

EDITORIAL**Emphasising the learning in Learning Design**

This issue presents four papers that have independently looked at how students learn – and how teaching can be framed by an understanding of this - through a number of diverse disciplines. As with our previous issues, the commonalities of effective teaching and learning overcome potential differences in context or methodological approach. The papers here are from Policing Studies, Law, Architecture, and Education and respectively consider problem-based learning, authentic assessment, metaphorical reasoning and the social presence generated in online communication.

Each of the papers in this issue is based on a differing approach to learning which, as an ontology, “can have far-reaching significance ... can create new ways of being that previously did not exist and a framework for actions that would not have previously made sense” (Winograd & Flores, 1986, p. 560). The authors in this issue have made new “sense” from new settings but each is strongly founded in concern for student learning outcomes.

The first paper in this issue, by Shipton, is drawn from the teaching of police force recruits through problem-based learning. It transcends its context and addresses issues of teaching and learning applicable to all. Shipton, who is also a valued reviewer for the Journal, begins his paper by identifying the nuances and complexities of what seem to be simple divisions between teacher- or content-centred and student- or learning- centred practice. It then describes the findings of a survey, based on Åkerlind’s (2007) framework, which seem to indicate that while the majority favour student-centred approaches in theory, their descriptions of practice evidenced a more teacher-centred approach. This apparent mismatch – between theories-in-use and espoused theories - has been reported elsewhere in the literature and perhaps will give readers cause to interrogate their own practice more closely.

Our second paper, by Burton, is based in the ontology of authentic assessment positioned in a Law faculty. It challenges the notion that authenticity is somehow fixed and recommends fluidity in academics’ calculation of what makes for authentic assessment. She also provides a critical synthesis of six approaches identified in current research including fidelity of task to the real world, collaboration and complexity. This leads to the formulation of a diagnostic framework where ten scaffolded questions can assist academics to calculate the authenticity of the assessment through a simple fractional measure. A case study is provided to show how the calculation can be made and, from this, how academics can make some informed judgements about the assessments they set and how these impact on student learning.

Casakin, our third paper, addresses the concept of metaphorical reasoning in a school of architecture. Here, students in a design studio setting make use of a creative connection to what they know and have experienced to take a step into the culture of their discipline. Casakin has found, through empirical research, that metaphorical reasoning is of greater value to beginning students than to those in later stages of their study. In this, and aligned to the thematic connection between the papers in this issue, he has shown the subtleties of student learning and perhaps cautions that there is no single rule to apply. Teachers need to frame their instruction and assessment to a finely-grained understanding of how students learn.

The final paper in this issue, Lloyd, discusses student learning from the perspective of social presence and how it can be enacted through an asynchronous discussion forum. In this, Lloyd, who is a co-editor of the *Journal of Learning Design*, talks to a course of study in an Education faculty. She uses the well-known Model of Community Enquiry (Garrison, Anderson & Archer, 2001) to analyse the responses students made in a low-stakes discussion forum. The goal here was to meet broader teaching and learning objectives, particularly those in relation to first year students and their entrée to the academy.

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- Mark Barret-Baxendale, Hope University (Liverpool), UK
- Debra Bath, Griffith University, Australia
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