Professional Doctorates Project Summaries

Integration of Mobile Technology in Education

Wong Chi Keung, Middlesex University

Students in the 21th century are very savvy in using technology in their daily life. They have spent most of their time using computers, playing online games, listening digital music and communicating with mobile phones. They are used to these digital products and these tools become integral parts of their lives. They think, learn, act and process information differently from the previous generation. On the other hand, most of their teachers were brought up before the arrival of those new technology. At some later point in their lives, these digital immigrant learnt and adopted many aspects of the new technology. It is apparent that a digital generation gap exists between digital native students and digital immigrant teachers in their learning and teaching styles.

Traditional teacher-centered teaching approach may not be the appropriate way to motivate and engage them in the learning process. With the help of small hand-held devices, e.g. tablets or smartphones, it is possible for teachers to induce a more student centered teaching approach to their students so that they may have a more pleasant learning experience. At the same time, teachers themselves may have a more effective teaching outcome.   Therefore, the aim of this project is to investigate how to integrate the mobile devices and the prevailing mobile communication technology into teaching practice to increase students' motivation and engagement in learning under Hong Kong tertiary education environment.

The technology used in this study is Mobile Instant Messaging (MIM). It is a type of online chat which offers real-time text transmission over the Internet by mobile devices. In Hong Kong, "WhatsApp" is the most popular MIM application and hence it will be used in this project. Various activities will be implemented to enhance teacher-student and student-student communication with the aim to provide an interactive learning environment in and out of the classroom.

A retrospective grounded theory study: How do recently licensed clinical psychologists in southern Israel perceive their relationships with their supervisors as trainees in the psychodynamic paradigm?

Lily Degen, Middlesex University

Carroll (2008) stated that supervision as a profession has developed from psychotherapy models (psychodynamic, cognitive behavioural, client-centered), through developmental and social role models, towards becoming a separate discipline concerned with conditions which enable therapists to learn from their supervisors. Using the term transformational learning, Carroll posited that good supervision will transform the perception of the supervisee, thereby changing his attitudes and behaviors towards his client. The focus is on a paradigm which enables learning.

In opposition to this definition, psychodynamic supervisors use terms from psychotherapy-transference, resistance, regression, parallel processes and supervisory alliance (Rock 2000). The use of professional language from psychotherapy suggests that psychodynamic supervision is a similar process to psychodynamic psychotherapy. Sarnat (2012), Frawley O'Dea (2003) and Frawley O'Dea and Sarnat (2001) present psychodynamic supervision as an intersubjective relationship which is different from the traditional approach. The supervisor is not the authoritative expert; instead she is self-reflective with a co-constructionist approach (Berman 2000; Yerushalmi 2013).

I am curious as to the applicability of a learning paradigm to an interaction which holistically affects the therapist, emotionally and cognitively. Conversely, I find it interesting that a supervisory relationship, which includes training and learning, puts so much emphasis on the therapeutic aspects of the relationship. This is the 'teach or treat' dilemma.

My study explores the experience of supervision in the psychodynamic paradigm. I will interview clinical psychologists who have passed their licensing exam and are interested in reflecting on and understanding their relationships with their supervisors as trainees. How does learning occur in psychodynamic supervision from the subjective experience of the trainee?

The study will be retrospective as psychologists will be interviewed after they are licensed. The relationship between the supervisor and the supervisee will be emphasized in order to understand the factors which contribute to the professional development of the trainee, from the trainee's perspective.

The objectives of the study will be to:

1. determine the critical factors in the supervisory relationship which enable the supervisee to experience herself as an increasingly independent professional psychologist;

2. note if the supervision was in the classical mode or the intersubjective- relational mode, or both; and

3. make recommendations regarding the supervision of clinical psychologists.

My interest in the experience of supervision arises from my personal experiences, my reading of the literature, conversations with colleagues and the particular context of supervision in Israel (Berman 2000; Yerushalmi 2013). The specific psychotherapy-focused model in this proposal is based on psychodynamic theory. Psychodynamic supervision involves understanding unconscious forces: defense mechanisms, transference and countertransference, between the supervisee and the client, and parallel processes (Searles 1955; Hora 1957). Psychodynamic supervision can be classified into patient-centered (classical, one person psychology model), supervisee-centered (based on ego psychology, self-psychology and object relations), and relational-intersubjective (Frawley-O'Dea and Sarnat 2001).

In England and the United States, various models have been developed to further our understanding of the dynamics of supervision. These include developmental models, a-theoretical meta models which describe the stages of professional development of the supervisee, assess the supervisee's stage, and the facilitation of his growth (Stoltenberg et al 1998). Other approaches to supervision have been through social process models,- the discrimination model (Bernard and Goodyear 2009), the cyclical model (Page and Wosket 1994), and the seven-eyed model (Hawkins and Shohet 2007). These models support the notion that supervision and psychotherapy are inherently different. They are not used in the training of supervisors in Israel. The study will use grounded and constructivist grounded theory. Although these approaches are epistemologically opposed, there are possibilities of balance in their discovery or construction of phenomena and processes. Both approaches use interpretation, hermeneutics and phenomenology in order to analyze the qualitative data.

