the Black experience cannot be in solidarity with Black people. Such a contention, although espoused by some commentators,[11] is not one I wish to pursue at this juncture. The discourse concerning 'insiders' and 'outsiders' in the representation and analysis of any experience is not a simplistic or straightforward affair. It is made complicated by issues such as context, the ontology of the people under discussion, and the positionality of the scholar and activists attempting to document and partake in that particular phenomenon.

I want to eschew any seemingly simplistic notion of 'outsiders' and 'insiders', which carries the restrictive refrain of essentialism and the notion of hard and fast boundaries that seem to 'police' cultural experiences and their accompanying production. As Lartey reminds us,

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[10] Ibid., p.65

[11] See Asanta, Molefi K. and Asante, Kariamu W. (eds.) *African Culture: The Rhythms of Unity* (Trenton, New Jersey: Africa World Press, 1990).

culture is a dynamic, human construction, which rejects any sense of fixity.[12] In some respects, human beings are very different from one another, in terms of ethnicity, gender, class, geographical location or historical experience. Yet in other ways, the common experience of being human remains the ultimate unifying concept for all people. Lartey sums this up beautifully when he writes:

> Every human person is in certain respects:
>
> > 1. Like all others
> >
> > 2. Like some others
> >
> > 3. Like no other.[13]

Clearly, it is both difficult and, in some respects, dangerous to create fixed lines detailing who belongs to (and presumably can speak for) a particular group or community and who does not belong, with the opposite being the case. When I speak of people being in solidarity with those on the margins, I am conscious of the complexities, philosophical and cultural, that exist in this form of discourse. How can we bring our shared experiences and notions of humanity together in critical partnership, in order to engage with the self and the other?

White scholars who have 'bucked the trend'.

In the development of inter-ethnic and anti-racist approaches to Christian theological reflections, one has to bear witness to the pioneering work of Roswith Gerloff. Gerloff, a German Lutheran minister, was appointed the first executive director of the 'Centre for Black and White Christian Partnership'. The centre was based for many years in Selly Oak area of Birmingham, and was an independent Para-Church organisation with links to the Mission department of the Selly Oak Colleges and the theology department of the University of Birmingham.

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[12] Lartey, Emmanuel Y., *In Living Colour: An Intercultural Approach to Pastoral Care and Counselling* (London: Cassell, 1997). pp.9-14.

[13] Ibid., p.12.

Working under the renowned Professor of Mission, Walter Hollenweger, Gerloff researched the growing movement of Black-Led Churches in Britain, the majority of which were closely associated with the influx of Caribbean migrants to Britain in the post Second World War period, between 1948 and 1965. Her monumental thesis (in two volumes) became for many years one of the standard texts detailing the development of Black majority church traditions in Britain.[14]

The second scholar is the Revd John L. Wilkinson, presently an Anglican priest at Kings Heath Parish Church, in the Diocese of Birmingham, in the West Midlands area of Britain. Wilkinson is one of the 'forgotten heroes' of the developmental process in the emergence of Black theology in Britain.

Wilkinson served for many years in Black majority Anglican churches in Birmingham. He was instrumental in helping to form a Black grassroots ecumenical church movement entitled 'Claiming the Inheritance'.[15] The fruits of his involvement in this multi-ethnic group of Black and White Christians can be seen in a number of ways. First, he initiated the very first Black Christian Studies course in the British theological education system at the Queens College back in the early 1990s. This course was a forerunner to the later module in Black Theology, developed initially by Wilkinson and his later colleague, Robert Beckford.[16]

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[14] See Gerloff, Roswith I.H., *A Plea for British Black Theologies: the Black Church Movement in Britain*.Vol.1. and Vol.2 (Birmingham: Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, The University of Birmingham, 1991).

[15] 'Claiming the Inheritance' was a grassroots movement that was founded in 1986 and based in Birmingham, in the West Midlands of Britain. It brought together pre-dominantly Black Christians to celebrate their history and heritage in order to create programmes and resources that would challenge and overcome the various ills that afflicted Black people in Britain. The movement came to an end in the late 90s, having been instrumental in mobilising and informing Black (and White) people for many years. A number of Black people who were active in the organisation in its formative years have since moved into ordained (pastoral) ministry having 'cut their teeth' in practical theological work by way of the involvement in C.T.I. See *Claiming The Inheritance: Ten Years On* (West Bromwich: Claiming The Inheritance, 1997).

[16] See Reddie, Anthony G., *Black Theology in Transatlantic Dialogue* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), pp.53-63 for a more in-depth assessment of the legacy of Robert Beckford.

Second, his post-graduate research, which arose from his grassroots engagement with 'Claiming The Inheritance' was one of the first such academic pieces of work, seeking to recognise and affirm the Black presence in White majority British churches.[17] This thesis was later 'converted' into a book.[18]

Third, and finally, I would like to mention briefly, Kenneth Leech. Kenneth Leech is an Anglican priest who has spent most of his working life in inner city contexts in London. In addition to being a pioneering youth worker, involved in a radical ministry amongst those suffering with drug addiction in the 1960s and early 70s, he has developed an ongoing ministry as one of the leading urban theologians in Britain.

Prior to his later development as an influential scholar, Leech worked as a field officer for 'The British Council of Churches'. His involvement with urban issues has found expression in his reflections upon the corrosive role of racism in the life experiences of Black and White people with reference to the body politic of White majority churches and the British state. Among his most important books are *Struggle in Babylon*[19] and *The Sky Is Red*.[20]

The role of Black Christian education for encountering self and the 'other'

I write as a Black theologian and educator based within a theological institution whose primary activity is training men and women for ordained, authorised ministry in one of our three[21] sponsoring institu-

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[17] See Wilkinson, John L., *Church in Black and White : the Black Christian Tradition in "Mainstream" Churches*. (Unpublished M.Litt, The University of Birmingham, 1990).

[18] See Wilkinson, John L., *Church in Black and White: The Black Christian Tradition in "Mainstream" Churches in England: A White Response and Testimony* (Edinburgh: St. Andrews Press, 1993).

[19] Leech, Kenneth, *Struggle in Babylon* (London: Sheldon press, 1988).

[20] Leech, Kenneth, *The Sky Is Red: Discerning The Sign of The Times* (London: DLT, 1997).

[21] The three sponsoring institutions are Anglican (The Church of England), Methodist and United Reformed.

tions. It is important that I declare this fact for it shapes my subsequent understanding of the role of religious education, within a confessional context of Christian faith and practice. The bulk of my research and published work to date has been concerned with combining the insights of Black Liberation theology with the pedagogical concerns of Christian religious education. I have described the fruits of this nexus as 'Black Christian Education'. Black Christian education is the practical, educational outworking of Black Liberation theology, and seeks to distil the central ideas of this liberative movement into teaching and learning strategies for the emancipation of all Black people. Black Christian education arises from the development of Black theology. Black in this context does not refer simply to the racial origins or skin colour of particular peoples, but rather, it denotes in symbolic terms, the sense of solidarity and connectedness between oppressed peoples in the world.

Many Black theologians have asserted that Jesus is Black. This statement should not be taken, necessarily, to mean that Jesus is literally Black. What writers such as James Cone,[22] Jacquelyn Grant[23] and Robert Beckford[24] are stating is that God's preferential option is for the empowerment and affirmation of oppressed peoples, the majority of whom are Black. If Black people were enslaved and continue to be oppressed solely on the grounds of the colour of their skin (the mythical 'Curse of Ham'—Gen. 9:18-28—was used to justify to enslavement of Black people), then God in Christ took the form of these exploited people in order to show God's total identification with their plight.

Black religious education as encounter is predicated on the notion of Christian believers engaging in what I call 'perfomative action'. Performative action requires that we creatively engage with the 'other' in a specified space in which the rules of engagement are con-

[22] See Cone, James H., *God Of The Oppressed* (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1975)

[23] See Grant, Jacquelyn, *White Women's Christ and Black Women's Jesus* (Atlanta: Scholar's Press, 1989)

[24] See Beckford, Robert, *Dread and Pentecostal* (London: SPCK, 2000)

[25] See Irizarry, Jose 'The Religious Educator as Cultural Spec-Actor: Researching Self in Intercultural Pedagogy'. *Religious Education* [The Vocation of the Religious Educator] (Vol.98, No.3, Summer 2003). pp.365-381. See also Apt, Clark C.,

stantly being defined and re-defined.[25]

In order to provide an embodied reality for the practice of performative action, I have created an experiential exercise in which adult participants can explore the dynamics of encounter within a safe learning environment. The thrust for this work has emerged from a previous piece of research.[26]

This process of perfomative action operates within a mythical space in which religious participants are invited to imagine themselves sitting on a bus. The accompanying exercise, which is entitled 'Get on the Bus',[27] invites participants to decide where they are going to sit on a mythical bus journey. The bus journey represents the collective journey of the Christian Church towards the 'promised land' of racial justice. This is a mythical place, which Martin Luther King once described as the 'Beloved Community'.[28]

The journey towards the beloved community is one in which the process is as important as the destination that is reached. By this I mean, the challenge to engage with one another across our tangled and complicated lines of ethnic and racial differences is one that is essential if the arrival at the destination is to make any kind of sense.

In the exercise, the different participants are challenged to determine their individual agency and positionality in this process. Where will they sit on the bus? Is it important that they sit near the front and direct the driver and as a corollary, dictate the route the bus should take? Traditionally, this has been the role paternalistic White people have played in their efforts to engage with Black people. Alternatively, are the Black people going to opt out of the journey, on the basis that they will refuse to engage with a White paternalist construct?

Serious Games (New York: Viking press, 1970).

[26] See Reddie, Anthony G., *Acting in Solidarity: Reflections in Critical Christianity* (London: DLT, 2005).

[27] The title is derived from a popular film by African American director Spike Lee entitled *Get on the Bus*. It uses the journey of a group of African American men travelling on a bus to hear Louis Farrakhan speak at the 'Million Man March' in Washington D.C., as a means of exploring notions of identity and positionality in Black life in the U.S. See *Get On the Bus* Directed by Spike Lee, (Forty Acres and A Mule Productions, 1996).

[28] See Baldwin, Lewis V., *Toward The Beloved Community* (Cleveland, Ohio: The Pilgrim Press, 1995).

Conversely, will they seek alternative ways of engaging that do not require them to collude?

This challenge, as is sometimes stated in Jamaican speak, to 'stay and burn and not cut and run', is one that poses hard questions for many Black theologians and religious educators such as myself. The development of the Black Church in the U.S. for example, as a repository and incubator for the creation and development of Black theology, came into being due to the decision of African Americans to leave the racialised ecclesial body of White America.[29]

Is that the best means of operating for Black people in Britain? It is worth noting that within the British context, racism and White hegemony have not led to complete separation. Rather difference and (in some cases) downright enmity has been contained by the use of parallel realties.[30] In effect, Black people and White people have separated into tribal territories, in which demographics and geography account for separation, but both remain housed within the one ecclesial body.

