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A Case Study to Investigate the Reconceptualization of an Undergraduate

Module as a Collaborative Learning Space Mimicking Industrial Practice to

Provide the Opportunity for Participation and Practice and to Enhance Learning

and Employability

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A dissertation submitted to the University of Huddersfield in partial

fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Masters of Arts in Professional Development

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Abstract

The research presents a case study undertaken as part of postgraduate research. This postgraduate qualification in professional development was undertaken by the researcher to facilitate the transition from industry practitioner to professional educator. The study considered 80 intermediate level students from 3 vocational fashion and textiles courses jointly undertaking a cross-discipline module. This research was developed to focus on students' conceptions of learning and personal and professional identity. A mixture of quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection was employed: questionnaire, reflective log and focus groups. The research questionnaire has drawn from Brennan et al (2010). Card sort activities outlined in Rees et al (2006) using QAA subject benchmark graduate attributes and skills and CIHE competencies provided the stimulus within the focus groups.

Learners responded to the authenticity of the project and embraced additional subject knowledge and new professional practices in order to succeed. Simultaneous exposure to the language, required standard and breadth of graduate employability skills enabled students to construct and more confidently articulate their own narrative of employability. Additionally the simulation of professional practice provided a realistic context to rehearse and affirm emerging graduate identities. This construction of a graduate profile facilitated autonomy in professional development and prompted adoption of a more holistic approach. As stated by Brown and Hesketh (2004:145),

> 'The concept of self-identity is [...] clearly important when it comes to how individuals construct and manage their employability. How an individual approaches the labour market is intimately linked with their ideas about what kind of person they think they are and the kind of person they want to become'.

Acknowledgments

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Chapter One – Introduction

1.0 Introduction

This research aligns with situated learning theories (Lave and Wenger, 1991) and adopts a case study strategy of inquiry in order to explore students' conceptions of learning and personal and professional identity.

Through the need to redesign a module, a collaborative learning space that mimics systems and roles of the industry was established to provide a realistic context so that learners gain experience of the industry by collaborating in this community of practice (Wenger, 1998) and can rehearse and affirm emerging graduate identities (Holmes, 2001). The module teaching team sought to challenge students to engage with this learning community and to empower them to see themselves as producers and collaborators, not consumers of their learning (Taylor and Wilding, 2009)

1.1 Structure of the research study

The research has been structured and presented across the following five chapters.

a) Chapter one will discuss the background for this research

b) Chapter 2 will examine aspects of essential literature to put the research into perspective and context

c) Chapter three will describe the methodology employed

d) Chapter four will discuss key aspects and findings from the analysis of the research data

e) Chapter five will present the conclusions for the study and outline plans for its dissemination

1.2 Context

This research has been undertaken over 2 years at a post 1992 University via the participation of a multidisciplinary cohort of second year Fashion & Textiles students

within the school of Art & Design school studying the core module of Global Sourcing. The university has a long history of working with industry and business and prides itself in providing innovative learning experiences that develop graduates to be highly employable (Guardian.co.uk, 2012) and confident in their own abilities to contribute to the economy and society.

This project has been shaped by current trends within education. The influence of inter-relationship of three key trends is transparent throughout the project. The three trends are outlined briefly here and then in further depth in chapter two. The first is the increased focus on prioritizing graduate employability and workplace readiness, the second is the emergence of creativity as a key learning outcome of the time and the role that the methods employed in design training may contribute and finally the impact of pervasive information and communication technologies (ICT).

In 1997 the Dearing Report contributed 'key skills' to educational vocabulary and kicked off the current employability debate. Despite it being 15 years on from Dearing, the area of graduate attributes and their employability remains high on the agenda. Moreau and Leathwood (2006:306) state that:

> '…in the labour market and higher education sector in the UK, a discourse of employability has become increasingly dominant. Universities are urged to ensure that they produce 'employable' graduates and graduates themselves are exhorted to continually develop their personal skills, qualities and experiences in order to compete in the graduate labour market.'

Pegg et al (2012:4) indicate some underlying issues pertinent to the debate:

> 'In an environment of high tuition fees and low economic growth, student expectations of both qualification, and the experience of higher education (HE) itself, have been raised and questioned.'

Rather than signifying a lack of progress this suggests that the issue is evolving and that current economic pressures have heightened tensions in the recent debate increasing the demand for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to be able to demonstrate value for money.

The Fashion & Textile industry represents a significant sector of the UK economy. The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) definition of creative industries is stated as those 'which have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent and which have the potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property.' (DCMS 1998:3 cited in Bridgestock 2011:10). The British Fashion Council (BFC) (2010) recently reported on the strategic importance of the sector. To date, the DCMS has limited its definition of the industry to purely "designer fashion" i.e. excluding fashion retail. The BFC makes the case for fashion retail to be included in the sector in recognition of its increasingly important role and uses this wider definition in its report (2010:10). The BFC report that the sector has successfully remodelled itself in the 21st century; with supply chain functions, such as design and sourcing, now being undertaken in-house by many retail businesses. The BFC summarizes the sector's significance:

> 'Fashion directly contributes nearly £21 billion to the UK economy (or 1.7% of total UK GDP)...The industry employs nearly a million people (2.8% of total employment) across a wide spectrum of roles and provides diverse opportunities for young people' (2010:12)

The government's 'Plan for Growth' (2011) appears to denote a policy shift towards greater recognition of the creative sector and its potential for growth within a 'rebalanced' economy:

> 'The Digital and Creative Industries have the potential to drive significant growth in the UK. Their exports are third only to advanced engineering and financial and professional services.'

This is indicative of the growing interest in the role of creativity in the knowledge economy. The creative industries appear to be currently thriving with growth in both employment rates and contributions to gross domestic product (GDP) being at least double the national average (Higgs at al., 2008, 2009 cited in Bridegstock 2011:10). This has encouraged a broad spectrum of businesses to investigate the approaches and practices of the industry as a way of encouraging innovation and creativity; its practices are being recognized as increasingly relevant to manage the assets of the knowledge economy in a dymanic world (Martin, (2009), Brown, 2008, 2009, Schuima

2011). Brown (2008:86) summarizes a key aspect of this approach as 'design thinking':

> 'a discipline that uses the designer's sensibility and methods to match people's needs with what is technologically feasible and what a viable business strategy can convert into customer value and market opportunity'.

This placement of creativity centre-stage in the knowledge economy impacts on the debate of graduate employability. The implications of this to higher education are summarized by McWillian and Dawson (2008:634) detailing how the Eurpoean University Association (2007) has directed the higher education sector to consider creativity as central to research and teaching:

> 'The complex questions of the future will not be solved 'by the book', but by creative, forward-looking individuals and groups who are not afraid to question established ideas and are able to cope with the insecurity and uncertainty that this entails' (2007:6)

This highlights a pedagogic challenge of how to design a learning environment in order to develop creative practices and simultaneously embed high-level technical and commercial competence in which students translate an original concept into a viable solution. This is important to fashion and textile education because although the industry continues to succeed, Skillfast UK (2008:16) report that the:

> 'general understanding of the dynamics of the sector, its career opportunities and related skills requirements has not kept pace with the changes experienced by the sector over recent years […] and individuals cannot identify entry and progression routes suited to their skills and aspirations'.

A further pedagogic challenge comes from the pervasive influence of information and communication technologies (ICT). Our students are described as the 'net generation' in reference to the fact that they have grown-up with the internet and therefore tend to incorporate digital technologies seamlessly thorough all aspects of their lives. Wilen-Daugenti (2007:1) describes how the internet creates a 21st century learning environment where 'learners have complete access to any higher-education resource, including experts, lectures, content, courseware, collaborative dialogs, information exchanges, hands-on learning, and research' and then points out that this 'already exisits. It is up to educators to facilitate use of the environment' (2007:5). This helps us

to see the opportunity offered by the shift away from formal, didactic education to a situation where the learner has unrestricted access to knowledge via the interenet and can choose how to shape this interaction to support their learning. As we make the transition to this new learning environment it is important to support the transition of our students so that they develop as 'digitally aware learners who have the capacity to participate in learning throughout their life by using technologies of their own choosing' (JISC, 2009)

1.3 Rationale

My second career as a full-time lecturer began in 2009. This transition had started ten years earlier as I began to search for a better way to balance work and family life. My first career was in the textile industry sourcing and supplying products for a leading UK retailer. Part of my teaching responsibilities was to contribute to an intermediate level module on global sourcing. This module was originally created in 2002 by industry experienced tutors in response to the decline in the UK Fashion & Textile industry of manufacturing and the accompanying expansion in off-shoring in the 1990s. The academic team at the time recognised that changing employment opportunities required students to be equipped with different industry knowledge. Students were no longer entering a labour-intensive industry and new opportunities were emerging in the supply chain in product development, sourcing, corporate social responsibility (CSR) and quality assurance. The module sets out the importance of an awareness of contemporary global issues to the sourcing of products and processes. For almost ten years of delivery the programme had adopted a mixed approach of traditional lectures with guest speakers from the manufacturing industry. My contribution to this lecture programme was to be in the areas of sustainability, sourcing and supply chain management. This is my area of expertise and passion and yet teaching on this module was close to intolerable. The cause of this was not obvious; the philosophy behind the module appeared to be sound, on paper the content was relevant and

interesting, the staff worked well together but staff and students appeared to find it difficult to connect with the module.

a) Visual analogy of 'before' → b) The process of the redesign → c) The conceptual framework
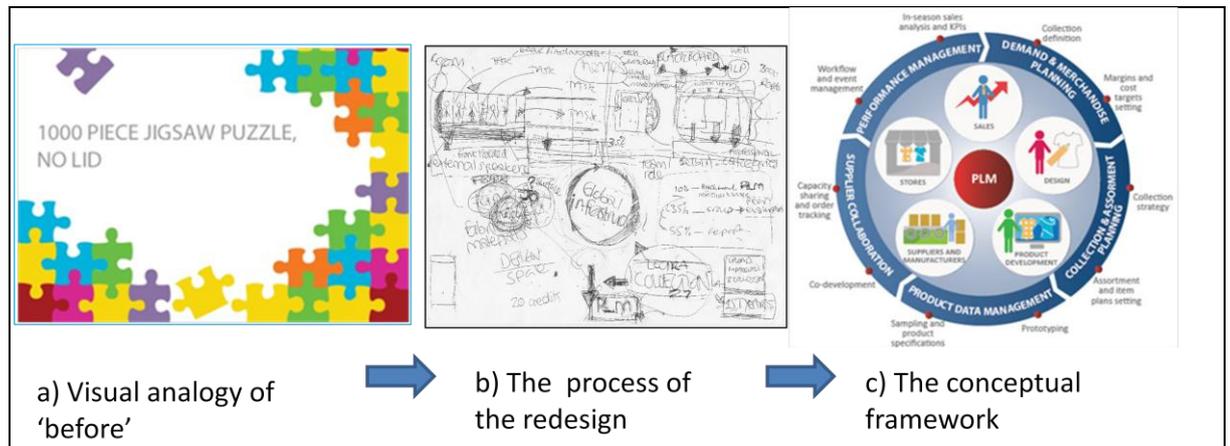
Figure 1.1: Emergence of the module redesign

The analogy of a 'jigsaw without a lid' was made and persisted (fig 1a). The connections between sessions and opportunites within the industry were lost. The lack of engagement of the students prompted a discussion with the module leader to update and revitalise the module and give it new relevance and meaning to students. It was at this stage that it emerged that the module leader planned to return to industry and the responsibility for the module was passed to me. After confirming the validity of the existing learning outcomes the new module team drew on personal experience of textile and apparel sourcing, pedagogical research regarding 21st century learning and industry opinion on the future of the industry (fig 1b). We aspired to develop a community of learning and practice that mimics professional practice and uses appropriate skills and technologies to collaborate and achieve its work. A framework to aid the sequencing of content and to demonstrate the interconnectedness of subjects within a business context was also required. A conceptual Product Lifecycle Management (PLM) system (fig 1c) was adopted as a framework for the redesign. Product Lifecycle Management (PLM) systems have emerged as the future global communication technology of the fashion and textiles business. They can be defined as an all-encompassing business approach from new product design and development

through to production and onto ultimate end of life disposal through the provision of centralized real-time product information and the integration of people, data and processes throughout the value chain.

It was envisioned that the opportunities to participate in the new module would encourage active engagement with the module content while simultaneously providing opportunities for exploration of the industry and personal development. This case study research seeks to investigate the effectiveness of the changes to the module.

1.4 Aims

- To investigate the underpinning of the learning design for iterative improvement and dissemination
- To capture primary research from learners within the case study by means of questionnaires, reflective logs and focus groups in order to test assumptions, provide feedback and contribute to the iterative development of the module
- To complement the primary research of the case study with contemporary secondary research
- To review the research methods employed to inform future research design

1.5 Summary

The preceding sections have attempted to put the project in context. I am a passionate advocate for the industry and long to see my students thrive within it. I had previously seen this somewhat simplistically akin to a download, I now recognise the complexities involved. I strongly believe that the creation of collaborative, digitally-supported learning spaces has much to offer for the future development of teaching and learning in the 21st century.

