“I felt I knew everybody”

Learner experiences in an open cross-institutional CPD course for teachers in HE

APT Conference: Connected Learning in an Open World, University of Greenwich, 8 July 2014
Voices

• ecological university (Barnett, 2011)
• personalisation, collaboration, informalisation (Redecker et al, 2011)
• blending of formal & informal learning (Conole, 2013)
• call to open-up, join-up (European Commission, 2013)
• the danger of monocultures (Weller, 2014)
• lifewide curriculum (Jackson, 2014)
• recognising the positive impact of human interaction for learning
PhD research: to develop a flexible collaborative learning framework for open cross-institutional Academic Development courses

Phenomenography (Marton, 1981)
- Main data collection: individual interviews
- Complementary data via survey instruments (initial and final)

Multiple-cased approach (Stake, 1995)
- Case study 1: FDOL132

http://fdol.wordpress.com/

http://globaldimensionsinhe.wordpress.com/
FDOL132 and organisation

- Open cross-disciplinary professional development course for teachers in HE
- Developed and organised by Academic Developers in the UK and Sweden
- Developed using freely available social media
- Offered from September – December 2013
- Pedagogical design: simplified Problem-Based Learning

Numbers
- Registered: 107
- FDOL132 community in G+ until now: 72
- Signed up for PBL groups: 31
- PBL groups: initially 8-9 in each x 4 > then 3 (group 2: 6, / group 3: 5 / group 4: 6)
- PBL facilitators: 4
- Participants in webinars: 10-25
- Participants who completed in groups : 31 (42% of participants learning in groups)

Countries
- UK - 66
- Sweden – 17
- Canada – 4
- Ireland – 2
- also participants from: Hongkong, Argentina, Greenland, Switzerland, New Zealand, Slovenia, Belgium, New Zealand, Norway
## Key observations

**importance for learning**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>initial survey</th>
<th>final survey</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>group work</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>feedback</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>recognition for study</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>independent study</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
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<tr>
<td>facilitator support</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
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</tbody>
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Group related data
Preliminary thematic analysis

PBL groups

Knowing each other
“It's about being able to read the other person's body language, and, and things like that. I don't know. That's what I assume it is. I just feel that it, it was that that gave it the personal feel [...]. I felt like I knew everybody because I knew what they looked like and, you know. And I think that made a difference. Then they weren't just, [...]. you know, an icon on a computer screen, that I'd recognised them as a human being if that makes sense.” participant F2
Group related data
Preliminary thematic analysis

Motivation

**Feeling useful**

“... It was good to, I think that I felt good of contributing with my experience to what they're doing. So when, they ask something, and I saw that it can work in a certain way because we have done it here in UK I could tell them what we have done and then they can experiment. So from that point of view it felt good, of sharing[...].” Participant F7
Tensions

Lack of choice
“...I think there's quite a contradiction in PBL actually, in terms of that kind of liberal social constructivist ethos. But at the same time, it, it can be quite rigid, and, I'm not convinced that using one particular, educational approach is necessarily always the best thing. Particularly if you're trying to bring people together in a. OK, structuring, is, is important, and, putting people in groups but like the, to kind of feed them through, a certain educational approach, I'm not, I'm not all-, I'm not always convinced by that. “Participant 1
Doing stuff
“If you're gonna prepare people for complexity then prepare them for complexity and put them in complex situations. Don't, don't kind of prescribe everything and then say ‘well we, prepared you for the real world now’ -oops! So if, we can have some degree of controlled anarchy and some controlled chaos which is done in a reasonably, safe environment, I think that much better prepares learners in the twenty first century than, prescribed curricula.” Participant F1
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>FDOL131</th>
<th>FDOL132</th>
<th>FDOL141</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Course duration</td>
<td>11 Feb – 7 May 13</td>
<td>12 Sep – 5 Dec 13</td>
<td>10 Feb - 23 March 14</td>
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<tr>
<td>12 weeks</td>
<td>12 weeks</td>
<td>6 weeks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thematic units</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learners</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learners from the UK</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learners from Sweden</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learners from other countries</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groups</td>
<td>8&gt;4</td>
<td>4&gt;3</td>
<td>6&gt;4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learners in groups/%</td>
<td>64/80%</td>
<td>31/29%</td>
<td>27/32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitators</td>
<td>4&gt;3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14&gt;11 (in pairs/threes)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learners per facilitator</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>7 or 14 (in pairs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learners that completed in groups</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17</td>
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<tr>
<td>Completion rate based on the whole cohort</td>
<td>insufficient information</td>
<td>insufficient information</td>
<td>insufficient information</td>
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<tr>
<td>Completion rate based on group participation</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>63%</td>
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(Nerantzi, 2014, 55)
References


Wiley (2006) a shift towards ‘openness’ in academic practice as not only a positive trend, but a necessary one in order to ensure transparency, collaboration and continued innovation