Despite the challenges of history and the nuances of differing contexts, the goal of existing and remaining within the same paradigm remains an important challenge for all Christian communities. This exercise highlights the very real challenges that are in evidence when one attempts to exist within a shared context, where all, if only notionally, are engaged in a shared and similar task.

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[29] See Pinn, Anne H., and Pinn, Anthony B., *(Fortress Introduction to) Black Church History* (Minneapolis: Fortress press, 2002).

[30] Black Methodists, Anglicans and those in the Baptist and Reformed traditions in the U.K. have not left to form separate churches, but have attempted to create their own self identified spaces within the corporate whole. A similar strategy has been used by Black members of White dominated churches in Southern Africa. In the British context see Walton, Heather, *A Tree God Planted: Black People in British Methodism*. (London: Ethnic Minorities In Methodism Working Group, The Methodist Church. 1984) and Wilkinson, John L., *Church in Black and White: The Black Christian Tradition in "Mainstream" Churches in England: A White Response and Testimony* (Edinburgh: St. Andrews Press, 1993). In terms of the latter see Knighton-Fitt, Jean, *Beyond Fear* (Cape Town: Pretext Publishers, 2003).

Black Christian education for racial and ethnic reconciliation

The work of Black theologians may prove helpful, I believe, in enabling us to find a way of 'being one' which takes us beyond the unhelpful binaries of 'race', ethnicity and difference. This approach is not one that borrows the old colour blind adage of steadfastly refusing to see 'race' and difference,[31] nor does it essentialise these notions into unhelpful and restrictive boundaries and borders.[32]

This form of Black Christian education is based upon a liberative Black theological ethic that calls upon White people to look critically at their Whiteness and to reflect upon the ways in which White supremacist thought and action has exerted a profound and corrosive influence upon the Christian faith. The historical thought forms that have arisen from White normativity have not only advantaged White people, but also exerted unimagined pressures and negative traits upon Black people.[33] The privileges of Whiteness are called into question, both within the interpretation of the Christian faith[34] and also in terms of the correlation between Christianity and socio-political analysis.

This form of Black Christian education also challenges Black people in their positionality and critical consciousness. Through engaging in the exercise, Black participants are challenged to reflect upon the extent to which they have engaged in essentialised discourses around issues or race. To what extent have they become hostages to the restricted notions of forced identity and homogeneity as much as the White people they often charge with forcing such dictates upon themselves?[35]

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[31] See Reddie, Anthony G., *Acting in Solidarity: Reflections in Critical Christianity* (London: DLT, 2005), pp.98-108.

[32] See Anderson, Victor, *Beyond Ontological Blackness* (New York: Continuum, 1995).

[33] See Byron, Gay L., *Symbolic Blackness and Ethnic Difference in Early Christian Literature* (New York: Routledge, 2002).

[34] Hood, Robert E., *Must God Remain Greek?: Afro-Cultures and God-Talk* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990).

[35] See Anderson, Victor, *Beyond Ontological Blackness* (New York: Continuum, 1995), pp.86-93.

This prophetic Black theological approach to Christian education is one that takes seriously the multi-dimensional analysis of post colonial Biblical studies. Writers such as Sugirtharajah and his seminal text *Voices from the Margin: Interpreting the Bible in the Third World*,[36] plus the likes of Musa Dube[37] and Justin Ukpong, et al[38] have much to teach us about a critical re-reading of the Bible in which the perspectives of the silent majority of the Earth are heard, with their viewpoints becoming the focal point for a shared learning and empowerment of all people.

This is a process of Christian religious education that looks at the Bible through the eyes of the poor and the marginalised, in a manner which extends beyond the parameters of simply 'race' and racism. This will enable us to learn radically new insights about what it means to be a Church and to be the people of God, instituted by the spirit, in order to bear witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ. A radical re-reading will enable us to see Paul's injunction in Galatians 3:28 no longer as a proof text to justify a homogenised notion of sameness—in effect a colour blind theology that has captured many Black evangelicals; but rather, it becomes a radical ideal in which distinctions between 'in groups' and 'out groups' are obliterated. A new reading moves us into a model that affirms difference, but outlaws preferential treatment based on ideas of election and pre-ordained acceptance for some and the exclusion of others, on grounds of 'race,' gender or sexuality.[39]

The challenges proposed by this Black Christian education are ones that confront all participants, whether they exert power or not. This approach is one that asks all participants to re-read their own experiences and positionality within an imaginary exercise, in which questions of power, difference and notions of being religiously inspired communities are constantly challenged.

This proposal forces us all to re-frame what it means to be Black

[36] Sugirtharajah, R.S., (ed.) *Voices from the Margin: Interpreting the Bible in the Third World* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991).

[37] See Dube, Musa W., *Postcolonial Feminist Interpretation of the Bible* (St. Louis: Chalice press, 2000).

[38] Ukpong, Justin et al., *Reading The Bible in The Global Village: Cape Town* (Atlanta: Society for Biblical Literature, 2002).

[39] See Williams, Demetrius K., *An End to This Strife: The Politics of Gender in African American Churches* (Minneapolis: Fortress press, 2004).

and largely disparaged or White and commonly with power. And yet the challenges of this proposal go beyond the endemic fault-lines of race between Black and White within the body politic of Christianity. Perhaps the bigger challenge that faces us as we step, tentatively, into the 21st century is the challenge between the East and the West; between so-called Christian liberal democratic traditions and Islamic theocracy.[40]

Perhaps this radical model of Black Christian education can become a transformative paradigm for an inter-religious process of encountering the self and the other, not only across race or ethnic lines, but also across religions too? What would it mean to be passengers on a bus in which the participants in the mythical exercise were Islamic as well as Christian? What would it mean to be participants and passengers where Dalits sat alongside Brahmins?

Black Christian education as inter-ethnic and anti-racist discourse is a process of encountering self and the 'other'. It is one that challenges in groups and the construction of the demonised 'other'; the latter often perceived as the necessary scapegoat for the expiation of violence in order that the dis-ease of the seemingly homogenous society might be assuaged.[41] This model attempts to create a process that may finally overturn what Du Bois saw as the fault line through the 20th century.[42] Du Bois felt that 'race was the endemic problem of the last century'. Well, the 20th century came and went and race and racism remained no less potent in the new century than it did in the old, if the murder of Anthony Walker, a Black teenager in Liverpool, is anything to go by. Perhaps a Black Christian education for encountering self and the other, in which is located an experiential exercise that attempts to embody this pedagogical approach, is one that may help to finally lay to rest the haunting truth of Du Bois' prescient thoughts in 1903.

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[40] See Parekh, Bhikhu, *Rethinking Multiculturalism: Cultural Diversity and Political Theory* (Basingstoke: MacMillan Press, 2000).

[41] See Girard, Rene, *The Scapegoat*,Trans. Freccero, Yvonne, (London: Athlone, 1986). See also Girard, Rene, *Violence and the Sacred*, Trans. Gregory, Patrick, (London: Athlone, 1988).

[42] Dubois, W.E.B., *The Souls of Black Folk* (New York: Bantam books, 1989), p.3.

Making it Safe to Think Differently about Sex in the Academy

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Introduction

How do we create a space in the Academy in which it is safe for our students to think differently about issues of gender and sexuality that are foundational to their existence in the world? Culture, Gender and Sexuality is an interdisciplinary module open to second and third year undergraduates at the Westminster Institute of Education at Oxford Brookes University. The Institute takes as its remit

the promotion of study in the area of human development and learning, and is keen to promote interdisciplinary work. The explicit remit of the Culture, Gender and Sexuality module is 'to *critique traditional and static understandings* of gender and sexuality, drawing on a diversity of disciplines, including those of gender studies, critical theory, queer theory, feminist theology and feminist criticism' (emphasis mine). It was developed to be taught in the fields of theology and religious studies which, from 2006, will be amalgamated under the title Religion, Culture and Ethics, but given its inter-disciplinary nature it was made acceptable to students in the field of communication, media and culture—many of whom (as evidenced by choice of assignment topics in other modules) have an interest in the subject area. The module sets out to destabilise notions of biological sex, 'trouble' gender (Butler: 1990) and open up debate around sexualities. In doing so the module (which runs for 12 weeks) seeks to challenge some of the most fundamental assumptions that govern our identities.

It was intended that while students would find the subject matter interesting and relevant they would also find it challenging at both an intellectual and ethical level. It was thought that the subject matter for the module—which includes discussion of what Plante (2006) has recently referred to as the 'alphabet soup' of sexualities (including, but not limited to, lesbian, gay, trans, queer, questioning, and sado-masochistic)—had built into it some controversial topics. So it was deemed important to create a safe space in which students could discuss and debate the issues raised and share openly their point of view. After all, dialogue is seen as central to all forms of liberatory, critical and feminist pedagogies—and dialogue cannot take place if students feel unable to speak.

The focus of this article will be the way in which the module was presented to students in the classroom in order to generate a sense of (at least temporary) safety, and to encourage open debate and honest discussion. It will address the information students were given in the module handbook to prepare them (both intellectually and ethically) for engagement with the module content. It will also cover their involvement in setting the criteria for the success of the module and the formulation of ground rules for student participation, these being designed to give the students a sense of ownership of the course and responsibility for their own learning. The intention in doing this was to

foreground the teaching/learning relationship as one of (albeit unequal) partnership rather than transmission. Finally the article reflects on the effectiveness of these elements over the course of the module, and concludes with some thoughts on what might be done differently in future.

Locating the issue

My sense that the subject matter in this module would be controversial, and that the classroom would not always feel a safe space, came from my experience as both student and teacher. In 1999 I returned to higher education after many years spent as a career civil servant where I had developed a particular interest and expertise in issues of equality and diversity. I embarked on a postgraduate course on gender and sexuality. My cohort comprised mainly mature students with a high degree of intrinsic motivation. However I was surprised by the extent to which such motivation did not go hand-in-hand with intellectual curiosity and a willingness to be open to new ideas. It became clear early on that many of those enrolled on the course were seeking answers, or definitive guidance. Indeed, many students thought that questions of gender and sexuality (particularly gender) were 'common sense', so while they were prepared to undertake a certain amount of reading this was often confined to texts that offered academic support to what they already 'knew'.