Chapter two - Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

This literature review starts by examining the broad context of careers in the 21st century, and how this influences the emerging careers patterns of those seeking employment. This leads on to a review of the debate surrounding the repositioning of role of higher education to more actively support transitions into employment. Finally it explores the role of learning through participation and self-identity to inform the process of becoming a graduate.

2.1 Careers in the 21st Century

> 'No amount of sophistication is going to allay the fact that all your knowledge is about the past and all your decisions are about the future.' - Ian E. Wilson

2.1.1 Macro Economic Factors

Although the future has always been unknown, we have made use patterns of the past to frame our understandings of possible future scenarios. Now in the 21st century the work environment is being redefined by rapid change brought on by the impact and interactions of external forces that have fundamentally changed the world and continue to shape it and therefore the future can no longer be adequately modelled and predicted by extrapolating the past. Gratton (2010:20) states that:

> 'We live at a time when the schism with the past is of the same magnitude as that last seen in the 18th century. A schism of such magnitude that work – what we do, where we do it, how we work and with whom – will change, possibly unrecognisably in our lifetime.'

She summarises these external forces into five key themes: globalisation, technology, diminishing natural resources, unprecedented social and demographic change. Individually and in conjunction these external forces are having a profound effect that cannot be predicted. To gain an insight into the magnitude and pace of change it is only necessary to briefly review these themes over the period since the end of World War II noting that this is within living memory. The origins of globalisation began at this

time as a mechanism for preserving peace via international relationships forged in trade. A new era of international economic cooperation now exists; providing challenges and opportunities for the workforce. Technology has accelerated and enhanced the increased interconnectedness of global communities and now low-cost, high quality personal computing is further altering where and how we work through expanded networks of collaboration. This is further emphasized as we begin to become aware of the limits of the world's natural resources and engage with sustainable practices to limit our impact.
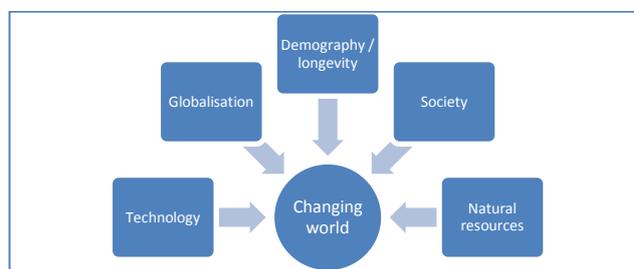
Fig 2.1 Summary of the five key forces shaping the 21st century

(Gratton, 2010)

Arnold and Randall et al (2010) have summarized (Fig 2.2) the social and demographic changes of our society and the impact on organizations and careers. A conclusion is that the future labour market will require the individual to be resilient, flexible, ready to seize opportunities and to take a deliberate responsibility for their own career management throughout their working lives.
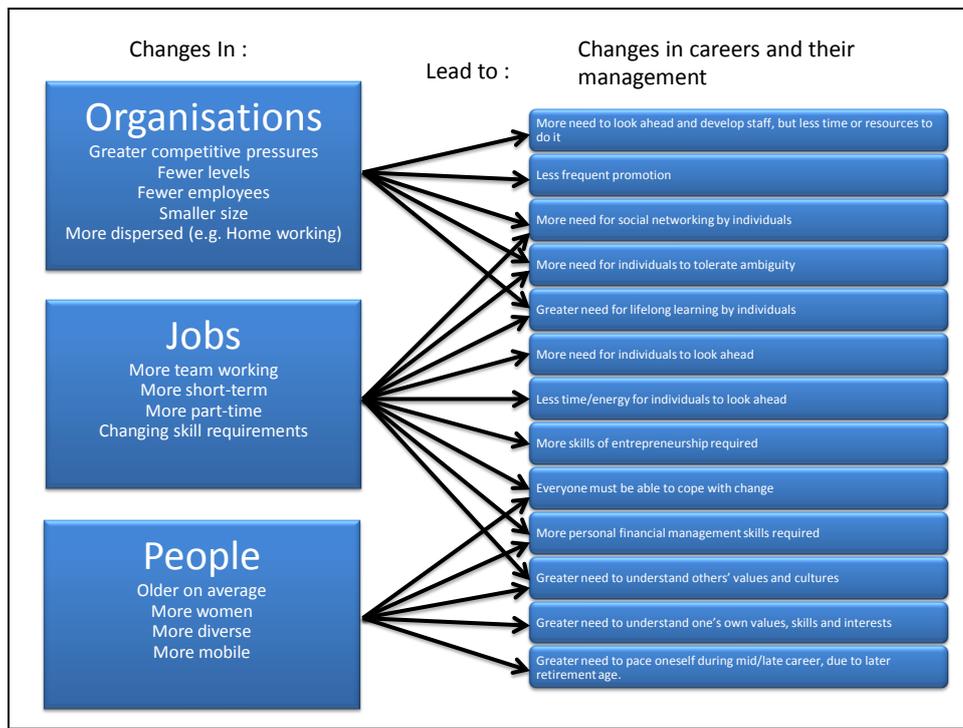
Fig 2.2 The social and demographic changes of our society and their impact on organizations and careers (adapted from Arnold and Randall et al, 2010)

2.1.2 Emerging Forms of Careers

Thus, today's working environment is increasingly moving away from full-time employment and job security. The traditional career defined by a steady vertical progression within one organization based on a transactional relationship of company-loyalty in return for training and a pension at the end is becoming increasingly scarce. Careers today are better described by the concept of the protean career. The protean career has been defined as 'a career based on self-direction in pursuit of psychological success in one's work' (Hall, 2002:23). Hall not only describes this as an approach to careers but argues that it is the best way to approach one's career with interpretations of 'success' being unique to the individual. The idea is that people can (and should) have both a coherent sense of identity, but also be able to adapt to labour market conditions. Briscoe and Hall (2006, cited in Arnold and Randall 2010:603) specify that a protean career is one where a person is:

1. Values driven, in the sense that the person's internal values provide a the guidance and measure of success for the individuals career; and

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2. Self-directed in a personal and career management, having the ability to be adaptive in terms of performance and learning demands

The concept of portfolio careers is also useful to review. Portfolio careers consist of a portfolio of jobs and are particularly common in the creative industries. In the early stages of a career it can be a transition stage to a protean or traditional career and towards the retirement stage of a career it can be the start of stepping back or giving something back to the community (Horn 2010:481) It can also provide an alternative approach to achieving a desired work-life balance in the main phase of a career.

The skills for managing both types of career are similar and include self-awareness, resilience, adaptability, self-management (and promotion) as well as a commitment to life-long learning and the ongoing development of strong networks.

2.1.3 Career Expectations of Generation Y

Generation Y is the collective term for the generation born in the period from the late 1970s to the turn of the century (no dates have yet been agreed to define this period precisely) but they are the children of the baby-boomers (post-war 1946-1964) and follow Generation X (1965-1977) into employment. Other terms for Generation Y include the 'net generation' in reference to the fact that they have grown-up with the internet and therefore tend to be more 'tech-savvy' with digital technologies incorporated seamlessly thorough all aspects of their lives. In an amalgamation of descriptors used to characterize this generation Broadbridge et al (2007) describe Generation Y as independent, well-educated, confident, technically literate, collaborative and socially aware. They seek challenge, personal growth and aspire to a good quality of life over a high standard of living. In many ways their characteristics are aligned with the changing workplace.

2.2: The Changing Role of Higher Education

The connection between higher education and the economy is long-standing; Yorke (2004) refers to the Robbins Report of 1963 and the more recent Dearing report

(NCIHE, 1997) to illustrate this point. However the contribution of higher education to the post-industrial economy is of growing significance as summarised in Ashwin (2006:5):

> 'In a fast-changing and increasingly competitive world, the role of higher education in equipping the labour force with appropriate and relevant skills, in stimulating innovation and supporting productivity and in enriching the quality of life is central' (DfES 2003a, paragraph 1.3:10 cited by Ashwin 2006:5)

As economies develop post-industrially they are described as knowledge based. "The knowledge based economy" is an expression coined to describe trends in advanced economies towards greater dependence on knowledge, information and high skill levels, and the increasing need for ready access to all of these by the business and public sectors (OECD, 2005). In knowledge based economies the product or output is the creation of knowledge and performance, therefore clearly reliant on the effectiveness of the workforce; this repositions the workforce as a vital asset described as 'human capital'. Expenditure on education is an investment in human capital. Many governments have strategies to increase the participation in higher education as a mechanism for increasing 'human capital' and thereby productivity. The last decade has seen significant increases in the proportion of individuals with a higher education qualification across many developed countries (Universities UK, 2011). A visible 'return' on this significant public investment then becomes required and successive governments have used 'employability' of graduates as a performance indicator in higher education (Atkins (1999), Morley 2001). Strategies for enhancing the employability of new graduates have therefore developed despite questions whether higher education can develop employability as governments suppose (Atkins, 1999 cited in Yorke 2004:4).

'Key employability skills' were originally integrated into the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) subject benchmarks for all undergraduate degrees following the Dearing Report in 1997. A variety of skills-centred lists have been developed from the original four 'key skills' of the Dearing committee. A main criticism

of these skills-centred lists is that they are not based on empirical evidence (Holmes, 2002:137) and therefore have the tendency to lengthen into a 'wish-list'. Knight and Yorke (2004:33) also describe the problem of shifting priorities of 'key' skills within a multitude of employment types and as the labour market fluctuates. Bowden and Marton (1998:11) challenge the relevance of lists of skills to education further stating:

> 'that outcomes described in terms of narrowly defined units of professional behaviour, derived from what professionals currently are believed to be capable of doing, is not appropriate. Education is about the future, not the present.'

There is a 'deficit model' apparent in the skill-centred lists that implies a shortfall between the expectations of employers and the achievements of graduates that is often articulated by lobbyists for business. By way of example Susan Anderson, the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) Director for Education & Skills, said:

> 'Employability skills are the most important attributes that businesses look for in new recruits, but graduates are currently falling short of employers' expectations. Competition for jobs is intense and graduate unemployment remains high, so students need to proactively develop relevant employability skills. But at the same time all universities need to explain these skills better and make sure they embed them in teaching.' (CBI, 2011)

However it is a moot point if such enhancements to employability skills are actually required. Brown & Hesketh (2004:232) report on the 'serious mismatch between what it takes get a good job and what it takes to do a good job'. Further Knight and Yorke (2004:22) describe how mass higher education is increasing the supply of graduates beyond the demand and that many employers neither demand nor can make best use of many highly skilled people. This encourages us to search for reasons for the persistence of the employability agenda. Could it be that it makes good business sense to off-load the responsibility for employee training to the public sector in order to reduce costs and that by undermining the confidence of highly capable graduates through statements of their failure to measure up helps to reduce initial salary expectations and keep the workforce 'grateful to have a job'? As Morley states in Knight and Yorke (2004:24):

'the employability discourse is a one-way gaze with truth claims that problematise the capital of students while leaving the cultural and social capital and employment practices of employers untouched.' (Morley 2001:137)

Regardless of whether the gap in employability skills is real, employability is a real concern for our students. Brown and Hesketh (2004:217) describe 'the investment in a university degree as a 'defensive' expenditure to reduce the prospect of declining wage levels'. The CBI state that the majority of students (79%) say that they decided to go to university to improve their job opportunities (CBI, 2011). It could be suggested that as the costs of a higher education rise and claims continue that graduates fail to 'measure up' it is inevitable that reassurances that higher education is 'value for money' will be sought. In order to respond to students' motivations for entering higher education it is pertinent to engage with the debate on employability. Futurelab (2006:3) describe this as shift in emphasis rather than a direct challenge to core purpose:

'…we are increasingly witnessing a change in the view of what education is for, with a growing emphasis on the need to support young people not only acquire knowledge and information, but to develop the resources and skills necessary to engage with social and technical change, and to continue to learn throughout the rest of their lives'

This shift encourages a redefinition of what is meant by employability in terms that focus on the benefits to learning and to society rather than business. Knight and Yorke (2004:8) address academic concerns and describe wider benefits:

'despite the name, 'employability' can be understood as a concern for learning that has benefits for citizenship, continued learning and life in general. This position is endorsed by the Work Experience Group (2002:9): 'Many of the skills required for success in work are the same as those needed for success in life more generally'.'

The Learning & Employability series all use the common definition of Yorke (2004:8) where employability is taken as:

'a set of achievements – skills, understandings and personal attributes – that makes graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy'

Despite the validity of concerns regarding the employability agenda it is important that academics do not become marginalized in the debate and seek a mechanism to support our students while maintaining academic values.

