University of Huddersfield Repository

Bennett, Elizabeth

Scaling up: how does it impact on pedagogy?

Original Citation


This version is available at http://eprints.hud.ac.uk/10637/

The University Repository is a digital collection of the research output of the University, available on Open Access. Copyright and Moral Rights for the items on this site are retained by the individual author and/or other copyright owners. Users may access full items free of charge; copies of full text items generally can be reproduced, displayed or performed and given to third parties in any format or medium for personal research or study, educational or not-for-profit purposes without prior permission or charge, provided:

- The authors, title and full bibliographic details is credited in any copy;
- A hyperlink and/or URL is included for the original metadata page; and
- The content is not changed in any way.

For more information, including our policy and submission procedure, please contact the Repository Team at: E.mailbox@hud.ac.uk.

http://eprints.hud.ac.uk/
Scaling up: how does it impact on pedagogy?

Liz Bennett, School of Education and Professional Development, University of Huddersfield, liz.bennett@hud.ac.uk

Background
In current economic climate higher education institutions are looking for ways of teaching and learning more efficiently. One solution appears to be larger cohorts studying online (Fildes 2010).

The Open University has been a leader in the field of online distance education for the last ten years (or more). However the Open University institutional context is entirely different from that of traditional place based education such as University of Huddersfield. The Open University students make their choice of course knowing that that they will need to operate in a distance medium and Open University staff have a set of roles, policies and practices to support distance delivery which have been accumulated over many years of operation.

Methodology and aims
An ethnographic study explore the impact that scaling up provision had on pedagogy and to compare how the institutional context impacts on online pedagogy (Coffey 1996).

Findings
The key issues which emerged where dubbed “lowest common denominator”, “one voice”, “playing the room” and “nanny state”. They consisted of some closely inter twined issues relating to the technological skills and confidence of both students and teachers and the need for a consistent approach when delivering large scale provision.

The analysis also indicated how the nature of the institution impacts on pedagogical processes in that students in place based institution have very different experiences and expectations of learning are different from those who sign up for a distance learning provider such as the Open University where a higher level of autonomous learning is necessary.

Conclusions
- scaling up is no panacea for the challenges of delivering more for less.
- scale introduces a new cost in the form of an additional layer of administration, tutor training and tutor support.
- Scale adds new sets of skills and ways of working; both pedagogic and administrative.

References
Fildes. N. (2010, January 13). New learning curve scales the internet :Online education. The Times,