In addition, homophobia and transphobia were sometimes evident in the classroom. A small (but frequently vocal) minority of students were quite open in expressing such views (see Eyre (1993) for a fuller account of a similar situation). Finally, and no doubt linked to the above, non-heterosexual students were not always comfortable in using their personal experience as a site from which to speak, even though the issue of partial and situated knowledges was foregrounded in the core module of the programme. As a student I was very conscious that one student never spoke of their personal experience as a transperson—even in classes that focussed on trans issues. Indeed that individual was not 'out' to the course and shared with me that they would not have felt comfortable acknowledging their status openly.

My experiences were similar when I began to teach gender and sexuality, and the evidence indicates that my experiences are not

unique. Reflecting on her experiences of teaching a course on Introduction to Gender History in the urban environment of Detroit, Elaine Carey has noted, 'everyone constantly engages in some form of gender analysis and criticism whether in their homes, at school, or standing in a check-out line skimming the fashion and gossip magazines' (2003:4). Carey's comment supports my observation that all students will approach a course on gender and sexuality with some sense that they are already familiar with the subject matter. It is, after all, impossible to go about one's everyday life without some sense of one's gender embodiment—Julia Collar notes 'students are gendered bodies, replete with hormones, and are consequently sexual, and in some cases highly sexualised, individuals' (2000:165). Society is so rigidly constructed on the basis of the male/female binary (perhaps one of the last grand narratives left in the post-modernist world?) that being either male or female is critical to the subject's interpellation. The first question we ask of a new baby is 'is it a boy or a girl?' And while Judith Butler has done more than most to question the foundational nature of this identification, even she does not suggest that an individual's gender identity can be changed at will (1993: x).

So while all students will approach issues of gender and sexuality with a sense of pre-existing knowledge '[t]ypically we are not talking about a sophisticated understanding of the contingent and constructed nature of these identities, but one based on stereotypes and media omniscience in television, film and music culture' (De Soto, 2005:212). Aureliano Maria DeSoto is writing as an openly gay and Latino professor who, in the spring of 2003, taught a course on lesbian and gay social formation from World War II to the present. Reflecting on his experiences of this course, DeSoto notes that his students' expectations were 'not based on a quest for knowledge but, rather, in the pursuit of a reassertion of what is already known' (p. 214), and that the views they held were often both sexist and racist. De Soto's experiences as a teacher reflect my own experience as a postgraduate student and, subsequently, lecturer.

Carey and DeSoto had, as an explicit part of their agenda, a desire to have students critically analyse questions of gender (Carey, 2003: 4), challenge previous knowledge systems (DeSoto, 2005: 216), and in doing so to model new ways of looking. This parallels the agenda for my module which—as noted above—was developed with

the specific remit that it should 'critique traditional and static under-standings of gender and sexuality'. Carey acknowledges that this is a great demand to make of second and third year students (2003:4), although neither she nor DeSoto engage specifically with the fact that their demands are not just intellectual but are also ethical, and cannot be addressed successfully unless students are able to negotiate them through higher order thinking skills.

While neither Carey nor DeSoto mention the formation of ground rules as a way of negotiating the challenging subject matter they sought to tackle, both reflect on insights offered by their courses—and these have influenced my approach. Operating in the economically and eth-nically diverse environment of Detroit, Carey notes that, influenced by the ideas of Paulo Freire, she sought to embrace the knowledge that her students brought to the classroom, inviting them to decide what intrigued them about gender (2003:4). Carey sought to empower students in the construction of the classes, which enabled them (if they wanted) to lead the discussion into areas such as gay studies, the history of contraception and the role of women in the church—all sen-sitive topics at the Catholic university in which the course was being run (p. 5). She notes that, at times, the topics were uncomfortable for some students, but concludes that providing a safe space where students could talk to one another about controversial subjects and ideas (while drawing on their own knowledge) led to some highly sophisticated analysis of gender-related issues (p.7).

Carey does not discuss how she created this 'safe space', nor how she tackled questions of racism and sexism amongst the student body—assuming that such issues arose. Moreover, in Carey's case, she does not reflect on the challenges of asking students to speak from the position as 'informed experts' based on their embodiment. Given that the subject matter of her course was Gender History, with a focus on gender and race, this may not have been a problem as both gender and race are inscribed on the body. This is not true of sexuality. As noted above, DeSoto acknowledges his position as an openly gay professor. He also notes the burden that this brings—indeed the special burden that all those who teach in race and sexuality must confront—in that the tutor's presence as a raced and gendered body inevitably bears inordi-nate weight in student learning (2005:219). Drawing on the work of Joseph Litvak, DeSoto notes the way in which students often prefer to

view their professor as a representation and not an individual. Thus, in the queer classroom, the professor—if they acknowledge their own embodiment as queer—can come to stand in for queer as a whole. De Soto quotes Litvak's observation that:

> the students, especially the self-identified queer or bisexual students, seemed precisely to regard as invasive any attempt not to grant them the heterosexual privilege of spectatorial distance, and to resent any invitation to explore their encrypted desires and identifications. (Litvak in DeSoto, 2005: 213).

This observation calls into question the belief that it is easy to treat students as 'informed experts' and ask them to contribute to class on the basis of their embodiment—particularly if their status as 'informed expert' is based on the non-visible, i.e. on their sexuality rather than their gender or race. Moreover, both Litvak and DeSoto are writing from the perspective of professors who openly acknowledge their queer positionality. How much harder might it be to ask students to speak from their experiences as members of a marginalised group when the tutor is both white and heterosexual (as I am)—albeit one following in the steps of Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (1994) and Calvin Thomas (2000), neither of whom view queer as synonymous with gay/lesbian identity. Rather I adopt David Halperin's position, viewing queer as:

> … by definition whatever is at odds with the normal, the legitimate, the dominant. There is nothing in particular to which it necessarily refers. It is an identity without an essence (1995:62).

On the positive side, such a position does enable me to foreground my own heterosexual privilege in a way intended to alert the students to their own (often unacknowledged) forms of privilege. It may also confer advantage in that students engage with the material I present without assuming that I am putting forward a particular political agenda. Yet I do have a significant political commitment to the issues raised by this module, and do not seek to hide my agenda of promoting openness and tolerance of difference, highlighting the often life-threatening consequences faced by many of those whose identity fails to conform to cultural expectations. Indeed, at the end of one class a student asked me how it felt to have the power to change lives. Hence

while I do not profess a lesbian identity I do openly question my identity as 'female', and make no attempt to present a disembodied pedagogy.

So how I choose to present myself is an important issue. After all, most students will approach a course that seeks to critique traditional and static understandings of gender and sexuality from a hegemonic perspective gained from parental, peer and media socialisation. And those who fail to conform to the norms of a society in which heterosexuality is so ubiquitous that it goes unnamed as such, but is simply seen as 'normal', are unlikely to feel comfortable in asserting their status as 'informed experts' unless an explicitly safe space from which they may speak is created and they are able to anticipate a positive reception. But it also needs to be noted that simply presenting alternatives to traditional understanding will not necessarily lead to acceptance (and even acceptance may be more than can be achieved over a 12-week period). Writing on teaching *Boys Don't Cry* (Kimberly Peirce: 1999), a film that set out to offer a sympathetic representation of transperson Brandon Teena (who was raped and subsequently murdered when his 'true' sex was discovered—highlighting the dangers consequent upon non-conformity), Alexandra Barron notes the range of reactions students had to the film ranging from comments that Brandon was sick and diseased to identifying with Brandon and his pain (2003: 43). And Davis (2000: 347) has noted that 'consciousness is not easily transformed even when 'truth' is revealed' and 'that there always exist emotional repressions, denials, and silences which resist rational self-control'.

Speaking at a panel on queer pedagogies at the *Queer Matters* conference held at King's College London at the end of May 2004, DeSoto reflected that attempts to instil critical thinking in students who have an investment in narrative stability can generate resentment. Some students will be unable to make the journey, and that becomes one of the risks of the job. At this point it is also worth recalling that many of the students embarking on the Culture, Gender and Sexuality module will come from the fields of theology and religious studies. While this does not, *de facto*, make them religious, it is worth recalling Collar's observation that subscribing to a religion 'also necessarily entails subscribing to a code of morality and ethics that govern the interaction of the body with society' (2000: 165) and that this may

conflict with some, if not all, of the secularised thinking that forms the basis of the course content (it should also be acknowledged that many of the students taking the module who were not actually studying theology and/or religion may also have held quite strong views based on their faith).

At the *Queer Matters* panel, seeking to offer practical advice to fellow academics teaching a queer curriculum, DeSoto suggested a student 'survey' at the beginning of the course to tease out expectations and fears. He also noted the importance of being willing to sacrifice content for process, and the importance of dealing with student needs rather than be guided by the need to work through the questions that, as tutor, you may want to address. As Kalwant Bhopal has noted (echoing the views of Elaine Carey discussed above) 'giving students *the space to discuss* sensitive issues is the most effective role the lecturer can take' (2002: 114, emphasis in original). This advice chimes with encouraging a deep approach to learning where students attempt to relate concepts to existing experience, critically evaluating and determining key themes and concepts (Fry, Ketteridge and Marshall, 2003: 18). This, in turn, should lead to high levels of understanding with at least some students achieving what Fry *et al* have described as 'extended abstract' understanding where:

> A coherent whole is conceptualised at a high level of abstraction and is applied to new and broader contexts. It is a level of under-standing in which a breakthrough has been made and it changes the way of thinking about issues. (p. 20).

What becomes clear from the above is that any course that seeks to challenge students at the core of their being—their normative gender identity—and to destabilise notions of biological sex, gender and sex-uality, is, if students engage deeply with the material, likely to lead to what Warren has described as 'hot moments' in the classroom. These are moments 'when people's feelings—often conflictual—rise to a point that threatens teaching and learning' (n.d. p. 1 of 4). Recognising the inevitability of such points the purpose in agreeing ground rules at the outset of the course is designed (a) to minimise such moments of tension and (b) to have an agreed strategy for dealing with such moments when they occur.

U74124: Culture, Gender and Sexuality

Considering it to be important to set the tone from the outset, the module booklet provided a high degree of detail with regard to the course content. The strength of this was that it enabled students to see from the outset how the module fitted together and to have a clear idea of the route to be followed. One potential weakness was that it limited the scope for responding to specific student interests (see Carey 2003). However, feedback from other modules I have taught has indicated that students feel most comfortable when they can see the structure of the course they are taking. Given that some of the sessions may raise issues that students feel challenged by, the security of a clear and comprehensive handbook was intended to help allay anxiety by reassuring students that the tutor was in control of events. It also allowed me to provide detailed guidance on reading for each session that students could use to prepare in advance or follow up after the class. In addition it gave me a space to include web addresses for sites that I thought might be useful (such as that for the advocacy group the Intersex Society of North America) so that students had somewhere to go for more information should any of the classes have a particular resonance for them. Moreover, when I discussed with students their hopes for the module, and asked them to identify the factors that would make the module a success, both groups claimed to want a logical progression through the topics and to have a sense of structure, in respect of the whole module and individual classes. There was a particular fear that the interdisciplinary nature of the module would mean that it lacked coherence, that classes would not relate to one another and that, as students, they would lack any sense of progression.