2.3 Learning as becoming

Situated learning theory focuses on the way knowledge is distributed socially and learning is embedded within activity, context and culture i.e. is seen as situated in the practices of communities (Lave and Wenger, 1991). Learning can then be articulated as legitimate peripheral participation (LPP). The term legitimate peripheral participation refers to a way of understanding learning that explicitly acknowledges the dialectical relation of individual subjects and the collective in which they are part; learning can be best regarded as changing participation in these settings rather than passively absorbing and processing information presented to them (Lee and Roth, 2003). Participation is at first peripheral to the activities of a community at the stage of the novice and with learning moves more centrally. This view of knowledge constructed socially through active participation is increasingly relevant in the knowledge economy. Learning of knowledgeable skills is subsumed by the learner's experience of participating in a community of practice. With the concept of a community of practice comes an emphasis on the individual's relationship with the group. Wenger (1998: 215) describes how learning informs identity,

> 'Because learning transforms who we are and what we can do, it is an experience of identity. It is not just an accumulation of skills and information, but a process of becoming – to become a certain person or, conversely to avoid becoming a certain person [...] We accumulate skills and information in the service of an identity.'

Skilful professional practice therefore clearly requires more than the acquisition of knowledge and skills. The inability to adequately capture the essence of required professional performance is a reason behind the lengthening list of attributes in a skills-centred approach. Dall'alba and Sandberg (1996 p425) summarize this and highlight the role of identity: 'a focus on attribute acquisition occurs at the expense of

encouraging development of professional identity, that is, learning to be the professional one seeks to become.'

Brown and Hesketh (2004:145) argue that:

> 'The concept of self-identity is [...] clearly important when it comes to how individuals construct and manage their employability. How an individual approaches the labour market is intimately linked with their ideas about what kind of person they think they are and the kind of person they want to become'

Hall (2002:4) states that identities are about questions of using the resources of history, language and culture in the process of becoming rather than being: not 'who we are' or 'where we came from', so much as what we might become, how we have been represented and how that bears on how we might represent ourselves.

Although communities of practice are often interpreted as relatively stable groups built up over years. A community of practice can be built around a common endeavour and in this way educational learning groups can have the characteristics of a community of practice (Mayes and de Freitas, 2007:20 in Beetham and Sharpe)

Holmes formulates these representations of self as a graduate identity model (2002: 144) and helps us to understand that our conceptions of skilful professional practice are a socially produced construction and the usefulness of identity to understand this further: 'the concepts of identity provide an analytical link between the personal and the social, between action and structure.' He then presents the claim-affirmation model of emergent identity (Fig 2.3) to explain the negotiations and interactions of 'claims-making' of identity. This maps the claim / disclaim and affirmation / disaffirmation as location in a social context and map emergent identity as movements between the zones.
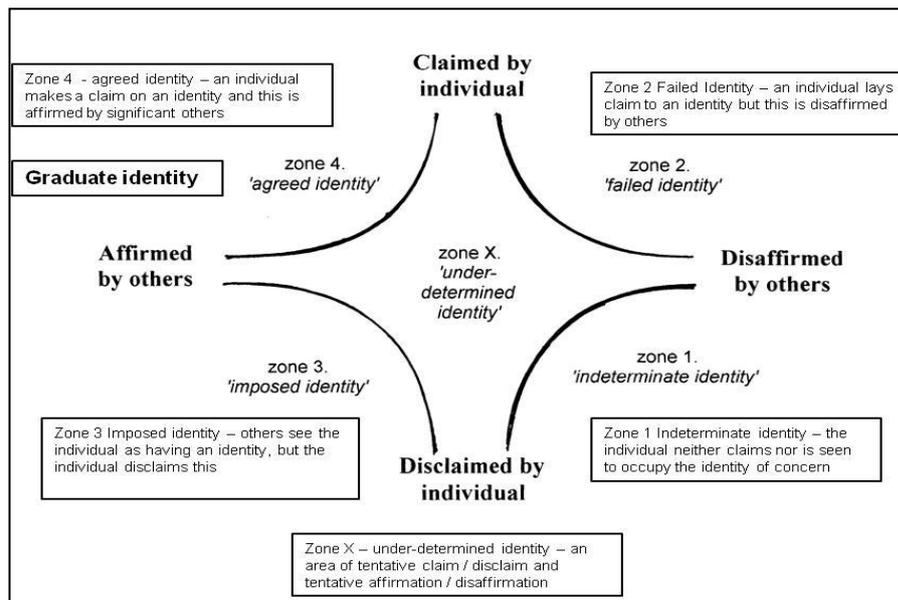
Fig 2.3 Claim-affirmation model of emergent identity (Holmes, 2002)

Zone X elegantly describes the fragility of transitions as from this point there is the possibility of moving into any of the other zones. The confirmation of identity by significant others is also introduced and Holmes goes onto to describe this through the notion of warranting by gatekeepers. He suggests the need for a double warrant for claims for a graduate identify (zone 4) to acknowledge the canonical and situational of knowledge of graduates. Judgments as to whether a person is capable of assuming a role in respect of practice are exploration of identity and this model can be helpful in the process of recruitment, articulating graduate attributes in response to employer descriptors. An advantage of this model is the student is active in the centre of this process and they must lay claim to their graduate identity. In this way an individual's own aspirations for their individual graduate identity can be incorporated rather than aligning oneself with predetermined lists of what a graduate 'should be'. Hinchliffe & Jolly (2011:575) have built upon this:

> 'Graduate identity, we suggest, is made up of the four strands of values, intellect, performance and engagement. The precise mix will vary across employers, size and sector, reflecting the distinct nature of each organisation, its structure, 'product' and ethos. The implication of this is that graduates need to be aware of their own identity (or profile) across these four sets of experience.'

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The 'graduate identity' approach is aligned with situated learning theory and 'legitimate peripheral participation' (Lave and Wenger 1991). In forming the graduate identity students need opportunities to test and rehearse aspects of what it means to be a graduate in order to then lay claim to a graduate identity. These opportunities for rehearsal can be readily embedded within a curriculum. Lave and Wenger (1991:108) clarify the need for active participation in practice, 'for newcomers the purpose is not to learn from talk as a substitute for legitimate peripheral participation; it is to learn to talk as a key to legitimate peripheral participation'. This active participation is a central premise in the curriculum redesign for the module.

2.4 Summary

Higher education now represents a considerable financial investment. In order to respond to this and to students' motivations for entering higher education it is pertinent to engage with the debate on employability. Skills-centred lists have not been successful and are both an over-simplification and over-complicated. We clearly need a different approach that engages learners and academics and can impart the independence and creativity needed to survive in a changeable working environment. There is a need for a clearer acknowledgement of the interconnectedness and synergy between knowing, doing and being. That this is a personal construct and not fixed. The participation within communities of practice can provide a realistic context to rehearse and affirm emerging graduate identities. The process of claims making maintains relevance in sustaining a career as needs and aspirations change over time.

Chapter three - Methodology

3.0 Introduction

This research aligns with situated learning theories and adopts a case study strategy of inquiry in order to explore legitimate peripheral participation within communities of practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991, Wenger 1998). The origins and fundamentals of the learning space re-design are described in chapter one. The contemporary shift towards viewing learning as 'situated' has been documented in chapter 2. This chapter will explore the reasons for the research methods that were utilised in this study.

3.1 Research Strategy

Yin (2009:9) states that the case study approach is most applicable when answering 'how' or 'why' questions because it draws attention to what can be specifically learned from the single case. Further, Simons (2009:23) states that it is useful for 'exploring and understanding the process and dynamics of change and can determine the factors that were critical in the implementation'.

This study documents how this learning space was constructed, how effective it was and how participation within it challenged students to engage with their own learning and development.

Yin (2002) defines a case study as an empirical inquiry that:

- Investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, when
- The boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are not clearly evident, and in which
- Multiple sources of evidence are used

Each of these aspects will now be detailed below. The module is a core 40-credit intermediate level module for a multidisciplinary cohort of 80 students of Textile, Surface Design and Fashion & Textile business courses at a post-1992 University. In term one the learners participate in the role-based global sourcing team project which

is 50% of the module mark. A pilot study was conducted in 2010-11 followed by this research in 2011-12. External influences on the learning space from learners' engagement with other modules within the university as well as their external commitments cannot be prevented. A mass of data was accumulated simply as a result of conducting the project. Stake (1995:24) identifies the difficulties in processing this mass of data as a potential weakness in the case study approach. The main methods for data collection for further analysis were refined to questionnaire, reflective log and focus groups and are described later in this chapter. Data that was deliberately not analysed included the teams' facebook contributions, as this was considered unethical use of the privileged access I had been granted, video recordings of the final assessment presentations as I predicted little research value in analyzing a scripted assessment presentation

Action research, common in pedagogical development was considered as an alternative approach. Blaxter at al (2010:68) confirm this as a popular approach 'for small-scale research in the social sciences, particularly for those working in professional areas such as education…It is well suited to the needs of people conducting research in their workplaces, and who have a focus on improving aspects of their own and colleagues' practices. Simons (2009:18) describes the different purposes that case study and action research have defining a case study as a 'process of conducting systematic, critical inquiry into a phenomenon of choice and generating understanding to contribute to cumulative public knowledge of the topic' and action research being concerned with a democratic shift of power in evaluation to the participants. Action research therefore is characterized by full and equal involvement of participants in the shaping of the outcome alongside the researcher. As the re-design had largely been implemented and the research sought an understanding of the experience for participants a case study approach was confirmed.

Case studies are often criticized for the lack of generalization to wider field but the main aim of case studies is not to produce knowledge that can be generalized to other

contexts in the conventional meaning. Stake (1995:85) writes about naturalistic generalization in case study research. His argument is based on the shared issues and aspects between the reader's experiences and the case study report itself. He expects that the empirical data presented by intensive case studies resonate with the readers, thereby facilitating a greater understanding of the case among the readers (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008:225). Therefore despite the uniqueness of this case but it will have connections with reader's tacit knowledge of this field and dissemination of this case study should yield pragmatic outcomes for others to build into their own understandings of this topic.

3.2 Case study data collection and analysis

3.2.1 Pilot - Preliminary planning to support effective learning

As described in chapter one the re-design was run as a pilot 2009-10. This allowed the processes of forming and operating in the learning space to be tested and somewhat refined before the case study. With the learning space established to some extent it allowed for clearer consideration of data collection and how best to support effective team-working and embed professional practice. Other changes made to the learning space following the pilot:

- Support for effective team-working was further improved with specific resources, class exercises and discussions throughout the project

- With students being from three courses the scheduling of a regular meeting time had proved difficult and therefore the delivery of some content was revised to provide more space within the taught timetable to meet face to face

- The industry has a current shortage of technical skills, the project allows interested students to select a technical role and consideration of career opportunities in this area were boosted with an external speaker

- A reflective log was added to the submission requirement

3.2.2 Learning Design
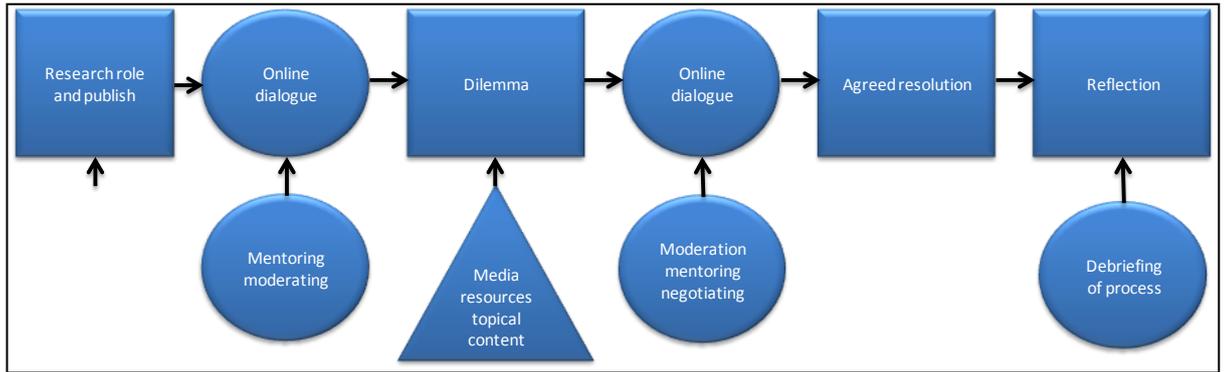
3.1 Temporal sequence describing a role-based learning design (Oliver et al, 2007)

The redesign had been completed with limited time. There was a lot of additional material and tasks beyond the module content that contributed to the experience. The experience also has a blurred existence alongside the learners' activities outside the module. It was considered important to attempt to unravel the underpinnings of the design and to map it. Britain (2004 cited in Oliver et al, 2007) describes this process of designing for learning as creating a learner workflow. This process was carried out in reverse using the temporal sequence framework for role-based learning designs (Fig 3.1) (Oliver et al 2007) and then compared to the framework in order to make iterative improvements.

3.2.3 Student's initial perceptions survey

The pilot had been successful in terms of attainment and the change had been well received by course leaders and by students but before it evolved further it is also important to get feedback from the student group. Students are the subject matter expert in this process and it was important to test and re-affirm my assumptions with them. This was a major incentive behind the questionnaire completed at the very start of the module. It was useful to open up an honest dialogue of my intentions and research area. The questionnaire (appendix A) was developed to capture students' initial conceptions of learning and personal and professional development and is discussed further below in section 4.3.