Giving voice and face to generations at work

Annemiek Friebel, Ashridge Business School

For my doctorate in organisational change I am working on an action research project in Norway to enable voice and face of generations at work.

Today we have four generations at work and many organisations are struggling with misunderstanding, conflicts, frustrations, jealousy, miscommunication and tensions between employees from different generations. They often have different perspectives, different work habits, different expectations and different needs in their work situations. People live longer, stay longer fit and pension funds are starting to struggle to pay out retirement, so we see that the different generations have to keep up with each other for a longer period at work because employees keep working longer and the retirement age is rising in many countries.

My study is about taking a closer look at the different generations at work. I am inquiring into how to enable them with a voice and face by using videography as a

method to make this happen. In my research project I am working with organisations in Norway where many of the employees are often working 'out on the distance' with projects outside the main office. By using a video graphic approach (making short video films), I am giving employees from different generations 'voice and face' at work. With these videos I expect to create a greater sense of company pride, inter-generational understanding and respect.

In the first phase of my project I am making these short video clips of different generations at work myself. I show them at 'all employee meetings' and I record the reactions from their colleagues. In the second phase I am inviting employees from different generations to film each other to learn how they see each other. By giving them face and voice through video clips I expect that respect, understanding and engagement will grow.

In the modern world of Norway today each employee has a camera in his or her pocket and can film anytime anywhere with their smartphone. I want to use this opportunity to let employees see each other in a different way at work. Can video make an organisation change and become more successful can it facilitate engagement at work? By making short video clips of working situations, new emotions arise among colleagues after watching them. Music, sound and film can create new understanding and perspectives to work. Employees can become the movie-stars in their own jobs.

The research project is part of my Ashridge Doctorate in Organisational Change (ADOC) which will be concluded in 2016.

The Pedagogy of Critical Thinking in University Early Childhood Studies: a Practitioner's Comparative Study

Beverley Barnaby, Middlesex University

This study investigates how critical thinking is assessed within two BA in Early Childhood programmes in an attempt to improve pedagogy in Higher Education. Once the research

has been completed, I will create a toolkit that can be used to assess how well students think critically in order to support their progression in critical thinking. The two London universities being examined will benefit from this research and, by publishing and presenting findings from this study, the profile of the university in which I work will be raised. My ontological view, driving this study, is that different people may construct their own meaning in dissimilar ways in relation to the way in which critical thinking is assessed and, therefore, many different but valid accounts may exist. Also, whilst I see critical thinking as a social construction, for the purposes of this study, I will form my own understanding of what constitutes critical thinking in the context of higher education. I will then propose how it can be assessed to support students' progression in this cognitive skill. As a researcher practitioner, I will have easy access to students, academics as well as an insight into learning and teaching practices and issues. However, I will need to guard against insider bias and make sure that colleagues and students do not feel obliged to take part in the study due to the relationship that they have with me being the researcher. Developing students' critical thinking skills is a main aim of higher education and most educationalists agree that cultivating such skills is essential for students who are engaged in academic study (Behar-Horenstein and Niu, 2011). This is because critical thinking enables learners to dig below the surface of subjects and engage in critical dialogue with its main arguments and theories (Cottrell, 2011). Whilst academics agree to the importance of developing students' critical thinking skills, there are multiple definitions of critical thinking (Xia-jun, 2012). Philosophers have developed different theories of critical thinking (Mason, 2007), making an agreed definition difficult to define. According to Knight (2007), this lack of consensus suggests that students and tutors do not have a clear and shared understanding of critical thinking which makes fair and valid assessment of students' work is difficult. The Quality Assurance Agency's (2008) descriptor for a Bachelor's degree with honours lists some critical thinking characteristics that relate to critical thinking. This implies that university tutors guided by the QAA descriptors will use the same characteristics to teach critical thinking. However, as 'Assessment of student learning is a fundamental function of higher education' (Higher Education Academy, 2012:

7) and involves an understanding of the appropriate standards and judgements of quality (Bould, 2000), it follows that both students and tutors need to understand what constitutes these standards and judgements of quality when assessing critical thinking.

Aims, Objectives and Outcomes

The aim of this research is to examine how the critical thinking abilities of Early Childhood Studies undergraduates can be assessed in order to facilitate the development and progression of their ability to think critically. In order for the aim of this research to be achieved, the following objectives will need to be secured:

- To understand tutors and tutors perceptions of critical thinking
- To gain knowledge of standards used to assess critical thinking
- To identify criteria that students and tutors use to assess students critical thinking

It is hoped that a major outcome of this research will be to provide a tool kit that practitioners and students can use to assess the standard of students' critical thinking to ensure undergraduates' progress in developing this important thinking skill.