From the outset the handbook was designed to lay the foundation for the establishment of ground rules. The first page offered an introduction which recognised that students would be approaching the module with a sense of familiarity with the subject matter, but asking them to be open to new approaches and new arguments. It stated, explicitly, that the willingness to be prepared to question received wisdom—to 'think differently'—would be a key element of the module and quoted Foucault:

> There are times in life when the question of knowing if one can think differently than one thinks, and perceive differently than one sees, is absolutely necessary if one is to go on looking and reflecting at all. … [W]hat is philosophy today … if it is not the critical work that thought brings to bear on itself? In what does it consist, if not in the endeavour to know how and to what extent it might be possible to think differently, instead of legitimating what is already known? (Foucault, 1992: 8-9)

With specific regard to the question of ground rules, page one of the booklet stated that 'one of the things we will do in our first week is to agree, as a group, ground rules for contributing to the course and for in-class behaviour'. This is reinforced in the outline of the Week One class which states 'we will spend some time agreeing rules for in-class behaviour to ensure that all students feel able to contribute to the discussion in a space that is safe, and tolerant of a wide range of experience and opinion'. Following the advice of Warren, this approach allowed discussion norms to be established early in the course (n.d. page 2 of 4) and was intended to enable agreement to be reached on the importance of encouraging open discussion of difficult material.

DeSoto's suggestions regarding the need to tease out student expectations and fears and the importance of being willing to sacrifice content for process were addressed explicitly. Students were asked to work in groups (opening up small-scale discussions) to share their hopes and fears for the module, which were then shared by the class as a whole, in terms of what would make the module successful for all concerned and what might spoil it. These were recorded on flip-charts and were turned into a handout distributed to all students in Week Two, and reviewed both mid-semester (as a lead-in to a mini-evaluation) and at the end of the module. In the light of the avowed aims of the module the success criteria that the students came up with were encouraging. The number of students who enrolled on the module (62) meant that they were taught in two groups (a morning and afternoon session on the same day).

Both groups indicated that they were keen to achieve deep, rather than surface, learning (and they formulated it using these terms), wanted to be challenged with new ideas, and to understand the viewpoint of others. One group spent quite a lot of time discussing the importance of learning something about themselves, having an

increased awareness of 'difference' and understanding how stereotypes came about. Both groups were also keen to avoid having people be afraid to speak out and having people judged for their ideas. What they wanted to avoid was intolerance, narrow-mindedness, being afraid to express an opinion and not being given the time to explore the topics in sufficient depth. One group raised the issue of being subjected to verbal and/or physical violence.

Having agreed what would make the module a success and what would spoil it, the students were then invited to formulate some 'rules' that would maximise chances of success and minimize the possibility of failure. The ground rules common to both classes were:

• We will encourage everyone to contribute to class.
• We will not judge people on the basis of their ideas.
• We will respect all contributions.
• We will critique ideas but never people.
• We will try and be open to the ideas and points of view of other people.

In addition to formulating 'rules' designed to create a safe space from which to explore a range of potentially challenging theories and ideas, the first class sought to introduce students to standpoint theory and issues of embodied epistemology. This encouraged students to address the relationship between our classed, raced and gendered bodies and the way in which we understand the world, and to instil a sense that different individuals will see the world differently depending on whether they are male/female, straight/gay, white/black (to formulate this in shorthand binary terms to which I am opposed). More abstractly the input was designed to lead in to an agreement that 'all students seek to understand each other's perspectives, as a prerequisite to understanding the subject at all' (Warren, n.d. page 2 of 4). So students were asked from the outset to be open to the voice of others and to recognise not only their right to speak and be heard, but also to be conscious of their own privilege when listening.

Having formulated some basic ground rules the intention was that these rules would be foregrounded in each class. However, as it turned out there was very little controversy in the first few weeks and it felt false to keep revisiting the 'rules' when there were no issues.

Indeed, it seemed to me this would be counter-productive and might lead students to be less accepting of new ideas if they thought they were expected to find them problematic and controversial. The issues we tackled in these weeks included the work of Anne Fausto-Sterling (2000) on multiple sexes, questions around intersex, and a range of trans issues (transsexuality, transgender, transvestism). The thinking tools provided in Gayle Rubin's now-classic article 'Thinking Sex' (1992) were used to explore issues around a range of sexualities. In order to provide material for discussion I drew not only on a set of key readings but also on a range of visual texts and testimonies—both documentary and fictional.

My experience followed that reflected in the review of the literature. That is, while students were willing to contribute to discussion, very few did this from the perspective of 'informed experts' drawing on their own embodiment. Where this did happen—particularly in the first class, in which we discussed the meaning of embodied epistemology—was in respect of race. A small number of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) students were politely dismissive of those White students who claimed to understand the nature of race discrimination (the class dealt explicitly with the issue of White as a colour in order that later in the module we could discuss heterosexuality as one of a range of sexualities rather than as a default position). Fortunately by this point in our (first) class we had come up with the basis of our ground rules, which certainly made the situation easier to handle by reminding students to challenge the idea and not the person.

However, on reflection, introducing questions of race at this point in the module was probably not helpful for two reasons. First, it deflected attention from the issues of gender and sexuality that were intended as the focus of the module. More importantly, while race has some parallels with gender as an identity worn on the body, it differs from sexuality in that sexual identities can be kept hidden (albeit at often considerable personal cost). With this in mind one thing I will do differently next time the module runs is to attempt to tackle standpoint theory and related epistemological questions in the context of heterosexual privilege. One way of tackling this might be through use of selective questions from Martin Rochlin's now classic 'Heterosexuality Questionnaire'. This would require students to think about the types of questions that same-sex identified individuals are frequently faced with

—such as the 'cause' of their heterosexuality, or how they could be sure of being heterosexual if they had no experienced of a same-sex relationship. Another way would be to get students to identify all the things they take for granted, but which are conferred by heterosexual privilege—such as holding hands with their partners in the street without fear of incurring violence.

Moreover the fact that debate did become heated in our first week, even if this was managed successfully, may have made some students uncomfortable and closed down discussion in the weeks immediately following. I should, perhaps, have sought feedback on this at the mid-semester evaluation. As it was, this took the form of 'what should I do more/less of, what is about right?'. The vast majority of students (around 90%) indicated that they were very happy with the module as it was, and no one expressed any concern about lack of discussion or feeling unable to put forward their point of view. Other comments indicated that the students liked the personal testimonies (from documentaries) and wanted more of this. Finally there were a couple of requests that I organise a course outing to the Rocky Horror show, which was coming to Oxford for a week towards the end of the module (we had spent part of an earlier class discussing how to 'label' Dr. Frank-N-Furter).

Later in the module controversy arose in the classes related to multiculturalism and theology. In the multiculturalism class the most heated discussion arose in response to a short reading from Germaine Greer (1999: 120-123) in which she argues in favour of female circumcision (despite this being proscribed by the United Nations). This provoked a range of responses from students with a variety of backgrounds, including a young woman from one of the regions where infibulation is seen as a widespread practice, who discussed the very different views of herself and her cousins on this issue. It was, however, unusual to get this degree of personal testimony—and in most cases the testimony of those able to speak from an embodied perspective came from selective use of documentary footage.

There were, however, a number of advantages to the use of documentary and, sometimes, fictional footage. Linda Eyre (1993: 274) has written of the issues involved in exploiting friends as tokens of minority identity and has proposed (p. 281) that textbook (or visual text-based) analysis is less threatening for students than listening to the

live voices of those engaged in consciousness raising. Such analysis can be safer for all concerned. Yet there was an element of self-disclosure in the class. One very interesting aspect was that the module attracted a number of mature students who were parents—and many reflected on, or shared, their concerns about their children (for example one student who thought that her teenage daughter was a lesbian unwilling to 'come out' to her mother, and another who had a young son who liked wearing dresses). These topics were discussed at a general level in class, and were the subject of one-to-one discussions (initiated by the student) following the end of the session. This does indicate that in a module such as this, even if the tutor does not carry the weight of representation (see Litvak and DeSoto earlier in this article) they do carry the weight of 'expert' in a practical as well as intellectual sense. Dealing with such expectations is always challenging and so knowing how to access key resources (and providing such information in the module handbook and in class handouts) needs to be considered from the outset.

As mentioned, the other 'hot' class was on feminist theology. This was to be expected as a number of the students on the module were reading theology and I knew from conversations with colleagues than many of them held strong religious views. During this class it did become necessary to revisit, briefly, the ground rules and it was helpful to be able to separate the need to engage in conceptual thinking from the need to agree with everything being said. To give a specific example, one of the topics introduced during this class was Marcella Althaus-Reid's (2000, 2003, 2004) concept of indecent theology that considers how we might reflect on the Virgin Mary and Christology from sexual stories taken from fetishism, leather lifestyles and transvestism. While the students were able to accept the intellectual argument that the search for God should embrace the lives of those subject to social and sexual exclusion, there was little engagement with pursuing what this might mean in practice. In (large) part this may be because I do not have an advanced theological/religious education and make it clear to students at the start of the module that my speaking position is that of a secular gender/sexuality theorist. So not pursuing the implications of Althaus-Reid's theology may well reflect my concern not to misrepresent what I see as an important progressive theology, rather than my students' unwillingness to engage with it.

The following quotes are taken from student feedback provided as part of the end of semester evaluation. They indicate the extent to which the module was, overall, a huge success, and that the ground rules operated effectively. As can be seen, there were mixed views on the extent to which students felt able to contribute: two of the quotes (representative of a the overall tone of the feedback) indicate that the discussions were effective; one suggests otherwise (although this is the only negative comment on discussion from all the evaluations submitted). Nevertheless I take on board fully the desirability of getting more students to speak.

'Completely challenged and changed some ideas I had…make it compulsory!'

'[I was given] the opportunity to express an opinion and not be apprehensive about it.'

[I particularly liked] the wide variety of methods and opinions discussed.'

'I had great fun doing a module which at first I wasn't sure of. It felt very cutting edge.'

I think [this module is] a very useful one. People need to know!'

'[I particularly liked] the discussion we were able to have. …The communication between the lecturer and the students was fantastic.'