It was considered necessary to capture initial data from the learners prior to the project. This was to gauge the 'starting point' as this may not be in line across all 3 courses or with my own expectation. Although questionnaires yield general information rather than rich data it was felt that a small scale survey would yield an effective insight into the learner's current position. There are many existing surveys in this field, these were consulted but were viewed as more appropriate for an individual consultation rather than a general survey. The final research questionnaire used the SOMUL study (Brennan et al, 2010) as a basis because of its broad approach to include conceptions of learning and personal and professional identity. The original survey is extensive with ten sections and this was shortened to 58 questions over five sections: on being a student, attitudes to learning, how you study, skill-awareness and skills-development. The questionnaire uses a likert scale of five common in opinion surveys. Although there is the possibility that respondents will give the answer they think they should rather than their genuine response, the plan was to gain an early overview by identifying the top 10 (high agreement) and bottom 10 (high disagreement). The research was outlined at the beginning of the first lecture and a request for any completed questionnaires to be returned at the end of the session was made.

3.2.4 Reflective Log

It was clear from the pilot that the learning space did facilitate good quality learning as well as provide an opportunity for rehearsal of professional practice and for personal development but there needed to be a mechanism to capture this and for students to take ownership of it. The reflective log at the end of the project was added to provide this and is discussed further in section 4.4

From the outset of the project students are notified that a team mark is routinely awarded for this assignment. The allocation of a team mark is usually accompanied by concerns regarding fairness due to issues regarding contribution (Michaelsen at al,

2002). The reflective log was introduced to provide a mechanism and outlet for addressing these issues following the pilot stage. It was also expected that the logs would collect useful data on the experience and reveal pertinent aspects of learning relevant to the iterative development of the project.

The log has a broader purpose than simply providing evidence of cases of perceived unfairness. This is a challenging project but had previously yielded phenomenal results and a log would provide a meaningful way of capturing these difficulties and successes of the project in a way that could be built upon. Reflection enables learners to feel that they 'own' their knowledge and understanding. Reflection is a common part of practice within Personal Development Planning (PDP) as it provides opportunities for emotional engagement with subject learning and is a fundamental feature of a deeper approach to learning. Moon (2004:83) defines reflection in academic contexts:

> 'Reflection is a form of mental processing – closely related to thinking and learning. In the academic context, there is likely to be a conscious and stated purpose for the reflection, with an outcome stated in terms of learning or clarification. Academic reflection is likely to be preceded by a description of the purpose and/or subject matter of the reflection. The process of reflection is applied to relatively complicated or unstructured ideas for which there is not an obvious solution. In the academic context, the outcome of reflective work is likely to be written, to be seen by others and to be assessed which may influence its nature and quality.

Learners were not provided with a framework or other presentation requirements for their log. The log was deliberately unstructured to avoid learners simply 'going through the motions'. A guidance sheet was provided detailing the purpose of this piece of reflective writing together with some prompt questions to facilitate reflection (Appendix B). Teams were encouraged to keep professional meeting minutes so that absence and actions are visibly recorded and a personal diary record of the term to draw from for the submitted reflective log. The 1500-2000 word log is submitted one week after the team presentation.

As a research method the use of logs must be considered as a highly interpretative method as events are interpreted by the learner in completing the log and then again

when the data is analysed from them. Additionally the process of extracting data from logs is inevitably time-consuming and the data emerging from them must then be treated with caution. Despite these disadvantages worthwhile outcomes were expected and the method was used.

3.2.5 Focus groups

Denscombe (1998:173) defines a focus groups as 'small groups of people who are brought together by a 'moderator' (the researcher) to explore attitudes and perceptions, feelings and ideas about a specific topic'.

Three focus groups were conducted separately with each of the three courses taking the module. It was felt participants would be more comfortable with peers from their own cohort and there would be more 'common ground' to discuss. The focus group sessions were conducted 3 months after the completion of the global group project and at a time when students were focusing their attention on getting or preparing for a placement in the industry. Six participants from each course volunteered to attend. The sessions were all videotaped to prevent note-taking becoming a distraction to the participants and the flow of the discussions. There was an initial discussion on their experience of being a student and expectations of graduation and early career. Then two card sort activities outlined in Rees et al (2006:12) using skills and competencies identified by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Subject Benchmark Statements and the Council for Industry and Higher Education (CIHE) competencies provided the main focus of the sessions. Participants completed the card sort activities in smaller groups of two or three. Before the first activity participants are reminded that the statements are intended to represent graduates not intermediate level students and to consider this when thinking of how closely they felt they represented the statements of expected graduate ability. In the activity students are given individual cards of each skill identified in the QAA Subject Benchmark Statements and asked to place it on a header sheet in the range from 1 – no experience to 6- significantly better than most. Students in this cohort are under 2 benchmark statements and the appropriate statement was used. In

the second activity participants were given individual cards of each competency from the list of CIHE competencies and asked to place it on a header sheet in the range from 1 – not relevant to 4 – essential. At the end of each activity there was a general discussion and then more specifically on how this information could be used in a CV or presented in a job interview or to plan placement activities.

3.2.6 Secondary data

As it was not manageable to split the cohort into a control group and the experimental group experimental data to assess learning through achievement was accessed via departmental results records. Although this is a somewhat crude measure with other data it will support an overall picture.

3.3 Research Ethics

The student group were made aware of the field and purpose of the research at the beginning of the project and again before any of the sessions. This was formalised through written consent forms that also explained that participants would remain anonymous, that any data would be treated confidentially and that they were able to withdraw at any time. Responses have been anonymised and are indicated by a number, although this loses the gender of responses as there is only one male student in the cohort, the protection of his identity needed to take priority. As this research is conducted from the position of module leader it was reiterated that module grades would not be affected by participation or withdrawal.

3.4 Summary

The research adopted a case study strategy. The methods employed were:

- Mapping of the module using a temporal sequence framework
- Questionnaire
- Reflective log

- Focus group

- Secondary data collection from departmental results records

Chapter four will present explore and discuss the findings from the data collected by these methods described above.

Chapter four - Findings

4.0 Introduction

This study documents how a collaborative learning space was constructed, how effective it was and how participation within it challenged students to engage with their own learning and development. It also seeks to test underlying assumptions in the redesign with the student group. As described in chapter three the findings are subject to an interpretative approach.

4.1 Measuring the effectiveness of the redesign through achievement

It was not considered appropriate or manageable to operate a control group alongside the redesign in order to measure the effectiveness of the measures taken to improve the module. In order to capture some data to address this the year on year results have been considered. These show the median mark improving from 61.5% in 2009-10 to 68% in 2010-11 and 69% in 2011-12 as well a general improvement in all grades as depicted in figure 4.1. Grades are awarded by a panel of 4 at the presentation and panel members have been consistent in the time period reported here.
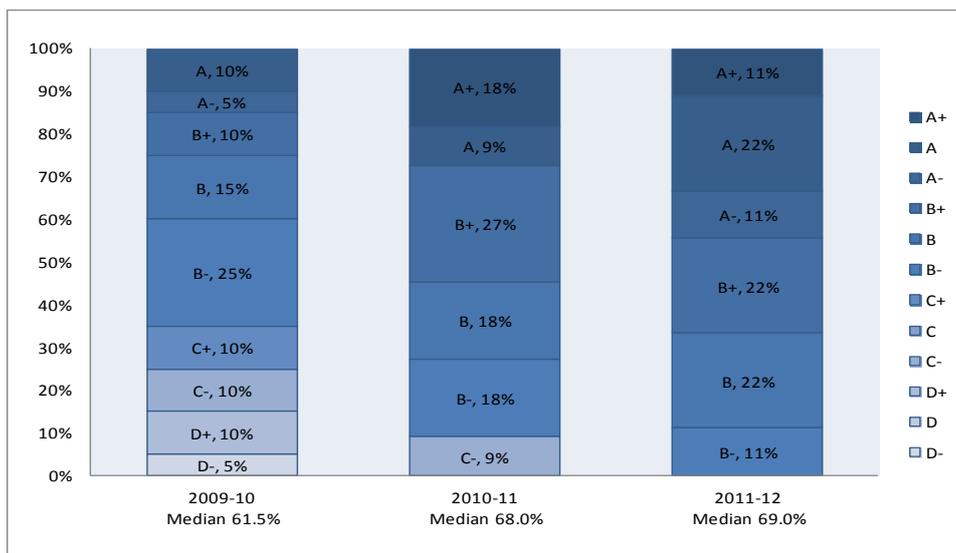
Fig 4.1 Module median marks 2009-2012

Although the improvement could be attributed to a number of factors it is clear that students are engaged with the new format and are achieving good results.

4.2 Research Design

A model of the learning design has been constructed using Oliver et al (2007) temporal sequence framework for role-based learning designs in order to clarify the key aspects that underpin the module and to prompt further iterations. Figure 4.2 clearly demonstrates the breadth of resources beyond standard lecture input. The role-play team project spans the first term of the module and is delivered in 2 two-hour lectures and supported by self-directed learning.
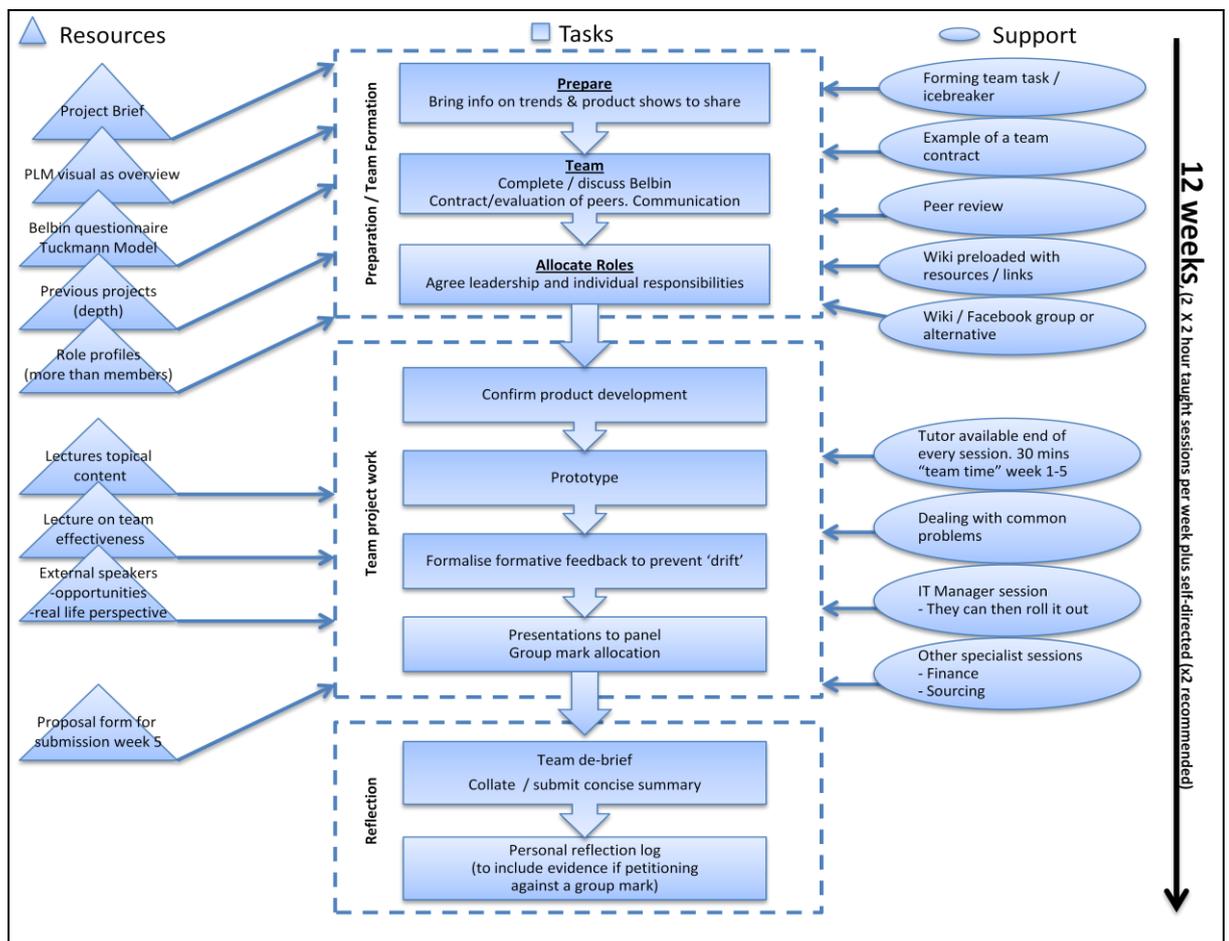
Fig 4.2 Constructed learning design for the module

The learning design has three critical phases of planning and preparation, interaction and reflection and evaluation. In the first phase learners agree within their team the form that their product development and operating business model will take. They then use the Belbin model to review team strengths alongside industry roles in order to

assign roles and responsibilities within the team. The next phase sees learners making use of the pre-loaded resources and their own research to develop their products. Key ICT knowledge was rolled out directly to those who took on the role of IT manager and this has proved very successful in encouraging adoption of new software.   This mechanism will be used to disseminate other technical knowledge such as finance and quality assurance. This phase culminates in a presentation to a panel of staff. The final phase involves reflecting on the process and experience and producing an individual log to facilitate ownership of the learning. This stage will be enhanced by a team de-brief after the presentation where a group report is summarized for submission.