Methodology

In order to carry out this study a case study approach will be taken. The project will focus on a group of lecturers and students teaching and studying within Early Childhood Studies programmes at two post 1992 London universities, creating two cases to be compared and evaluated. I am based in one of the post 92 universities and the other university will reflect a similar diversity in student population. Throughout the study, documents will be analysed to provide a benchmark against which the results can be compared. Twelve students at each university, chosen from year two and year three will take part in a focus group interview and six tutors from each university will be interviewed individually. The sample of students selected from each institution will include four students who are currently receiving 1:1; four students who are currently receiving 2:2 degree classifications and four students who are currently receiving a 3rd class classification. Six tutors from each university will be asked to volunteer. The learners selected from each

band of degree classification will be random. Once the data has been collected, it will be coded into themes for analysis. These themes will then be examined individually as well as the relationship that they have to each other.

Do IT Professionals need a different coaching approach? What are the implications for effective coaching outcomes for the client and coach?

Jane Short, Middlesex University

IT professionals appear to display individual differences as a professional group. A distinct coaching approach seems to result in more effective outcomes for the individuals, coaches and organisation. This research investigates this and aims to establish a preferred coaching model. Clarity over their position within the research and what is expected is paramount.

This project is an amalgam of my personal perspectives, professional experience and professional situation. My experience within the IT profession has allowed me to note that the very skills and personalities that make IT professionals good at their job is not always valued by other disciplines. Learning and development interventions do not always "hit the spot" and traditional coaching can seem too emotion based for this group of professionals. These behaviours are similar to those displayed by people on the autistic spectrum and there are proven links between this spectrum and IT professionals.

My personal epistemology is constructivist allowing for some shades of grey to my beliefs around knowledge creation.

My research will involve two key sets of participants; IT professionals who have had coaching and coaches who have worked with IT professionals. As background I will also interview professionals from other disciplines for their views on IT professionals and a two organisations that screen positively for autism.

This is not insider-research in that I am not researching within my own organisation, but is practitioner research within the field of coaching.

The effectiveness of coaching interventions is important to all parties concerned. I will base this effectiveness on Kirkpatrick's (1959: 1976: 1996: cited in Praslova 2010) criteria : reaction, learning, behavioural and results. Whilst there is an apparent lack of robustness in coaching research there is a common view that the coaching relationship is the most important. The factors the coaching relationship mediates vary amongst researchers. De Haan et al ((De Haan, Duckworth et al. 2013) suggest that this relationship mediates the impact of self-efficacy and the range of techniques on coaching outcome. They conclude that these are of central performance. Dingman ((Dingman 2006) supports many of De Haan's views with relationship building as a key stage in the model she has extrapolated from the work of others.

Robinson et al ((Robinson, Ruthenberg et al. 2013) have shown that individuals working in IT and Technology have a greater number of autistic traits which whilst valuable to technical roles are less valuable when aspiring to a management role. They typically display poor mentalising affecting social interaction and empathy. Weak central coherence is also present which presents as an over-reliance on detail and inability to summarise. These factors are important in all more senior roles where inter-disciplinary interaction is important.

The aim of this research is to identify the impact of individual differences displayed by the IT profession on the outcome of coaching interventions. The main research questions that support this aim are:

- What constitutes effective coaching for the IT profession?
- Is self-efficacy mediated by the common particular behaviours of IT professionals?
- What factors impact the development of a good relationship with clients from this client group?

- What approach to executive coaching leads to better outcomes for this community?
- What are the views of other business disciplines that can contribute to the coaching model?
- What techniques and tools support the coaching intervention for IT professionals?

With a constructivist epistemology I believe that truth and meaning are constructed through interaction with the world. As a work-based researcher my research is aligned to an interpretivist paradigm. A phenomenological approach encompasses the way I work allowing understanding of subjective experience whilst bracketing off assumptions and conventional wisdom. This approach gives value to both the researcher's interpretations and the views of the participants.

I will be seeking qualitative data through discussions-as-interviews. This will provide the depth of data that I am seeking. I will have a broad schedule of themes to cover, making sure that my research objectives are covered. Those participants who are IT professionals will complete a personality questionnaire to assess their systematising/empathising quotient. The interviews will be analysed to identify key themes.

This method plays to my expertise as a coach, as I am able to quickly establish rapport and trust. Additionally I am able to follow and guide conversations without imposing my own opinions.

There will be issues arising from my approach. The data must be robust and I will ensure this by seeking the SQ/EQ from my IT participants. I will achieve triangulation through discussion with experienced coaches such as my coach supervisor as well as organisations that positively screen for autistic spectrum.