'This module has challenged my preconceptions and allowed me to examine ideas and topics I had not considered before. I have really enjoyed this module, it is one of the most valuable that I have done both educationally and personally.'

> '[I would like] more class discussion. Set up class in circle. Maybe have one class on getting to know one another so that it is a really comfortable place, then more people would talk.'

A colleague who teaches a module on Equality and Identity (that deals with issues of class, race and gender) told me that she gets her students to complete a 'personal history' sheet at the beginning of the module and to speak to this in the first class. While I see great value in this I am not convinced it is appropriate on a module that deals with sexuality—but I do intend to consider whether such an approach might be adopted in some form as a way of getting students to speak. However it should be noted that the field of theology at Brookes chooses not to operate in a confessional mode and students, while expected to be open minded, are not expected to share issues of personal faith. This suggests that the approach I took on this module fitted well with the expectations that students were deriving from elsewhere in their studies.

Thinking about the future

This module ran more smoothly and successfully than I anticipated. As can be seen from the student comments above, the participants on the module were introduced to a wide range of new ideas. Each week offered the opportunity to discuss the issues raised, and there was always spirited and lively discussion. Despite dealing with issues of embodied epistemology and the impossibility of not having a standpoint, for much of the time the students approached the topics from an 'anthropological' perspective—that is they functioned as informed and critical observers of the Other. Despite efforts to make the space as comfortable as possible no students chose to speak as 'informed experts' on any of the sexuality topics (although they were happy to do so in respect of gender), but in keeping with the non-confessional mode of the field this should not be seen as a failure. Rather it is important to recognise that, however safe the classroom environment, lesbian, gay, trans and queer students will continue to live in a world in which individuals with non-normative sexualities are discriminated against and often persecuted.

Writing in 1993, Linda Eyre noted (p. 275) that '[f]earing reprisals, many lesbian and gay students and teachers continue to hide their sexuality, often with disastrous personal consequences'. And while many may think of higher education as a liberal and tolerant space, a recent article in the *Times Higher Education Supplement* (Tysome, 2006: 56) based on research conducted by the AUT reported that in a survey of 800 staff at six universities carried out by Jeff Frank, professor of economics at Royal Holloway, only 46% of lesbian staff and one in six of his gay male respondents described themselves as 'out' at work, suggesting that even within the Academy space may not always be perceived as safe for those not identifying as heterosexual, and that harassment and bullying of such staff is rife.

On controversial (but less embodied) topics, such as multicultur-alism and the attitude of the Church to female sexuality, students were much more open in acknowledging their own point of view—while at the same time asking for input on alternatives approaches/opinions, which I was expected to provide. Steven Schadt (2000: 3/13) states that 'Recognizing that a truly value-free stance is an illusion, the instructor must take positions on issues without silencing other classroom voices'. More recently Judith Halberstam (2005: vii) has asked how we can combine an impassioned pedagogy with a principled commitment to abstract thinking. Teaching this module I was very aware of the extent to which my personal politics and commitment to a world more tolerant of queer identities pervaded the classroom and, because of the power relationship which must exist in the classroom, inevitably made it difficult for students who did not share my views on these issues to speak out.

On the basis of my experience with this module I am engaging with the following issues when considering what changes to make for next year:

- Considering a way of getting every student to speak in the first class. Personal histories may not be the way forward, but some equivalent approach should be considered.
- Being more explicit about the 'confessional'/'non-confessional' nature of the module. While making it clear that this is a space in which students should feel safe in speaking from the position of 'informed experts' be clearer about offering the opportunity

to assess the testimony of third parties. This means being diligent in obtaining more third party testimonies, particularly in the form of documentary footage where students can engage with the testimony of individuals with a degree of critical distance that would not be possible with live testimony.

• Cutting the content of some sessions to provide more space for discussion, i.e. be prepared to sacrifice content for process to an even greater extent.

• Developing strategies to deal with students' deep engagement with the module content while protecting my own space (see Davis, 2000: 351 on the importance of setting boundaries). As evidenced from the module feedback and a number of one-to-one discussions with students, this was a course in which they invested a great deal on a personal level. Students want, quite rightly, to be known as individuals. Yet it was difficult to manage this with over 60 students on the course and inevitably there were some students who remained (at least relatively) anonymous. Given that there are already more than 80 students registered for next year, finding a way to make sure all are engaged and supported will be a challenge.

This leads me to one final point. I mentioned earlier my own political commitment to the issues raised by this module, and I do need to be more aware of my own investment in the issues and consider how I might moderate my 'presence' in the classroom to allow for a more divergent range of engagement with the issues we discuss. But I need to do this without diluting my own passion and commitment to my subject, as this is one of the aspects of the course that seemed to be most highly valued by the students.

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Academic Capital, Postgraduate Research and British Universities:

a Bourdieu Inspired Reflection

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'And we must ask ourselves if the very plurality of hierarchies, and the coexistence of practically incommensurate forces, scientific prestige and university power, internal recognition and external renown, are not the effect of a sort of anti-trust law both written into the structures and at the same time tacitly recognised as protection against the consequences of a strict application of the norms officially professed.' [1]

Introduction

In *Homo Academicus*, Pierre Bourdieu's sociological critique of the French educational system, he states:

> Academic capital is obtained and maintained by holding a position enabling domination of other positions and their holders, such as all the institutions entrusted with controlling access to the [academic] corps.[2]

Over the past three decades, Bourdieu has emphasised that the best way to wield academic capital is to determine, or 'name', the factors that an educational system uses to barter successful careers. Once academic capital is gained, it can be cashed in when it comes time to find employment or to move to another post. Though the teaching staffs of most British universities have learned how to gain academic capital over time, most final-year doctoral students are not familiar with the concept—despite noble efforts made by the universities to institute postgraduate teacher-training programmes or to offer teaching fellowships. Like economic capital, there are 'trade secrets' that are used to acquire academic capital and many successful academics are not interested in passing on these insights because it weakens their ability to outperform competitors both inside and outside of their university. The end result is that many students do not understand how to acquire academic capital until it is too late and they are terminally unemployed. This essay, therefore, outlines how a student can acquire academic capital in time to 'spend' it in the job market. Although academic supervisors and staff comprise my primary audience, the following suggestions could also be used as an 'academic capital handbook' by a proactive postgraduate. In particular, I propose a way that doctoral students can transform their research interests into three types of academic capital: publications, teaching experience and a viable network of like-minded scholars. In short, I show how a student's research can translate into an academic job. I will emphasise that doctoral candidates

[1] Bourdieu, Pierre, *Homo Academicus*, Collier, Peter (trans.) (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988) p. 20.
[2] Ibid., p. 84. For a broader introduction to Bourdieu's notion of capital, see Chapter 4 in Jenkins, Richard, *Pierre Bourdieu* (London: Routledge, 1992).

need to start making themselves marketable as soon as possible. Indeed, in the current climate, young researchers should begin to prepare themselves for the job market as soon as they matriculate into a doctoral programme.

'Research' and the three types of academic capital

For British academics, the notion of 'research' is a familiar concept, especially since it is widely considered a key indicator of intellectual credibility.[3] For most first year doctoral students, however, 'research' is often a vaguely defined category. When they begin to write their doctoral theses, most instinctively associate this term with searching relevant databases, haunting the halls of the library and reading deep into the night. Although these pursuits are definitely part of 'research', there are other elements, especially concerning publication and teaching, which many students do not fully understand until they come to the end of their studies. Such a belated realisation usually places them one step behind candidates whose supervisors candidly disclose helpful advice on these topics that can be turned into academic capital. As the present job market for UK academics is quite competitive, students need to be told the criteria that will be used to assess their applications. In general, there are three types of academic capital that every doctoral student needs to gain if she wishes to become a lecturer or a postdoctoral fellow. These are (1) publications, (2) teaching and (3) networking. I will first define these categories and then I will explain how use them effectively in the job market in the next section.

Publications

As all full-time academics know, every UK department wants to hire a person who will help increase their score on the government's Kafkaesque Research and Assessment Exercise, or RAE for short. However, though staff members are familiar with the RAE, most post-graduates are not, and they need to be told explicitly that a department's

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[3] Or even intellectual celebrity. Ibid., pp. 237-239.

score in this exercise determines directly the amount of funding it will receive for the next few years; likewise, students need to be informed that each member of staff is required to have at least four quality publications, that is, articles that appear in journals with high circulations or in books published by international printing presses. Even though new academics are not required to have as many publications, the reality is that most successful lectureship candidates have a strong publication record. In truth, recently graduated doctoral students will compete against those who have good publications and who are willing to start being paid at the bottom of the pay scale. For this reason doctoral candidates must work very hard to have as many quality publications as possible before they receive their degree. By 'quality' I mean a publication which either augments or challenges the works of what Bourdieu has called the 'hit parade' of intellectuals who are considered authoritative in any given field.[4] Even though, at the time of writing, the RAE is under review, it seems likely that the pressure on applicants to have a strong publications record will only increase under any future system, and post-graduates need to understand how this affects their chances of getting a job.

Teaching

At the most obvious level, 'teaching' includes one's experience with tutoring or lecturing. How a future employer (a university department) judges a potential candidate's teaching abilities, however, is often not fully understood by doctoral students who are entering the market. In general, most postgraduates will agree that one way to measure one's ability in this area is to obtain a shining reference from a supervisor or to perhaps to include positive student responses from departmental questionnaires. I even know some applicants who have included student 'testimonials' with their application packet. What some postgraduates do not realise, however, is that tutoring and lecturing are not the only part of one's 'teaching experience'. Indeed, it even could be said that, in the current British climate, the notion of teaching is merely window dressing, as it cannot be translated into an indicator that significantly enhances a department's RAE score. Departments need to

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[4] Or even intellectual celebrity. Ibid., pp. 237-239.

inform their postgraduate students, therefore, that 'teaching' also includes managing modules, maintaining webpages, designing a module's curriculum and participating in administrational tasks that foster an encouraging learning environment within the department. The web, in particular, is becoming a flashpoint these days because of the increasing sophistication offered by internet-based software that allows a lecturer to interact with students in innovative ways. Doctoral students need to be made aware of these factors at the start of their degree, but they also should be encouraged to find a way to integrate the research engendered by their theses into the lectures or tutorials that they lead. This type of integration is a strong selling point that many postgraduates fail to consider (which inevitably works against them on their applications). In Britain, the reality is that teaching is directly relevant to research, as I will address below.