4.3 Initial Student's Perceptions Survey

As described in chapter three this was conducted in order to check my own assumptions with the student group. It also provided an insight into the concerns and aspirations of the cohort as well as the demands of learning today. The responses to the 54 statements were ranked by the whole cohort and for each of the 3 individual courses. The statements were then ranked and the highest and lowest statements by ranking are shown in fig 4.3.

There is a good consensus in both high and low ranking statements even though students are aligned to different QAA benchmark statements; group B to General Business and both S and T to Art & Design benchmark. This consistency in responses allows the group to be treated as a cohort. All respondents saw the development of a range of skills as important (D7) and keen to develop (D2) did attend to feedback (C10) and felt they were developing (A4) but were not actively reviewing their professional skills (D1). This last point is confirmed by responses suggesting they were unclear what employers might expect of graduates in their specialism (D3) suggesting that more support is needed and a clearer structure may be helpful. Respondents saw their personal development as an area of development throughout their careers (D11) which shows a mature and realistic understanding of the world of work, rather than assuming that their development was complete upon graduation.   It was surprising that

respondents did not feel their attitudes were changing (A1) which is at odds with the other responses on development but implies a somewhat fixed perception of self to be investigated further. In line with the vocational nature of the course students are interested in the subject and industry (C7, C8, D9, C5) and had a positive view of their courses in the main (E15, E14, E3, E6, E9, D5, E2) although areas that may need further strengthening were also raised (E1, E8, E13). Interestingly students felt the work was not as demanding as they expected (A2) suggesting they would respond to a challenge (opportune for the project) but possibly yielding a different result if taken later in the term. However, it does suggest that the foundation year could perhaps step-up towards the end of the year to introduce more challenge. Many responses of the questionnaire would be useful to follow-up on but it was judged impractical to repeat the questionnaire later as there would be little benefit to the respondents. It would be interesting to track responses longitudinally at course level.

Highest ranking statements (agree / strongly agree)

All Average	Rank	S Average	Rank	B Average	Rank	T Average	Rank	Q	
4.67	1	4.89	2	4.56	6	4.53	2	D7	It is important to develop a portfolio of skills.
4.65	2	4.74	3	4.89	1	4.29	6	D11	I expect to continue to develop professionally even after graduating.
4.65	2	4.94	1	4.35	10	4.67	1	E15	Creativity.
4.60	3	4.67	5	4.61	5	4.53	2	B9	For me, learning means acquiring knowledge and skills that I can later put to practical use.
4.57	4	4.58	7	4.72	3	4.38	4	C7	I have a broad interest in the subject I am studying.
4.52	5	4.47	10	4.67	4	4.41	3	D2	I am keen to develop as a person.
4.50	6	4.68	4	4.39	9	4.41	3	C10	I attend to the feedback I have received in order to do better.
4.45	7	4.63	6	4.61	5	4.11	9	A6	I am motivated to succeed.
4.44	8	4.53	8	4.44	8	4.33	5	A4	I am developing as a person.
4.42	9	4.37		4.78	2	4.11	9	E12	Time management.
4.39	10	4.47	10	4.39	9	4.29	6	C8	I research my interests.
4.38		4.68	4	4.39	9	4.06	10	E10	Self-discipline.
4.36		4.58	7	4.44	8	4.06	10	E11	Self-reliance.
4.26		4.42		4.11		4.24	7	E14	A real expertise in my subject.
4.24		4.32		4.33		4.06	10	A3	Being a student gives me a sense of freedom and independence.
4.22		4.11		4.56	6	4.00		E3	Ability to work in teams.
4.18		4.21		4.17		4.17	8	E6	Evaluation skills.
4.16		4.47	10	4.39	9	3.61		E9	Oral presentation skills.
4.15		4.16		4.50	7	3.76		D5	My course supports my development into a professional graduate.
4.15		4.26		4.44	8	3.71		D9	I try to stay up to date with the industry.
4.06		4.53	9	3.78		3.81		C9	I like to test ideas.
4.05		4.05		4.00		4.11	9	E2	Ability to apply knowledge.
3.98		3.89		4.00		4.06	10	B4	If I have difficulty understanding a topic I look for other material to help me.

Lowest ranking statements (disagree / strongly disagree)

All Average	Rank	S Average	Rank	B Average	Rank	T Average	Rank	Q	
2.15	1	2.16	1	1.89	1	2.41	2	C2	Much of what I learn seems no more than lots of unrelated bits and pieces in my mind.
2.19	2	2.21	2	2.00	2	2.35	1	C5	I just go through the motions of studying without seeing where I'm going.
2.57	3	2.53	4	2.44	4	2.76	4	C1	I often have trouble making sense of the things I have to learn.
2.71	4	2.47	3	3.06	8	2.61	3	E1	Ability to analyse and use numerical data.
2.76	5	2.84	6	2.33	3	3.12	7	A7	It's hard to find out what is expected of me
2.79	6	2.72	5	2.89	6	2.76	4	C4	I tend to take what I've been taught at face value without questioning it much.
2.85	7	3.28	9	2.50	5	2.76	4	B3	I prefer lectures where the information is presented to me and I do not need to participate.
3.06	8	3.21	8	3.06	8	2.88	5	D1	I review my professional skills regularly.
3.13	9	3.53		2.94	7	2.88	5	A2	The work is much more demanding than I expected.
3.15	10	3.11	7	3.22	9	3.11	6	B2	For me, learning is making sure I can reproduce the facts on the course.
3.40		3.56		3.33		3.31	9	B8	I expect to need less help from the tutors as my course progresses.
3.46		3.32	10	3.78		3.29	8	D3	I am clear what prospective employers will expect of graduates in my specialism.
3.64		3.21	8	4.06		3.67		E8	Leadership skills.
3.64		4.00		3.29	10	3.61		A1	I find I'm changing my attitude on all kinds of things.
3.71		3.89		3.22	9	4.00		A8	I'm worried that there's not going to be decent job for me at the end of the course.
3.95		4.16		4.22		3.44	10	E13	Writing skills.

Fig 4.3 Summary of questionnaire findings

4.4 Reflective Logs

The analysis of logs is highly interpretative. Ways to avoid this were investigated e.g. coding but this was considered to be too time-consuming. An alternative thematic approach has been used. The logs were collated and read as a team in order to get a full sense of the team dynamic. Logs that clearly articulated aspects or events within each team were kept to one side. These were then read again to identify key themes and are summarized below. Quotes from almost a third of the group have been used; only 3 logs were descriptive, rather than reflective, and therefore yielded no useable data.

4.4.1 Getting established

Michelson et al (2002:79) suggest that 'groups of five to seven would appear to be optimal'. This was largely achieved in the pilot of 2010-11 with teams consisting of at least 2 students from each of the three courses. However, in 2011-12 the business group cohort was significantly smaller and group size had to be increased for 2011-12 in order to maintain 2 students from each course within each team. This was given careful consideration but it was felt it would be unfair and daunting to leave some students 'on their own' in the initial forming stage. However as a consequence there are a lot of new people to get to know quite quickly. To facilitate openness and discussions one of the first tasks for the new teams is the completion of the Belbin Self-Perception Inventory. This was something I had completed on several occasions within my career in industry and had proven useful. Although these are intended for use within the workplace most of the students have had some work experience and are able to complete the questionnaire. The main purpose was to initiate a conversation within the teams of how different people may behave in a group, to encourage openness with peers about previous experiences and to become aware of how 'allowable weaknesses' could easily be misinterpreted. It is non-confrontational in that results indicate preferred / least preferred ways of working but do not suggest that any

are the 'right' way. It becomes clear through reviewing the descriptors that certain behaviours will be more effective; when we become aware of our habits of mind other approaches can be seen as valuable and possibly worth trying. After conducting these I became concerned that there may have been a breach of copyright in doing so but as this is educational research it is classed as 'fair dealing' and not viewed as a copyright infringement. However next year a more careful review of possible alternative tests will be made.

Students were very positive about the use of the Belbin roles:

> 'Using the Belbin test at the beginning was very helpful...I would definitely recommend this system when working in a group…we were able to work from the results' L-6

> 'With regards to the Belbin test it was immensely comforting to define myself within the team…I was actually stunned as the result because the description was so accurate. The weaknesses described me to perfection. I know this is not a good thing to say as we are meant to sell ourselves and not focus upon the negative but I found it so relieving to say the way I work which sometimes scares me and frustrates me is actually a stereotypical role. It was comforting to see the strengths next to the weaknesses as I do believe I have a lot of potential…My greatest hope is that I break this chain.' L-14

> With regards to the Belbin roles, at first I did not think they related very well to me but at the end I can see clearer links. This did shock me…but it gave me something to think about L-9

Following the Belbin evaluations, groups review the brief and the industry roles and responsibilities outlined in it. There are more roles than members meaning that they have to decide how to structure their business venture and how it will operate. Groups were advised to think about how often they would meet, how they would communicate, to agree a formal working contract and a mechanism for peer review. The large groups did create some difficulties in meeting regularly face-to-face:

> Due to the size of the team it was quite difficult to arrange physical meetings that fitted in with everyone's commitments L-1

> I found this module quite stressful in the fact that it is hard to get everyone together at certain times; we all had different timetables and things such as part-time jobs to work around L-12

Comments from the logs also recommended that the last part of each lecture be reserved for a compulsory team meeting to help with this. Certainly in the earlier stages when trust is being established through meeting and socializing this would prove useful. Some were quick to realise things could run more efficiently by forming specialism sub-groups:

> 'I implemented efficiency by dividing the team of 9 into sub-team of 3; this was partly in response to large team meetings which were becoming loud and argumentative. Division into sub-teams meant people were grouped together and allowed quieter people to be more decisive and influential within their sub-teams, thus yielding the best work from everyone. It also allowed the [weekly] full team meeting to be more constructive as everyone listened to what each sub-team had achieved that week.' L-10

In order to introduce current ICT practice, IT managers were required to attend a one-off specialism session to showcase cutting edge practice within the industry to challenge groups to test a range of software in their communications and presentations

> In my role as IT Manager, it was compulsory for me to attend an extra IT session, this was very informative and told us about the way companies work within industry, and how they pass around their ideas and documents…The extra IT session meant I could contribute and help my team with communicating. L-27

> To aid our communication outside group meetings we used a variety of online tools. These included Google docs, a Facebook group and Prezi. L-2

> A facebook group and Google docs were set up to enable us to connect with each other and share information L-8

> A facebook group meant we could all get in touch with each other all the time and it worked even more effectively due to the majority of the team having smartphones so we got updates immediately L-4

> 'the Facebook group was a good way for the team to communicate…as it is there for everyone to see' L-10

A Facebook group was used by all the groups, but there were some disadvantages to this too:

> 'Keeping in touch through Facebook group messaging was a convenient way of communication, yet I feel using the 'wiki' could have been a more professional way of exchanging ideas and thoughts as Facebook could often be distracting' L-5

> Although this [Facebook] was effective in communicating information quickly, there was often an overload of information which was not properly addressed and commented on L-24

> I like to be evaluated regularly so I enjoyed receiving positive feedback on my work [via Facebook]. However, I think that peer evaluation is quite a difficult skill to learn and as a team we need more practice, since generally team members were inclined to just comment that they 'liked' something rather than give reasons why or offer suggestions for improvement. L-3

Many students commented on concerns of lack of commitment from other students but shied away from establishing a formal contract or mechanism for peer review as a group and clearly need more support to implement this. Most groups came to realize that there were clear benefits from a more formal and structured approach and a competent leader:

> 'Next time I would have someone who is strict and not afraid of confrontation to be MD. Their sole purpose would be to oversee the group and prompt members to do work; they would check it over and make sure it was correct. I would encourage people to sign a contract at the beginning about work they will complete. L-11

> Do differently? – need a strong coordinator who was able to pull together all the different strands and have a clear plan of what direction we are travelling in…if we had one lead person the project could have been done quicker and been less stressful. L-21

> 'I motivated people by completing mid-term tutorials which formed an initial bond and confronted issues with individual members' L-10

> 'I think we should make the negotiating and agreeing on team deadlines a priority, since sometimes these were unclear' L-1

> What else would help? If there was something official to do on paper by the halfway point, such as a written proposal of the product...this would have forced us to decide at an earlier point.L-9

Although unequal contributions (real and perceived) had caused some stress in the teams during the project most were able to reflect maturely:

> I have learnt not to dwell on the people who do not contribute within the group – just carry on and do the best you can with the people who do want to work hard and you will come out with an enormous feeling of satisfaction at the end, and a project you can feel proud of. L-12

> I have come to realise there will always be a xxxxxx in every group L-17

> 'Some of us would need to be more motivated and have more energy whereas some of us would need to be less full on and more considerate of what other people are thinking / feeling.' L-16

Groups came to realize that confrontation can be a necessary part of agreeing a consensus and not to be avoided at all costs:

> This did lead to a clash of opinions but I think this had a positive impact because it tested the strength of our ideas and improved the product overall. As Thomas Jefferson once said, "Difference of opinion leads to inquiry and inquiry leads to truth" L-9

> Ending on a high has actually enabled us to reflect upon the whole project and understand that we all had the same end goal. Any conflict was set aside and completely forgotten about, and I felt we showed no sign of previous tension [when presenting], demonstrating our achievable professionalism L-23

Students could clearly identity where they had developed or could work towards in the future:

> As a whole we struggled to understand business finances. I decided to contact a student studying business and finance to look over our spreadsheet templates […] We [also] struggled to prototype our product so we contacted a student studying engineering […] asking him to bring our designs to life by making them 3D…I felt as though I really achieved something through this task as I reached out of my comfort zone and approached people and software I did not know. The assignment has also highlighted areas I would like to know more about […] I feel I have gained invaluable knowledge of the industry I aspire to be part of L-20

> 'In industry, I will need to be able to work alongside people with other specialisms and different characteristics and attitudes. This module helped be realize this and help me notice that sometimes I have to adapt the way I work to work better within a team' L-23

> I feel that this experience has developed me as a person, in preparation for my role in industry. I now really enjoy working in a group and no longer daunted by working in teams L-7

> This project helped me grow, as a designer and as a potential employee by making me realise just how much work goes into making one product. It has made me extremely interested in the administrative side of a company and I have applied for a partial administrative placement on the back of this project. To help me develop my skills I have been spending a lot of time researching product development and entrepreneurial skills in the library' L-18

> As confidence was one of my weak points I feel that all the effort the group had put into rehearsing and the belief we had for our product helped me a lot with

this issue and I was quite pleased with the way I presented as I managed to stay calm, speak in a clear voice and provide some eye contact' L-2

Finally, reflecting

Most importantly I have gained 9 new friends who can hopefully encourage each other in the future […] I honestly would not have achieved this on my own without my group's advice and our good group communication L-15

This was by far the most positive teamwork I have done and where I have gained more knowledge from my own research and from working alongside other students who have different methods of working and gathering research materials L-25

I have really gained a lot of knowledge both from the process and my colleagues L-20

We would all love to turn this project into reality, so watch this space L-8

4.5 Focus Group

The three focus groups yielded over six hours of video footage. The time was well spent as it gave a valuable insight into student life and although the students participated in order to support the research they did comment that it had been a helpful process for them too, 'I feel like I've has a counseling session' FS-4. However, it is not possible to process the qualitative data more systematically with the given resources. The results of the sessions have therefore been simplified to the summaries of the two card sort activities accompanied with relevant participant comments below. With further adaptation these activities would be a useful addition to current PDP practice particularly if the student added their own examples of evidence against each statement and retained the record for future refection.

4.5.1 Card Sort 1 QAA Benchmark statements

The language in the statements was not sufficiently accessible and clarification was sought on many of the statements. Lack of understanding of the statement meant that participants then ranked these statements at the lower end of the scale regardless of their actual ability. The interpretative nature of the statements and the lack of appropriate context became apparent. Participants were very clear that the nature of graduate recruitment and selection is very subjective and therefore they found it very

difficult to express the concept of 'a graduate' with 'trustworthy, passionate, driven, confident' being offered. It this way it was useful to have a basis to work from. It also proved useful in building confidence when the high scoring of statements as a whole was considered and examples of each discussed.

> I can't believe how much I've learnt in my second year, I do feel ready to go into final year' FT-2

> 'The course has done everything [expected] and more' FT-1

QAA Benchmark (Art & Design) card sort							
Score 1= no experience, 6= better than most							
Avg All	Rank A	Avg S	Rank S	Avg T	Rank T	#	Statement in full
5.6	1.0	6.0	1.0	5.3	1.0	6	Develop ideas through to outcomes
5.4	2.0	6.0	2.0	5.0	4.0	11	Study independently, set goals, manage own workloads and meet deadlines
5.4	3.0	6.0	3.0	5.0	5.0	16	Interact effectively with others, for example through collaboration, collective endeavour and negotiation.
5.3	4.0	5.5	9.0	5.2	3.0	17	Articulate ideas and information comprehensibly in visual, oral and written forms
5.2	5.0	5.5	10.0	5.0	6.0	14	Source and research relevant material, assimilating and articulating relevant findings
5.2	6.0	6.0	4.0	4.7	8.0	15	Identify personal strengths and needs, and reflect on personal development.
5.2	7.0	5.0		5.3	2.0	20	Source, navigate, select, retrieve, evaluate, manipulate and manage information from a variety of sources
5.0	8.0	6.0	5.0	4.3		10	Able to employ materials, media, techniques, methods, technologies and tools associated with the discipline with skill and imagination while observing good working practices
4.9	9.0	5.5		4.5	10.0	7	Manage and make appropriate use of the interaction between intention, process, outcome, context, and the methods of dissemination
4.9	10.0	6.0	6.0	4.2		18	Present ideas and work to audiences in a range of situations
4.8		4.5		5.0	7.0	1	The knowledge, understanding and skills for continuing personal development and professional practice.
4.8		5.0		4.7	9.0	13	Analyse information and experiences, formulate independent judgements, and articulate reasoned arguments through reflection, review and evaluation
4.8		5.5		4.3		9	Communicate visually to investigate, analyse, interpret, develop and articulate ideas and information.
4.6		5.0		4.3		21	Select and employ communication and information technologies.
4.4		4.5		4.3		19	Use the views of others in the development or enhancement of their work.
4.6		5.5		4.0		3	Generate ideas, concepts, proposals, solutions or arguments independently and/or collaboratively in response to set briefs and/or as self-initiated activity
3.8		3.5		4.0		22	Demnostrate an enthusiasm for enquiry into the discipline and the motivation to sustain it.
4.4		5.5		3.7		12	Anticipate and accommodate change, and work within contexts of ambiguity, uncertainty and unfamiliarity.
4.0		4.5		3.7		8	Apply resourcefulness and entrepreneurial skills to their own practice and to that of others
4.5		6.0	7.0	3.5		5	Select, test and make appropriate use of materials, processes and environments
4.2		6.0	8.0	3.0		4	Employ both convergent and divergent thinking in the processes of observation, investigation, speculative enquiry, visualisation and/or making
4.0		5.5		3.0		2	Apply, consolidate and extend learning in different contextual frameworks and situations, both within and beyond the field of art and design.

Fig 4.4 Summary of QAA Benchmark (Art and Design) Card sort.

QAA Benchmark (General Business & Management) card sort			
Score 1= no experience, 6= better than most			
Avg	Rank	#	Statement in full
5.5	1.0	6	Ability to self-manage their time, behaviour, motivation, initiative and enterprise.
5.0	2.0	7	Have an appetite for reflective, adaptive and collaborative learning.
4.8	3.0	4	Be effective in written & oral communication, using ICT and a range of media widely used in business, for example, business reports
4.5	4.0	9	Have leadership, team building, influencing and project management skills
4.3	5.0	10	Be effective at listening, negotiating and persuasion
4.0	6.0	1	Ability to demonstrate understanding of organisations, the external environment in which they operate, how they are managed and the future needs of organisations
4.0	7.0	11	Be able to research business and management issues
3.8	8.0	8	Be self-aware, sensitive and open to the diversity of people, cultures, business and management issues
3.5	9.0	3	Be effective at problem-solving and decision-making, using appropriate quantitative and qualitative skills and also be able to create, evaluate and assess options, together with being able to apply ideas and knowledge to a range of situations
3.0	10.0	12	Be able to address issues at European and international levels.
2.8	11.0	2	Apply, consolidate and extend learning in different contextual frameworks and situations, both within and beyond the field of art and design.
2.3	12.0	5	Have numeracy and quantitative skills including modelling and data analysis, interpretation and extrapolation

Fig 4.5 Summary of QAA Benchmark (General Business and Management) Card Sort.

4.5.2 Card Sort 2 Council for Industry and Higher Education (CIHE)

Avg (all)	Rank	Avg S	Rank	Avg T	Rank	Avg B	Rank	#	Statement in full
CIHE competencies card sort									
Score: 1 - not relevant 4 - essential									
3.9	1	4.0	1	3.7	2	4.0	1	5	The ability to communicate
3.7	2	3.8	5	3.3	6	3.9	2	21	Work experience
3.6	3	4.0	2	3.7	3	3.4	5	4	The ability to work with others in a team
3.6	4	3.5	7	3.3	7	3.8	3	12	To prioritize and plan effectively
3.6	5	4.0	3	3.3	5	3.6	4	14	To finish the job even under pressure
3.2	6	3.5	8	4.0	1	2.6		13	To seek and take responsibility
3.2	7	4.0	4	2.3		3.4	6	17	Technical competence in own field – can apply subject specific knowledge
3.1	8	3.8	6	2.7	10	3.0	8	6	The ability to persuade
2.9	9	3.5	9	3.0	8	2.6		10	The desire to improve own performance
2.9	10	2.5		2.3		3.4	7	22	Understanding of basic financial and commercial principles
2.6		2.0		2.3		3.0	9	23	Understanding of organisations work environment – strategy and competitiveness and internal culture
2.7		3.0		2.0		3.0	10	2	The ability to work with information and handle a mass of diverse data
2.9		3.3		2.7		2.8		1	The ability to identify, analyse and solve problems
2.8		3.0		2.7		2.8		20	Awareness of how businesses work
2.7		3.5	10	2.3		2.6		11	To be self-starting
2.6		3.5		2.0		2.6		18	Ability to use and exploit IT fully to complete tasks
2.4		2.5		2.0		2.6		3	The ability to assess risk and draw conclusions
2.8		2.5		3.7	4	2.4		24	Global awareness – culturally and economically
2.6		2.5		3.0	9	2.4		19	Actively updates technical knowledge / advances in field
2.4		2.0		2.7		2.4		16	Ability to generate imaginative ideas and/or recognise how best practice can be applied in different situations
2.3		2.0		2.5		2.3		26	Ability to reflect on own and others practice
2.6		3.5		2.7		2.2		25	Ability to evaluate outputs from own practice
2.4		2.5		2.7		2.2		8	The ability and desire to learn for oneself
2.3		3.5		2.0		2.0		27	Understanding of quality control in relation to own practice
2.2		2.8		2.0		2.0		9	To be self-aware
2.0		2.8		2.7		1.2		7	To have interpersonal sensitivity
1.6		1.8		2.3		1.0		15	To be open and sensitive to others

Fig 4.6 Summary of CIHE competencies card sort.

The more accessible language of the CIHE list allowed for the card sort to be completed quite easily. When the final placement was agreed it was useful to reveal the relevance of the colour coding. (Blue: cognitive skills, black: generic competencies, gold: personal capabilities, green: technical ability, purple: business awareness and red: practice). The breadth and complexity of defining and providing evidence of capability then became very apparent. This proved very useful to encourage participants to plan targeted development of high scoring competencies and those that would enable students to be judged 'more rounded'. Interestingly participants felt confident to attend to all aspects and did not hold with the view that some skills were 'hard-wired' – 'Anything's possible' (FT-1). The low scoring / perceived low relevance of some competencies was explained with a negative description of industry as very competitive and about delivering results rather than developing individuals. Participants were also realistic that different employers would emphasize and value

these competencies very differently. 'I've noticed that the student's with the strongest work are not getting picked [for placement], you need to decide if it is best to sell yourself or your work.' FT-3

Students have made the first step towards a career in the industry by their selection of undergraduate course. However the industry is complex and dynamic and therefore it is not easy to access a full picture of the opportunities and demands. The re-design of this module was intended to foster the opportunity for a more personalized exploration of professional practice and thereby challenge learners to develop and apply appropriate knowledge, skills and technologies. The learning design established multi-disciplinary, collaborative learning teams where learners agree the intended output and adopt industry roles to achieve this common goal. Oliver et al, (2007:68) states that role-based learning designs focus on an understanding of issues, processes and interactions of multi-variable situations. In role-based settings, learning is achieved through learners' participation as players and participation a setting, which models a real-world application (Oliver et al, 2007:75) Reflection on this experience can aid a clearer sense of self and the opportunities of the external environment.

4.6 Discussion

An intention of the module redesign was to provide a broad exposure to demands of the working environment. A role-based learning design was adopted to facilitate participation within an industry context that prompted learning and provided an opportunity for 'practice'. The conceptual framework of PLM system helped to provide cohesion and clarity for the learning design and a legitimate context for the learners to operate within. It was not the intention to actively embed employability skills and in this way its approach resonates with the views of Harvey (2005), '...the emphasis is on the developing critical, reflective abilities, with a view to empowering and enhancing the learner. Employment is a by-product of this enabling process.'