Networking

I realise that this term is very American. However, as Bourdieu and other sociologists have shown, academics work within social communities and doctoral candidates need to know that a 'network' is the sum total of all their contacts in academia—particularly academics who know about their area of expertise.[5] At the top of such a postgraduate network needs to be a senior academic, a patron so to speak, who is interested in the student's work and her potential to be a scholar. This person should be the supervisor, but I realise that we don't live in a perfect world and so some students may also wish to use another person in their department. In my interaction with postgraduates around the country, I have found that many of them have not been shown how to intelligently introduce themselves to other senior academics. Showing students how to interact with people at conferences, on internet listservs and at other academic activities is crucial and must occur early so that they can create a research-orientated network that will also help them get a job. Additionally, such a network will help them obtain clearer feedback when a potential post is advertised on a
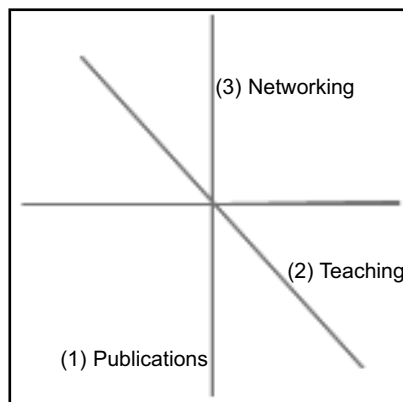
[5] Bourdieu addresses this issue throughout *Homo Academicus*. These networks are both internal to discipline and to the university, and external to the university and to the field. See Chapter 4, 'The Defense of the Corps'.

listserv. Knowing somebody in Leeds, for instance, comes in quite handy if Leeds decides to advertise a post.

The reason I have flagged publications, teaching and networking is because the most successful postgraduate students that I know are those who decided in advance to accumulate academic capital in these three areas. More specifically, it is quite helpful for students to ask themselves how their doctoral research is relevant to their potential publications, to modules being taught in UK departments and to existing academic networks that organise conferences, give fellowships and award prestige.

The Academic Capital Graph

Over the past few years I have spoken to a number of postgraduates and postdoctoral fellows about the job market. One of the things that I find myself re-emphasising is that departments look for candidates that are able to integrate their published research with their teaching and with current trends in the discipline. Granted, this sort of balance is hard to achieve. But it must be done. One way that a doctoral student can translate her research into academic capital is to make a graph based upon the three aforementioned categories that create academic capital: publications (or intended publications), teaching and networking. Based on this information, students can develop the Academic Capital Graph (ACG). I first created this heuristic tool as a postgraduate. Over the years I have given it to my own students and many of them have found it quite useful. It is usually drawn in the following manner:

(3) Networking

(2) Teaching

(1) Publications

Bearing in mind the Bourdieuesque reflections made in the above sections, I will now turn to a more practical issue, that is, I will explain each line of the graph in detail and how it is relevant to improving a student's employment (and research) prospects.

Line 1: publications

I often tell my students that this aspect of the graph should be drawn from topics that they find personally interesting. I encourage them to ask themselves a few questions. The first question is: 'What is it, in one phrase, that describes what I'm researching?' Let's say for the sake of argument that it is 'the philosophy of John Locke'. Next comes the second question: 'What is the most original aspect of my research?' Again, this is sometimes hard to determine, especially for students. A good way to help them along with this question is to suggest that, in addition to approaching their supervisor(s), they could ask staff members in their own department. Another way is to keep close track of how people at workshops or conferences respond positively to their ideas—the pulse of academic capital, so to speak. I usually underscore the fact that it is often easier for others to notice a sliver of originality than it is for the person who is reading the paper. But I also caution students to be vigilant in answering these questions because they may sometimes find that they are being 'original' on a topic that they may not find interesting enough to develop in their theses. In any case, let us assume that a doctoral candidate used the above questions to refine her research interests from 'the philosophy of John Locke' to 'John Locke's Implicit Acceptance of Innatism'. This, in other words, would be a concise summary of her (intended) publication area. She could then write the topic on Line 1 of her ACG.

Line 2: teaching

Here I encourage students to be aware that most departments like to hire people who can use their research in their teaching. This can occur via the applicant's familiarity with the canonical authors of the discipline[6] or if a candidate's immediate research interests can be shown to

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[6] Here I am referring specifically to the 'canonical master of the canonical disci-

be relevant to at least one module in the department's core curriculum. For instance, the above student writing about Locke's innatism needs to be shown that her research interest is relevant to the introductory epistemology modules taught in most philosophy departments. However, in order to be an attractive candidate for a lectureship, she additionally would have to expand her teaching experience into other related modules. Since most doctoral students' research interests are usually focused on a narrow topic, they need to ask themselves how the methods or topics of their research are broadly relevant to another module that is offered in the typical curriculum of departments in their field of study. In answering this question, the internet can be used as a profiling tool whereby students can look at the module summaries listed on the webpages of other departments. For instance, returning to our Locke student, a perusal of syllabi would reveal one module that sometimes addresses innatism is the Philosophy of Mind; so she could branch out into teaching on this subject. The more connections that can be made to other modules, the better. Knowing which modules intersect with her research interests allows her to pursue teaching in specific areas when and if her department appoints tutors or part-time lecturers. In the end, even if a doctoral student is unsuccessful in obtaining tutorials or lectures, she will still know how her research connects with her teaching—and this is a point that needs to be made in any cover letter. So Line 2 in the ACG should be a statement of how a student's research interests are relevant to teaching. For our Locke student, it could be written as 'Epistemology' or 'Philosophy of Mind'.

Line 3: networking

Making one's research relevant to one's academic network is not an easy task for postgraduates. They need to be reassured, however, that it becomes easier with practice—yet another reason for starting a network early in one's PhD studies. One of the best ways for a student to assess the potential relevance of her work is to subscribe to listservs that cover topics that are addressed in her thesis and those that cover her chosen field of study. So, for instance, if she were writing about the history and philosophy of science (HPS), she could subscribe to the

plines'. Ibid., pp. 90-105, especially pp. 100-102.

University of Notre Dame's HPS list while also subscribing to another list that covers all areas of philosophy; Liverpool's PHILOS-L for example. Based on these lists and on conversations with members in her department, she could be encouraged to see if her work is relevant to any sort of 'sexy' topic that seems to be attracting attention in the field. Notably, by 'sexy' I do not necessarily mean 'innovative', rather, I mean a unique view on the canonical authors and issues of a given field.[7] Once a student does this, she can then try to incorporate those who know about the subject into her network. (However, on this point it is crucial to remember that all fields have flash-fads and self-proclaimed gurus. Students must, therefore, be shown how to avoid these types of side-shows.)

So, returning to our Locke student, let's say that a sexy issue is 'the body'. A potential combination for Line 3 would be 'Locke's perception of the body'. Once Line 3 is decided, it is a good idea for the student to see if it connects with any other modules being offered her department or—and this is important— if she could perhaps devote part of a chapter in her thesis to the subject. A full-length article would be even better. Doing this will help attract more attention to her research and would help her expand her network.

Practice makes perfect

As mentioned above, the job adverts sent out on academic listservs provide the best way to try out the ACG. Again, a student must be encouraged to consult them early in her postgraduate career. Before doing this, however, it would be beneficial to tell her that her efforts to make her research interests relevant to her employment aspirations will be a bit difficult in the initial stages. In particular, after working hard to create an ACG, it will probably take her a bit of time to tweak it so that it is in touch with what the market is offering. The best way for her to test if she has created a potentially successful ACG is to suggest that she ask herself how the three lines (topics) of the graph match up with contemporary job advertisements. If her topics fail to show up, then she

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[7] Ibid., pp. 94-95.

might want to reconsider adjusting her graph so that she can be more competitive.

Once a doctoral student begins to read the job adverts and research projects that are posted to listservs, she will start to see that there are areas that continually pop up; both in terms of teaching and in terms of research. It would be a good idea, therefore, if she were to find a way for her to match her interests with these reoccurring areas. Finding this match does not mean that she has to blatantly take on a popular topic. For instance, recent adverts for philosophy posts have underscored the successful applicant will be familiar with applied ethics. If this topic kept reoccurring on adverts, then it might be beneficial for her to consider how she could creatively integrate applied ethics into her research. So, using our Locke student again, it might be beneficial for her to ask if perhaps Locke's thought had any sort of connection to ethics, or even morality, that could be pursued somewhere in her thesis or publications. Even if she did not find this exercise to be appealing, the very process of asking how her work is relevant to ethical and moral issues might just help her make valuable connections within her own research and, possibly, in future cover letters.

The extended relevance of academic capital

If a doctoral student wants to become a career academic, learning to craft research that is relevant to her publications, teaching and network will be something that she will have to practise for the rest of her career. One of the easiest ways for a student to burn herself out in this process is to become overextended, that is, having a wide variety of projects and duties that run in different directions. This applies to both to academics and postgraduates. The best way to avoid burnout is to remain concentrated on projects that serve the goals laid out on the ACG. If a student is in doubt about a research idea or a potential project, she can go to the graph. The more she crafts her projects around the nexus core of the graph, the more organised she will be and the less time she will lose.

The ACG can also help students when it comes time for them to present their ideas at conferences, when they write cover letters and when they think about making postdoctoral applications. I'll treat these three topics in turn.

Conferences

As academic workshops and conferences reinforce the power and prestige which creates academic capital,[8] students should be encouraged to attend them—especially if their departments are able to help them financially with the travel costs and registration fees. Although most postgraduates do not realise it, established academics often go to conferences on the lookout for sharp students who fall in line with a project they are setting up or who are eligible for a new position that their department is about to advertise. Since they were once a postgraduate or postdoctoral fellow, they are quite aware that most young scholars are still working through some of their ideas. So if a doctoral student's paper is a bit unclear, they will be sympathetic. Yet, in my opinion, the thing that will most impress them is how a student interacts with them on a one to one basis. In these conversations, it will be crucial for a postgraduate to communicate that she has a pretty good idea of where she is going with her work. A very good way to communicate such a sense of direction is to rattle off the three areas on the ACG.

Cover letters

Cover letters are notoriously hard to compose. When students first start to write them, they quickly find that the letters consume a lot of their time. The process becomes easier with practice, so I encourage students to exercise their skills by applying for minor awards or posts early in their doctoral career. This helps them to become familiar with how to use the codes and canons of their field at an early stage.[9] Most societies offer travel grants, while a few of them give research awards. Students may wish to start out by making small applications and then working their way up. This being said, no matter the size of the award or the length of the cover letter, the ACG can be turned into three mutually relevant letter sections that allow a student to clearly present

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[8] Ibid., pp. 234-237.

[9] The relationship between codification, academic capital and symbolic power is addressed throughout Bourdieu, Pierre, *Language & Symbolic Power*, Raymond, Gino and Adamson, Matthew (trans.), (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991).

herself as an organised academic. As she begins to write more cover letters, she will learn how to adapt her graph categories to the position at hand—but the process of creating the graph itself will have already shown her how to think interactively about publishing, teaching and networking.