The significance of supporting learners' reflective practice had been undervalued at the outset of the redesign. Reflection can take two forms in this experience; it can aid a clearer sense of self and the opportunities of the external environment. Harvey (2003) and Moon (2004) detail the important role reflective practice, summarized by Moon (2004:13), 'Students need to be able to fluently review their processes of learning and their achievements in higher education that are relevant to a job and to use reflection to support further learning.' Mechanisms to scaffold reflective practice further need integrating into the module. Reflection can help articulate aspirations as well as self-evaluation. Fig 4.7 at first appears to be hierarchical but Beetham and Sharpe (2009) explain that the framework can use the aspirations of desired attributes to prompt the development of supporting skills and practices.
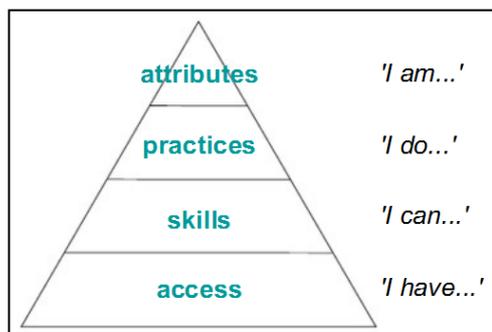

Fig 4.7 Stages of development model (Beetham and Sharpe, 2011)

This could possibly be prompted by working with the language of employability through a modification of the QAA benchmark and CIHE card sort activities enabling students to visualize and confidently make claim to their graduate identity. Meyer and Land (2005 cited in Shepherd and Braham 2010) describe how a shift in perspective can be 'occasioned through an extension of the student's use of language'

It appears that the next iteration of the module calls for a conceptual framework to enable learners navigate a pathway within the working environment. Therefore, it seems pertinent to explore the potential career development learning frameworks to enable learners to reflect on career needs, values and aspirations and external opportunities and encourage the use of language appropriate to external stakeholders.

Bridgestock (2009:38) describes five aspects that enable the proactive career management as:

> '(1) Being familiar with one's industry...(2) Being able to effectively identify and choose the best opportunities for advancement in terms of geography, projects and role. (3) Knowing how long to stay in a role, when to exploit a new employment or training opportunity and the ability to move quickly once an opportunity arises. (4) Knowing how to effectively apply for and obtain work; representing one's skills and abilities in a way that is attractive to employers or clients. (5) Creating social capital by creating personal and professional relationships with those who might provide opportunities and important resources.'

4.7 Summary

Although the findings are specific to the case study they do have a wider relevance to pedagogical practice. Through teaching on this module and being part of the assessment panel I can see that the students really engage with this role-based team project. The context that is created is authentic and challenging but this is achieved through the students, not imposed on them. They are provided with a structure, support, tools and access to information but the key is to let them get on with it; simply stand back and prepare to be amazed. How to develop an effective team is a key part of this support and this has been formalised as taught content. The significance of the role of reflection to enable students to take ownership of their learning and development has now been recognised and will be supported further. It has proved very effective to roll-out 'expert' knowledge to the teams through the team specialist i.e. cutting edge IT processes to the IT Manager. This mechanism will be used with technical aspects and finance in the next iteration. Students were very enterprising in their collaborations – seeking external help from other students and other external contacts. This will continue to be encouraged. Collaboration through strong networks prevents us over-fragmenting ourselves and diluting our efforts. Surprisingly they were less good at peer-evaluation despite 'critique' being commonplace in their work. Adoption of appropriate frameworks has been useful throughout this project. The PLM system really aided the new design to be visualised and sequenced. The temporal sequence for role-based learning designs has been very informative to aid the

underpinnings to be analysed and for further iterations to be made. It appears that a career management framework could be supportive to the further development of this module. Students would then familiarise themselves with the language of employment, begin to consider their personal needs, values and aspirations and articulate their experiences to date as they navigate a pathway to placement, graduation and beyond.

Chapter 5 - Conclusion

5.0 Introduction

Reflective practice encourages us to update our teaching in line with the changing environment and our students' needs. This research has explored the working environment of 21st century that our students will enter and how this demands a reframing of their learning environment. Our students are seeking a personalization of their learning, assistance to creatively manage the plethora of digital information they have access to and recognition of the challenges of sustaining future employment. (Wilen-Daugenti, 2007). Given the current economic constraints further resources to manage these demands will not be forthcoming and although we may feel compelled to 'do more with less' we should challenge ourselves to re-think our teaching. The redesigned module has proved to be successful in terms of engagement and achievement but has also shown that students can be empowered to collaborate in the creation and direction of their own learning. Participation and reflective practice can enable learners to confidently articulate a graduate identity as well as their own needs, values and aspirations for their future careers.

5.1 Aims of the research

The aims of this case study were:

- To investigate the underpinning of the learning design for iterative improvement and dissemination

- To capture primary research from learners within the case study by means of questionnaires, reflective logs and focus groups in order to test assumptions, provide feedback and contribute to the iterative development of the module

- To complement the primary research of the case study with contemporary secondary research

- To review the research methods employed to inform future research designs

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5.2 Summary of findings

Although the findings are specific to the case study they do have a wider relevance to pedagogical practice.

I strongly believe that the creation of collaborative, digitally-supported learning spaces has much to offer for the future development of teaching and learning in the 21st century. The benefit of using frameworks such as the temporal sequence used in this project is that key elements can be identified and maintained; the completed framework also facilitates dissemination. Many of the skills that made this experience a success are common to design education – collaboration, team-work, passion, imagining then creating the unknown and also key to success in the current turbulent times. It is important that this is recognized, valued and promoted in the current times of economic concerns and increasing fees. Although I would recommend that everyone consider a career in the fashion and textile industry, I am also convinced that students leave us able to make a valid contribution to other industries too.

We need to recognize the financial investment that a higher education now represents. In order to respond to this and to students' motivations for entering higher education it is pertinent to engage with the debate on employability. Skills-centred lists have not been successful and are both an over-simplification and over-complicated. We clearly need a different approach that engages learners and academics and can impart the independence and creativity needed to sustain a career in a changeable working environment.   There   is   a   need   for   a   clearer   acknowledgement   of   the interconnectedness and synergy between knowing, doing and being. That this is a personal construct and not fixed. The participation within communities of practice can provide a realistic context to rehearse and affirm emerging graduate identities. The process of claims making maintains relevance in sustaining a career as needs and aspirations change over time.

I have also become an advocate for considered research design to help focus and structure my active exploratory approach. I have learnt to more carefully consider data collection methods and mechanisms for analysis.

5.3 Implications for the future

It is envisioned that the future direction for the project will reach out into business communities and provide conduits to SME (small and medium enterprises) to create a community of learners, educators and industry communicating, learning and working together through open and flexible use of digital technologies and e-learning technologies.

5.4 Professional development

This has been a long journey from a City and Guilds qualification in Adult Training in 2001. I have remained a keen student throughout. It was important for me to develop the professional credibility in my new career of educator as I had developed in industry. This master's qualification has allowed me to claim the identity of a professional educator.

As I have stated earlier, my initial view of effective teaching would have been aligned to a matrix-like download of data. I can now enjoy participating with students as autonomous learners. The often quoted and apparently misattributed quote of 'Education is not the filling of a pail but the lighting of a fire' (WB Yeats) resonates with me.

Coming from industry I also had an overly simplistic view of skills and the employability agenda. I can clearly remember the subject coming up in a staff development session where it became apparent to me for the first time that some held an anti-employability stance. How could anyone be anti employability? I was prompted to investigate and much of what I discovered is in this dissertation. I now believe that skills lists sell our students short and that producing clones of ourselves fails to address the challenges of

the future. They also put in to motion a counterproductive competitive element which reminds me of a quote of Fred Hirsch (1977 cited in Brown and Hesketh 2004:27) 'If everyone stands on tiptoe, no one sees better'

Finally, I am fortunate to have an enriching vocation that is deeply rewarding but recognize that this is built on a foundation of collaboration. In industry the importance of establishing and maintaining strong networks is recognized. I began to study the theoretical origins underpinning this model through Wenger's 'communities of practice' following his keynote speech at SEDA Spring Teaching Learning and Assessment Conference 2010: Communities of Learning. A horizontal learning partnership model has implications for the future of education and this project has much further to go. The ability to collaborate effectively will help sustain and enrich our future lives.

5.5 Dissemination

Elements form this dissertation have been accepted for presentation at the following conferences. The submitted abstracts can be found in appendices F and G.

- Designs on E-Learning International Conference - Cloud and Crowd: Towards a collaborative future 5 – 7 Sep University of the Arts, London
- ASET Annual Conference 2012 Adding Value, Measuring Impact The Placement and Employability Professionals' Conference 4-6 September 2012, University of Chester

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Appendices

Student's initial perceptions survey

	Name:
	Age:
	Course:
	Participant consent (sign)

The answers you give will be treated with the utmost confidentiality. You can be confident that the information collected will be used for research purposes only and that no student will be identified. Your responses will be kept confidential to the research team.   Originals will be stored securely in accordance with data protection act. Your participation is appreciated but you have the right to withdraw at any time.

Circle to indicate whether you agree or disagree with that statement.

	Section 1 : On being a student					
	Question	**Disagree / Agree**				
		Disagree Entirely				**Agree Entirely**
A1	I find I'm changing my attitude on all kinds of things.	1	2	3	4	5
A2	The work is much **more** demanding than I expected.	1	2	3	4	5
A3	Being a student gives me a sense of freedom and independence.	1	2	3	4	5
A4	I am developing as a person.	1	2	3	4	5
A5	I am confident that I will cope with the challenges ahead.	1	2	3	4	5
A6	I am motivated to succeed.	1	2	3	4	5
A7	It's hard to find out what is expected of me	1	2	3	4	5
A8	I'm worried that there's not going to be decent job for me at the end of the course.	1	2	3	4	5
A9	List 3 words you would use to describe a successful graduate in your specialism.					
A10	Finally, have you decided the **kind of job** you would like to get after University? Yes (specify) / No					

Section 2: Attitudes to learning

	Question	Disagree / Agree				
		Disagree Entirely				Agree Entirely
B1	I prefer teachers who tell me exactly what I need to know.	1	2	3	4	5
B2	For me, learning is making sure I can reproduce the facts on the course.	1	2	3	4	5
B3	I prefer lectures where the information is presented to me and I do not need to participate.	1	2	3	4	5
B4	If I have difficulty understanding a topic I look for other material to help me.	1	2	3	4	5
B5	I take responsibility for what I am learning.	1	2	3	4	5
B6	I try to look for connections within the subject matter independently.	1	2	3	4	5
B7	I try to apply what I have studied to practical situations.	1	2	3	4	5
B8	I expect to need less help from the tutors as my course progresses.	1	2	3	4	5
B9	For me, learning means acquiring knowledge and skills that I can later put to practical use.	1	2	3	4	5
B10	Learning the key facts of the subject is the most important aspect.	1	2	3	4	5
B11	More time should be given to help me develop the skills I will need.	1	2	3	4	5
B12	List 3 key skills you would expect of a successful graduate in your specialism.					

Section 3: How you study

	Question	Disagree / Agree				
		Disagree Entirely				Agree Entirely
C1	I often have trouble making sense of the things I have to learn.	1	2	3	4	5
C2	Much of what I learn seems no more than lots of unrelated bits and pieces in my mind.	1	2	3	4	5
C3	In making sense of new ideas, I often relate them to practical or real-life situations.	1	2	3	4	5
C4	I tend to take what I've been taught at face value without questioning it much.	1	2	3	4	5
C5	I just go through the motions of studying without seeing where I'm going.	1	2	3	4	5
C6	Working things through with other students is really useful.	1	2	3	4	5
C7	I have a broad interest in the subject I am studying.	1	2	3	4	5
C8	I research my interests.	1	2	3	4	5
C9	I like to test ideas.	1	2	3	4	5
C10	I attend to the feedback I have received in order to do better.	1	2	3	4	5

Section 4: Skills - awareness

	Question	Disagree / Agree				
		Disagree Entirely				Agree Entirely
D1	I review my professional skills regularly.	1	2	3	4	5
D2	I am keen to develop as a person.	1	2	3	4	5
D3	I am clear what prospective employers will expect of graduates in my specialism.	1	2	3	4	5
D4	I am confident that I can meet these expectations.	1	2	3	4	5
D5	My course supports my development into a professional graduate.	1	2	3	4	5
D6	I actively seek opportunities to learn and practice new skills.	1	2	3	4	5
D7	It is important to develop a portfolio of skills.	1	2	3	4	5
D8	Working with other students is a good way for me to develop.	1	2	3	4	5
D9	I try to stay up to date with the industry.	1	2	3	4	5
D10	I am developing the capabilities to thrive in the industry.	1	2	3	4	5
D11	I expect to continue to develop professionally even after graduating.	1	2	3	4	5

Section 5 : Skills - development

My course is enabling me to develop the following different skills and abilities:

	Question	Disagree / Agree				
		Disagree Entirely				Agree Entirely
E1	Ability to analyse and use numerical data.	1	2	3	4	5
E2	Ability to apply knowledge.	1	2	3	4	5
E3	Ability to work in teams.	1	2	3	4	5
E4	Computer literacy.	1	2	3	4	5
E5	Critical analysis.	1	2	3	4	5
E6	Evaluation skills.	1	2	3	4	5
E7	Interpersonal skills.	1	2	3	4	5
E8	Leadership skills.	1	2	3	4	5
E9	Oral presentation skills.	1	2	3	4	5
E10	Self-discipline.	1	2	3	4	5
E11	Self-reliance.	1	2	3	4	5
E12	Time management.	1	2	3	4	5
E13	Writing skills.	1	2	3	4	5
E14	A real expertise in my subject.	1	2	3	4	5
E15	Creativity.	1	2	3	4	5
E16	Please specify any others.					