Postdoctoral applications

Almost every postdoctoral application asks for a written research proposal. A key component of most proposals is a section in which the candidate explains how her future project is consistent with her previous research. This is an implicit way of asking her if her thesis or subsequent publications were uniquely relevant to the research norms of the field. When thinking about how to craft this important part of the proposal, a student can draw from the thought that she put into creating the ACG; especially when it comes to verbalising the uniqueness of her thesis and the fact that she has a proven track record in producing research that is perceived to be relevant to the larger needs or interests of her discipline. Additionally, one of the most important ingredients of a successful postdoctoral application is an outstanding reference letter. In general, a student will have to ask academics to write on her behalf. It is here where her network becomes very helpful, as it will have already placed her in contact with people in her field who hold a significant amount of academic capital.

Conclusion

So what if a student thinks the ACG is a bunch of bunk? Fair enough. If she has her own way for integrating her current research with her future employment plans then she should be given the freedom to do so. There are some fortunate students who, for one reason or another, seem to haplessly engender success. Additionally, if a student's supervisor is a leading academic who has sworn to move heaven and earth on behalf of getting posts for her students, then the graph might seem a bit quaint. Yet, sadly, this scenario is not the case for most postgraduates. Most of them are very worried about the future. Indeed current

employment figures in the *Times Higher Education Supplement* show that it is becoming harder for academics to get full-time jobs that are permanent. So if this situation worries one of your students, the graph just might help her to think about how to integrate her research with factors that are extremely relevant to getting a job in a university. Based on my experience, using the graph, or simply considering the rationale behind it, has helped a number of students that I've known over the years. The basic goal is to get them to think about how their research is directly relevant to their publications, teaching and networking. If they actively work to integrate these three categories, it just might give them that extra edge to get a job and perhaps to realise that:

> Academic power thus consists in the capacity to influence on the one hand expectations—themselves based partly on a disposition to play the game and on investment in the game, and partly on the objective indeterminacy of the game—and on the other hand objective probabilities—notably by limiting the world of possible competitors.[10]

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[10] Ibid., p. 89

Manifesto for Higher Education:

Students are Human Beings (Discuss)

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What follows here draws on no empirical studies, but is rather an argument rooted in reflection on the experience of teaching students and of talking about teaching with colleagues (together with some established results in the philosophy of science). In other words, it is phenomenological rather than empirical. Phenomenology is subject to two tests. First, is it analytically satisfactory? That is to say, are the distinctions clear? Are the inferences valid? Second, does it gather and articulate some part of the reader's experience? The point of writing this article is not to tell you, my academic colleague, something that you do not know. On the contrary, the aspiration is to articulate something that you do know but may not have got around to saying yet. That, though, covers a lot. Out of the mass of

truths that go unsaid, I have picked seven that go unsaid because, I think, they offend in some way against the prevailing political and educational temper of our times. The question is not simply 'are these seven thoughts true?' but rather 'how can they be made effective?' Please let me know if I've hit the mark, or if I've missed, by how far and in what direction (b.p.larvor@herts.ac.uk).

I do not intend to criticise anyone's teaching practice. Since I rarely see the inside of other lecturers' classrooms, I am in no position to pass judgment on what colleagues do there, even if I wished to. Rather, the principal object of my criticism is the way we talk about teaching. In particular, I have in mind two relatively formal discourses about teaching: pedagogical research and the academic quality apparatus. My basic claim is that the seven thoughts I explore below are largely absent from these two discourses. We lecturers do not get around to articulating these thoughts because the formal apparatus for reflecting on teaching does not make room for them. This matters, because ultimately theory does affect practice.

This is not a view from the mountaintop: as a participant in pedagogical seminars and as an author of Subject Monitoring and Evaluation Reports and documents for validations and reviews, I am as firmly implicated in these discourses as anyone.

1. We do not teach in an ideological vacuum

No-one wants schoolchildren to eat junk. Everyone agrees that it would be better if children ate food, but in spite of this consensus, they eat junk. To change that, Jamie Oliver is going to have to pay attention to the large social, political and economic structures and imperatives that conspire to thwart the virtuous consensus. So too for us. If we are determined not to serve intellectual turkey twizzlers, we have to pay attention to the bigger picture. In particular, we have to examine the murky background of that big picture; the unspoken ideology, the economic imperatives and the habits of mind that conspire to carve a path of least resistance away from genuine higher education and towards the dumbed-down degree factory. Above all, we must examine students' beliefs about and expectations of higher education (just as Jamie Oliver spent a lot of his time working on children's tastes in food). No-one

wants degree factories, but then no-one wants children to eat junk.

The easiest place to start is with our own habits of mind. We must pay attention to the metaphors we use to talk about pedagogy. We should stop talking about the 'delivery' of 'provision'. When a new fridge is delivered to a house, the householder stands by while the deliveryman does all the work, heaving it out of the van, up the steps and through to the kitchen. In other words, the 'delivery' metaphor encodes and approves of student passivity. Gardening metaphors (such as 'cultivating the intellect') are more accurate, because the gardener looks after the soil, the light and the temperature, but the plant has to do the growing. Our job is to maintain an environment conducive to intellectual growth, but it's up to the students to grow. We cannot do it for them, and we should take care to employ metaphors that express that truth. This is not a covert argument for reducing lecturers' work. Gardening can be every bit as exhausting as fridge-delivery. So why would anyone prefer the delivery metaphor to gardening metaphors? One reason arises from the management of academic quality. The growth of a plant is a subtle and complex process, and if the plant fails to bloom, it may be hard to say who or what is to blame. On the other hand, if a fridge is not delivered as ordered, blame can be apportioned accurately, by examining the paperwork. For good, obvious and respectable reasons, managers like to see 'clear lines of responsibility'. The delivery metaphor helps to sustain the fiction that learning and teaching is the sort of activity in which blame can be allocated precisely.

We live in a technocratic culture that pretends to regard language as an ideologically neutral means of storing and transferring information. Language is more than this; it shapes our imagination and makes some thoughts easier to think than others. Awareness of this requires ceaseless mental fight. We cannot take charge of our own thoughts, let alone speak the truth to power, if we do not examine the metaphors that pass amongst us.

2. We are not here to give students what they want, but rather what we know to be good for them

Students often do not know what is good for them. Like the children in *Jamie's School Dinners*, many students will choose intellectual turkey twizzlers if we let them. An essential part of Jamie Oliver's campaign was forcibly to remove children's junk in order to make them eat food—and with what shocking indifference to the ideology of consumer choice! Then he showed the older children what goes into a chicken nugget. Thus educated, these children were left to choose, and they almost invariably chose wisely. Note the order of events: education before free choice. Indeed, we may wonder whether a choice made in ignorance can be free (rather than arbitrary or whimsical).

I labour this point because consumerism is part of the spirit of our age and creeps into the mental habits even of those who mean to oppose it. The relation between customer and retailer is governed by the maxim 'buyer beware'. A retailer may sell any rubbish that the law allows, and is under no obligation to help the customer make a wise choice. On the contrary, the retailer's job is to help the customer to make an expensive choice. If you can sell water-skis to the nomads of the Gobi Desert, good for you, you are salesperson of the year.

Obviously, our relationship with students is not that of retailer to customer. But competition between universities, faculties, departments and subject groups presses us all to behave more commercially. In some ways, this is a good thing. It is no longer possible for universities to treat their students (or students' parents) as a necessary nuisance. But ultimately, consumerism is a damaging picture of our relation with our students, and we must take care that it does not shape our thoughts surreptitiously. Consumerism will shape our thoughts if we do not take care because it is part of the unspoken common mind of our age. To use the computer imagery that is also a powerful and often pernicious part of that common mind, consumerism is the 'default option'.

Hence, 'student-centred' cannot mean 'customer-focussed', and we will not fulfil our laudable aim to practise student-centred teaching merely by increasing the choices available to students, or by doing whatever it takes to improve student feedback questionnaire scores.

Rather, we have to ensure that we understand our students well enough to know that we really are giving them what is good for them. This is more difficult than knowing what they want, and much more difficult than knowing what they say they want. It gets harder as our students become more diverse and less like we were at their age. What is more, we should think of our students not just as customers or future employees but rather as people whose most profound needs cannot be met with anything that can be bought. Those needs include companionship, recognition of one's moral worth and public confirmation of the ethos by which one is trying to live. Sometimes, the diligent student who does the reading before the class can feel as lonely and ridiculous as Don Quixote, doggedly living by standards that others find quaint and silly.

Notice that these are all social needs. The last one is the particular responsibility of the institution charged with sustaining a given ethos (in our case, an academic ethos). What tone is set, what message about priorities is sent, for example, by cancelling classes throughout a university to make way for non-academic activities? How would a university regard a lecturer who refused to teach students who persistently failed to prepare for class? Why do so many university websites embody the assumption that prospective undergraduates have no interest in our research? Of course, few students want to read our research. But descriptions of research remind the students, their parents and everyone else that a university is a living embodiment of the academic ethos, rather than merely a repository of curricular content.

3. Every model of learning implies a model of humanity, and may be judged by it

We cannot say what it is for a human to learn without saying something about what humans are like. Therefore, we may test a model of learning by comparing its implied model of humanity with what we already know about people. Humans think feelingly and imaginatively. We humans (including students) live first in a world of meanings, connotations and associations, which are only later resolved into thoughts, facts, hypotheses and suchlike. What is more, our world of images,

feelings and meanings comes painted in ethical colours. Words and deeds, people and things strike us as admirable, mean, unfair, compassionate, and so on. Also, our experience tends to be densely connected: a smell can summon a whole world of memory; a book can re-draw one's map of the future. Consequently, any model of learning that finds no place for feelings and the imagination is too impoverished to be of any use. Any model that forgets that students are ethical agents who make judgments of value as well as of utility will struggle to understand student motivations. And any model that conceives of learning as the transfer of isolated packets of information is false to the connectedness of human experience. Human learners do not access information, they seize ideas and make them their own.

If we want students to embrace their studies, we have to stop talking about them in a way that could equally well apply to laboratory rats or Turing machines. Laboratory rats do not pursue ends simply because they perceive them to be intrinsically worthwhile, and Turing machines do not synthesise their packets of data into coherent experiential wholes, or seek recognition and approval from other Turing machines. Of course, no lecturer thinks of any individual student as a rat or a computer; still less do we treat our students that way. But when we lecturers gather to discuss learning and teaching, we tend to focus on the mechanical aspects because these are the easiest to talk about. As a profession, we seem to lack a language to talk about the lived experience of learning and teaching. Fearful of sounding like mystery-mongers, we discuss configurations of classroom furniture, the use of technological teaching aids or some such, even though these are in fact marginal to our teaching practice. That is how we come to talk about students as if they were laboratory rats or computers. That is what we do whenever we discuss the mechanical aspect of teaching without connecting it to the inner lives of our students.

As I said at the outset, my principal targets are the formal discourses of pedagogical research and the academic quality apparatus, rather than informal conversations among teachers and lecturers. Take a pedagogical model from the learning and teaching literature, or an academic quality document such as a programme specification. Does it reflect, respect and minister to the fact that students are feeling, imaginative ethical agents, each of whose experience and activity forms a (mostly) coherent whole?

Why do we struggle to articulate the higher humanity of students, that is, the ways they differ from Turing machines and laboratory rats? Writers on pedagogy from earlier ages, and in particular churchy Victorians such as Matthew Arnold or J.H. Newman, had more success in this regard. A comprehensive explanation for this would require a cultural and intellectual history from their time to ours, but the short answer is that theology is out and cognitive science is in.[1] In some respects, this change is progress. Nevertheless, there are things that theology finds easier to see and to say than does cognitive science. Theologically-informed discussions of pedagogy naturally focus on the ethical and affective aspects of learning that more instrumental and technologically-minded approaches tend to neglect. For such teachers, it was obvious that the main task of education is to remedy defects in the students themselves. The main questions for these Victorian educators were 'what sort of character does this education produce?' and 'what sort of character ought we to try to produce?' These questions are difficult to ask in earnest now, partly because 'character' sounds hopelessly unscientific and partly because controlling others' moral development sounds unacceptably manipulative. The commercial aspect of present-day education also militates against this approach. It is a bold salesperson who tells putative customers that they are morally and intellectually defective. Here, in passing, is a good reason to read old books: to identify and illuminate the blind spots and taboos of present-day ways of looking and speaking. To paraphrase another unfashionable figure,[2] what does he know of the present, who only the present knows?

4. Students do not know what higher education is

Nor do we, in the sense that there is no agreed set of necessary and sufficient conditions that jointly define higher education. But we do know something about what it is not (this is often the case with philosophically interesting terms[3]). Many students arrive at university with a

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[1] In fairness, I should note that computational cognitive science has moved some way beyond Turing machines.
[2] Kipling.

bucket-model of education.[4] You pass a module by mugging up some stuff and reproducing it in coursework and exams. Then, you forget it. Higher education must be more than this.

Often, students who subscribe to the bucket view do not expect to enjoy their studies—and why would they? Education as they understand it is a suitable activity for a disk-drive; it's purgatory for a human being. It is hardly surprising that these students do not embrace their studies. Consequently, every programme of study should include some discussion of the nature and purposes of higher education. Students are hardly likely to commit to learning if they do not know what it is for or how it might be satisfying. Naturally, we cannot simply tell them what higher education is, since we are not altogether sure ourselves. Rather, the aim (as always when teaching essentially contested concepts) is to equip students to participate in the discussion and invite them to make up their own minds.

Most students understand (some more consciously than others) that higher education changes a person. Sometimes, students resist our efforts because no-one has bothered to explain what we are trying to change them into. This is entirely reasonable. Students who do not have graduates among their relatives, friends and neighbours often worry that higher education will estrange them from their former lives. This too is a reasonable fear. Education can set a person apart. These anxieties require a discussion about the nature and purpose of higher education. Why would anyone in education refuse that? There are plenty of reasons. First, some potential students may not wish to be changed, and hence decide that higher education is not for them. Second, this discussion would require us to confess that we do not quite know what higher education is. Third, an educationalist who talks about the way education changes a person runs the risk of sounding like Matthew Arnold. Nevertheless, education does change people, and we should talk to the students about that.

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[3] 'All determination is negation.'—Spinoza
[4] 'Education is not filling a bucket, but lighting a fire.'—W.B. Yeats

5. Higher education is education in values

Every institution, including ours, has a characteristic ethos. We value rigorous, gleeful curiosity and free discussion. Trying to instil these values in students is part of our job, and we should tell them that.

There is a streak of populist moral relativism in the spirit of the present age that intimidates some academics on this point. Is it not authoritarian to impose our value-judgments on students? In fact, we do not impose our values on students and we could not if we wanted to. We have two options: either, we explain the ethos of academic life to our students and thereby give them the possibility of embracing it themselves, or we keep quiet and leave them in the dark about why we do what we do. The academic ethos itself, and common honesty, require us to choose the first. Of course, if we make our values explicit, students will hold us to them.

In any case, there is no cause for academics to be shy about our professional values. We know that rigorous, gleeful curiosity and free discussion are good just as we know that murder is bad. We know that some books are better than others just as we know that some essays are better than others, and we think it matters—not as much as the AIDS crisis in Africa but rather more than the outcome of Big Brother. Part of our job is to help students to recognise truth, beauty and goodness when they meet them. These are not merely matters of opinion, though they are essentially contested notions. There is a debate to be had about exactly where and how truth, beauty and goodness may be found; it is part of our job to equip students to participate in it. This applies across the university: in engineering, for example, we can ask whether the ingenious solution is the most elegant; whether the most elegant is the most cost-effective; and whether the most cost-effective solution is socially responsible. (I do not doubt that engineering lecturers do this. The point is that in doing so, they are thinking about truth, beauty and the good.)

Students implicitly accept the university ethos when they enrol. We should tell them what they are letting themselves in for, and make the academic ethos a regular part of the conversations we have with them. Indeed, it should be the animating principle of those conversations, else we will have fallen into inauthenticity.

6. Classes are the common rite in the cathedral of reason

Why give classes? Why not transmit information to students in more effective and flexible ways?

We may as well ask: why do people go to religious buildings to worship together? Why don't they just pray and sing at home? God, being omnipresent, presumably wouldn't mind. Or, for a secular analogy: why do people go to football matches? You get a much better view of the action on television, and you get replays in slow-motion from several angles. Or again, why do people go to political rallies? Surely, they could signal their support more efficiently by sending a text-message or e-mail. The answer is something like this: you have to be there to make a public affirmation of your commitment to your faith, your team or your cause, and to witness others doing the same. Religious meetings, football matches and political rallies are celebrations of common purpose from which individuals may draw comfort and encouragement when they are later alone and wavering.

If we want students to commit to their studies, we should look at practices that people engage in wholeheartedly (like religion, football and politics). These have common rites that speak to our need to know that we are not quixotically alone in our values (laboratory rats and Turing machines have no such need). We should think of our classes in this way rather than as information-exchanges, and alter our practice accordingly. The student who skips the class because the notes are available online is like someone who thinks that reading the order of service is equivalent to going to church, or that reading the programme is equivalent to going to the match, or that reading a pamphlet is as good as going to the rally. Classes are our main opportunity to address the social needs I mentioned at the end of section two.

This may make teaching sound like preaching, but with the ethical and social dimensions of education in view, this is hardly surprising. Of course, classes have other functions too. They are an opportunity to be a critical friend to students; to engage in dialogue that would be clumsier and slower by e-mail or some other remote means; to foster the social skills requisite for reasoned debate. But the most neglected and easily overlooked purpose of classes is this social, ethos-

confirming role. Lecturers do not merely communicate to students; we commune with them, and they with each other.

What does this mean in practical terms? It may be as simple as ensuring that there is time to enjoy the material. In a class stuffed with content, there is no opportunity to revel in the details. Cut back on the content and use the time saved to talk about why this stuff is interesting or important. Point out bits that you find interesting even if they are not quite on the main track. Take a moment to show the students something from the recent research if you think it might help them to see the significance of the assessed material. Show them that there are live questions as well as fixed answers and established solutions. This is particularly important in cumulative disciplines where the point of this year's stuff is to prepare for next year's stuff. Those students who just want to get through their assessments as efficiently as possible may express some irritation at these apparently irrelevant and self-indulgent asides. Turn their resistance into a teachable moment. Explain that in wandering off the lesson-plan, you are giving them a tutorial in gleeful curiosity.

7. The lofty aims intrinsic to higher education are necessary enabling conditions for the utilitarian, economistic aims imposed on it from without

This may seem like a splendid sermon—meaning, a speech one can enjoy on a Sunday precisely because it has no connection with anything that happens from Monday to Friday. Our students have to get jobs in an increasingly globalised market, and our first responsibility is to ensure that they have the necessary skills. Isn't it?

This reaction is mistaken. Students will not acquire their economically useful skills unless they find their motivation in the activity of learning itself. Extraneous goads and bribes (such as the threat of failure and the promise of higher earnings) rarely carry a student all the way through a degree programme. In fact, a wholly disengaged student cannot succeed in higher education. To be successful, a student must learn to make sound judgments, and all judgment has an aesthetic aspect.[5] A mathematics student must be struck by the elegance of a

proof; a science student must feel the weight of evidence (or the lack of it). In the humanities, a lot of bad writing is the result of students trying to articulate and defend judgments that they have copied from secondary sources rather than felt in their viscera. The same point applies to directly vocational studies, especially those that require quick decisions, such as nursing. This is not to say that judgment is all inarticulate conviction or unreasoned snap decisions. But a graduate should have developed the expert intuitions that guide judgment in new situations or cases that were not covered in the lecture-notes. This education in feeling, this refinement of specialist sensibility cannot happen if a student simply has no feeling for the discipline at all, or if the discipline evokes a single, uniform reaction such as boredom or resentment. A student who knows that the argument on page 84 is a good one simply because it satisfies the rules set out on pages 64-73, but who does not feel the force of its logic, is unlikely to develop the critical-thinking skills that are demanded by employers and essential to anyone hoping for promotion into senior management.

For this reason, joy in learning is not merely desirable. It is essential. We (the university) have to foster a culture in which students can discover and express without embarrassment a delight in learning and find it reflected in other students and in staff. Joy does not usually figure in the aims, objectives, learning outcomes, programme specifications and benchmark documents that jointly constitute our official professional effort to say what we do and why. Until it does, these documents will never be more than *pro forma* exercises. In short, we must consciously adopt a pedagogical discourse that takes full account of students' humanity. Doing so may sometimes cause us to sound a bit old-fashioned, even a bit like churchy Victorians. Ironically, this is what we have to do in order to take full advantage of the unprecedented technological teaching-aids available now and in the future.

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[5] This is a long-established point in the philosophy of science. Its origins are usually traced to Pierre Duhem's *Aim and Structure of Physical Theory*; the locus classicus is Thomas Kuhn's *Structure of Scientific Revolutions*; and the fullest development is probably Michel Polanyi's *Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy*.

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