Section 6: Comments

Please add any additional comments below:

Appendix B

TID1120 Global Fashion & Textile sourcing

Individual reflective log to accompany team project and presentation

The assignment this term gives you the opportunity to participate in a product development team project in order to explore the practices and processes of industry and to develop your professional skills.

As well as the team presentation you are required to submit an individual reflective log of 1000-2000 words. This is to handed in 16th December before 3pm Creative Arts CA3/04. This date is after your presentations and you should include a paragraph on the presentations and Q&A session. This help sheet is to help prompt you to think about this and to begin to construct it.

In order to do this effectively you should be keeping a diary of the project to work **from**. Your reflective log is **not** a piece of descriptive writing of what happened this term. You are required to think about the experience and analyse what happened and why, exploring different possibilities and perspectives. As this is a personal account you are able to write this piece in the first person i.e. using 'I'.

I will be presenting some tools you can use to complete this assignment effectively and I am available to review and discuss your first drafts.

These questions may help you get started with this:

- What prior experience of team work do you have?
- Previously has this been largely positive or negative?
- How did you manage your preconceptions and concerns?
- This module encourages you to think about the skills you will need in industry - what skills have you noted need development?
- How are you actively developing these skills?
- The module introduced you to the Belbin method of team preferences, what did you learn from this and how did you use it?
- What skills do you bring to a team?
- How can these be demonstrated by examples?
- How can these be improved further?
- This module is challenging in that it requires you to actively research and negotiate with your colleagues, how have you found this process?
- What has gone well and why?
- What would you do differently next time?
- What else would help?
- Peer evaluation has been outlined for this project, has your team considered this?
- What criteria did you agree? How did you reach agreement?
- If not, why not? If you were to do it on an individual basis how would you appraise yourself and your team?

Jo Conlon j.conlon@hud.ac.uk 31st October 2011

Appendix C

Graduate skills list for card sort activity from QAA Benchmark (Art & Design)

1	The knowledge, understanding and skills for continuing personal development and professional practice.
2	Apply, consolidate and extend learning in different contextual frameworks and situations, both within and beyond the field of art and design.
3	Generate ideas, concepts, proposals, solutions or arguments independently and/or collaboratively in response to set briefs and/or as self-initiated activity
4	Employ both convergent and divergent thinking in the processes of observation, investigation, speculative enquiry, visualisation and/or making
5	Select, test and make appropriate use of materials, processes and environments
6	Develop ideas through to outcomes
7	Manage and make appropriate use of the interaction between intention, process, outcome, context, and the methods of dissemination
8	Apply resourcefulness and entrepreneurial skills to their own practice and to that of others
9	Communicate visually to investigate, analyse, interpret, develop and articulate ideas and information.
10	Able to employ materials, media, techniques, methods, technologies and tools associated with the discipline with skill and imagination while observing good working practices
11	Study independently, set goals, manage own workloads and meet deadlines
12	Anticipate and accommodate change, and work within contexts of ambiguity, uncertainty and unfamiliarity.
13	Analyse information and experiences, formulate independent judgements, and articulate reasoned arguments through reflection, review and evaluation
14	Source and research relevant material, assimilating and articulating relevant findings
15	Identify personal strengths and needs, and reflect on personal development.
16	Interact effectively with others, for example through collaboration, collective endeavour and negotiation.
17	Articulate ideas and information comprehensibly in visual, oral and written forms
18	Present ideas and work to audiences in a range of situations
19	Use the views of others in the development or enhancement of their work.
20	Source, navigate, select, retrieve, evaluate, manipulate and manage information from a variety of sources
21	Select and employ communication and information technologies.
22	Demonstrate an enthusiasm for enquiry into the discipline and the motivation to sustain it.

Appendix D

Graduate skills list for card sort activity from QAA Benchmark

(General Business and Management)

1	be able to demonstrate understanding of organisations, the external environment in which they operate, how they are managed and the future needs of organisations
2	have skills in critical thinking analysis and synthesis, including being able to identify assumptions, evaluate statements, detect false logic, identify implicit values, define terms adequately and generalise appropriately
3	be effective at problem-solving and decision-making, using appropriate quantitative and qualitative skills and also be able to create, evaluate and assess options, together with being able to apply ideas and knowledge to a range of situations
4	be effective in written & oral communication, using ICT and a range of media widely used in business, for example, business reports
5	have numeracy and quantitative skills including modelling and data analysis, interpretation and extrapolation
6	self-manage their time, behaviour, motivation, initiative and enterprise.
7	have an appetite for reflective, adaptive and collaborative learning.
8	be self-aware, sensitive and open to the diversity of people, cultures, business and management issues
9	have leadership, team building, influencing and project management skills
10	be effective at listening, negotiating and persuasion
11	be able to research business and management issues
12	be able to address issues at European and international levels.

Appendix E

CIHE Competencies for focus group card sort activity

1	Cognitive Skills	The ability to identify, analyse and solve problems
2		The ability to work with information and handle a mass of diverse data
3		The ability to assess risk and draw conclusions
4	Generic Competencies	The ability to work with others in a team
5		The ability to communicate
6		The ability to persuade
7		To have interpersonal sensitivity
8	Personal capabilities	The ability and desire to learn for oneself
9		To be self-aware
10		The desire to improve own performance
11		To be self-starting
12		To prioritize and plan effectively
13		To seek and take responsibility
14		To finish the job even under pressure
15		To be open and sensitive to others
16		Ability to generate imaginative ideas and/or recognise how best practice can be applied in different situations
17	Technical skills	Technical competence in own field – can apply subject specific knowledge
18		Ability to use and exploit IT fully to complete tasks
19		Actively updates technical knowledge / advances in field
20	Business / Organisation awareness	Awareness of how businesses work
21		Work experience
22		Understanding of basic financial and commercial principles
23		Understanding of organisations work environment – strategy and competitiveness and internal culture
24		Global awareness – culturally and economically
25	Practice	Ability to evaluate outputs from own practice
26		Ability to reflect on own and others practice
27		Understanding of quality control in relation to own practice

Appendix F

Abstract: Designs on E-Learning International Conference - Cloud and Crowd: Towards

a collaborative future 5 – 7 Sep University of the Arts, London

Title: Innovating the collaborative future of global fashion business

Authors: Jo Conlon and Andrew Taylor

With the increasingly ubiquitous nature of social networks and cloud computing, users are starting to explore new ways to interact with, and exploit these developing paradigms. Social networks are used to reflect real world relationships that allow users to share information and form connections between one another, essentially creating dynamic virtual organizations. (Chard et al, 2010) The reality within the fashion industry is that business practices are evolving at an unprecedented rate in accordance to Generation Y's dedicated and intuitive use of web 2.0 technologies and social networks that now demands of fashion education a re-thinking of the relationship between technology and learning.

The future employment of graduates, calls for new innovative thinking from skilled and digitally aware learners who have the capacity to participate in learning throughout their life by using technologies of their own choosing (JISC, 2009). The challenge for educational practitioners is to embrace digital technologies to harness the collective skills, knowledge and effort of all those involved in our learning communities and to transform practice to more accurately reflect the way we live and work (JISC, 2011).

This research outlines our vision of, and experiences with, creating a digital social community of design business learners, looking specifically at possible digital mechanisms that could be used to create a dynamic cloud infrastructure in a social network environment (see fig 2). The poster presents an exploratory case study (Yin, 2002) undertaken as part of postgraduate research. It documents the phases of the first two years of the intervention within the intermediate level module Global Fashion and Textile Sourcing. A transformational strategy was adopted to create a collaborative community of learning. This is based on a conceptual Product Lifecycle Management system (see fig 1) as a framework to test and support theory and practice in the fashion and textile industry.

The project aims are:

- To establish multi-disciplinary, collaborative learning spaces that mimic professional practice and demonstrates the interconnectivity within global sourcing networks thereby providing an immersive, learning experience to challenge students to acquire knowledge and skills and use digital technologies appropriately.
- To stimulate a dynamic connection with the global industry and its resources at the macro level through active participation in the creation and sharing of knowledge within a 'global sourcing' community at a micro level
- To embed an understanding of the diversity of graduate employment opportunities that enables students to shape their own 'graduate identity' (Holmes, 2001) and lay claim to it through reflection and articulation of their skills with examples from business practice.

In the pilot, learners were randomised in interdisciplinary product development teams with a brief to connect design, finance, buying, retail, and management concepts and experiences within a digitally-connected learning community. Each learning team used personal mobiles with online social networking spaces/ e-learning tools: Blogs, Facebook, Pinterest, Twitter, Wiki, Prezi, SkyDrive, Wix.com and other free open source tools to record, edit, share, construct and present ideas around the communication of product development data.

It is envisioned that the future direction for the project will reach out into business communities and provide conduits to SME (small and medium enterprises) to create a community of learners, educators and industry communicating, learning and working together through open and flexible use of digital technologies and e-learning technologies.

Figure 1. CONCEPTUAL PLM SYSTEM   **Figure 2. CLOUD COMPUTING...**
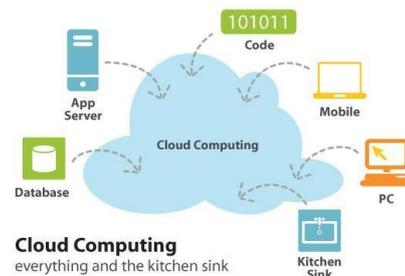
References:

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Figures:

Figure 1. http://www.txtgroup.com/scm/uk/txtperform/plm.shtml

Figure 2. http://www.cloudict.com/1/Cloud_Computing.html

Synopsis of Research Paper

A Case Study to Adopt Creative Industry Practice into Pedagogical Practice to Enhance Learning and Employability of Undergraduates

Key Words

Emerging pedagogies of employability, creative industries, collaborative learning spaces, graduate identity

Abstract

The working environment of the 21st century is undergoing unprecedented levels of change as a result of the macro-economic forces technology, globalization, demographic and social change, and limited natural resources. (Gratton, 2010, p.18). Organizations and individuals must strive to find new ways to contend with this unparalleled shift (Pryor and Bright, 2011, p.6). In this emerging reality the creative industries are gaining recognition not only as a driver of economic growth and employment (British Fashion Council, 2010, Department for Business Innovation & Skills, 2011), but as a rich source of innovative thinking and practices for addressing the challenges caused by these changes. (Brown, 2008, p.86). A recent report issued by the European University Association (2007, p.6) has directed the entire higher education sector to consider creativity as central to research and teaching.

This research project adopted a model of contemporary business practice to foster creativity and to enhance employability whilst preserving diversity in emerging graduate identities.

The aims of the project were:

- To establish multi-disciplinary, collaborative learning spaces that mimic professional practice and demonstrates the interconnectivity of industry networks thereby providing an immersive, learning experience to challenge students to consider, develop and test skills whilst acquiring appropriate knowledge.
- To stimulate a dynamic connection with the global industry and its resources at the macro level through active participation in the creation and sharing of knowledge within a 'global sourcing' community at a micro level
- To embed an understanding of the diversity of graduate employment opportunities that enables students to shape their own 'graduate identity' (Holmes, 2001) and lay claim to it through reflection and articulation of their skills with examples of business practice from these 'communities of practice'

Method

The research presents an exploratory case study (Yin, 2002) undertaken as part of postgraduate research. This postgraduate qualification in professional development was

undertaken by the researcher to facilitate the transition from industry practitioner to professional educator. The study considered 80 intermediate level students from 3 vocational fashion and textiles courses jointly undertaking a cross-discipline module. This research was developed to focus on students' conceptions of learning and personal and professional identity. A mixture of quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection was employed: questionnaire, reflective log and focus groups. The research questionnaire has drawn from Brennan et al (2010). Card sort activities outlined in Rees et al (2006) using QAA subject benchmark graduate attributes and skills and CIHE competencies provided the stimulus within the focus groups.

(The data analysis of the project is still ongoing)

Initial conclusions

Learners responded to the authenticity of the project and embraced additional subject knowledge and new professional practices in order to succeed. Simultaneous exposure to the language, required standard and breadth of graduate employability skills enabled students to construct and more confidently articulate their own narrative of employability. Additionally the simulation of professional practice provided a realistic context to rehearse and affirm emerging graduate identities. This construction of a graduate profile facilitated autonomy in professional development and prompted adoption of a more holistic approach. As stated by Brown and Hesketh (2004, p.145),

> 'The concept of self-identity is...clearly important when it comes to how individuals construct and manage their employability. How an individual approaches the labour market is intimately linked with their ideas about what kind of person they think they are and the kind of person they want to become'.