

IATL mid-term progress report for Strategic Project:

'Peer to peer learning – developing post-graduate teaching, whilst raising awareness of research for undergraduates'

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This project aimed to assist post-graduate students translate and share their individual research into teaching material in a subject-specific context for UGs in such a way that they make the material accessible and encourage active and performative participation by learners, and teachers. We also intended this project to suggest ways in PGs could support one another in peer-to-peer learning, while suggesting an integrated PG-UG peer-to-peer learning model for an academic department, in part to highlight PG research to UG students, who do not seem to have a strong sense of what post-graduate study means.

It also sought to analyse how researchers can develop their research through practice (academic performance lecture, workshop, an immersive experience) in an ethical way.

Ultimately, we aimed for this project to help PG students to develop their research, teaching abilities and the skill to give peer feedback to add to a holistic approach to their professional development

In December 2015 we began the project by appointing two second year PhD students: Liz Turner as project manager to assist with the organisation of the sessions and support PGs in process; and Chase Heltzel to film and edit the project, with a second year UG student to film the workshops so that all PGs could participate fully. We also identified appropriate teaching sessions in which students could present their work during a TPS staff meeting.

Spring term

On 19 January Hutchison & Heron ran the first 3 hour workshop with 11 students in their first and second years of study on translating their research into innovative pedagogies for UGs.

We began the workshop by explaining the project's aims and structure, and the format of the final report for the project would be a film based on the teaching sessions and some interviews of staff, PGs and UG students. This would require PGs signing consent forms, and getting UGs to sign consent forms for each teaching session. This highlighted and demonstrated an aspect of research protocol with which not all students had previously engaged.

Hutchison helped PGs understand how they could

- **Select and adapt material** for existing TS modules.

This included considering the context in which they would be teaching, the module aims, considering who the students are, what they know, expect and understand already. We discussed ways PGs could discover and assess these things. We also asked them to think about what they wanted the students to understand or idea/s they wanted them to engage with by the end of the session.

We then asked them to select the key concepts, examples, readings in advance of the session that they would use to help the students engage with the idea they wished to explore.

- **Structure** the specific aspects of their research chosen to explore in the session.

In this part of the workshop we discussed how PGs could best introduce themselves and the key idea/s of the session. We shared possible warm up exercises, examples, texts. We suggested that when structuring a session, students should think about what skills and conceptual awarenesses we are looking to develop in UG students.

In the second half of the workshop Heron focused on specific pedagogies that enable the participants to **respond practically to theoretical and historical materials**. This was modelled with reference to IATL's 'open-space learning' (OSL) projects, such as the 'student ensemble', and 'pedagogic interventions' that transgress disciplinary boundaries. We explored how in these environments students can engage with ideas in an embodied and exploratory way, making use of a series of OSL conventions, applied theatrical methods and, where appropriate, a practice-as-research methodology. Primarily, this session was concerned in the acts of translation that occur between teachers and learners (*and back again*) in order to establish high-quality feedback and assessment practices.

Here Heron shared various practices and asked students to reflect on their own learning experiences, what had worked and why. Also on the relationships they have with research and teaching, and how these do or may inter-relate with one another. Many students, particularly from non-UK contexts, found this aspect of the workshop really innovative and refreshing. All shared in suggesting various exercises we could use in our teaching, making this a really clear example of the kind of reflexive and truly democratic pedagogy to which Ranci re refers.

Hutchison introduced the idea of the buddy peer-to-peer system, which would enable each student to observe another PG's teaching and teach themselves. We asked them to set their own criteria for how they wanted their peer to assess their session. We suggested they give informal feedback to one another after the session and more formal feedback after the second workshop.

We explained timesheets for payment, which is part of professional development, as many have no idea of the UK system, and it helped them engage with another aspect of teaching.

Weeks 4-10 – Students ran and/ or observed teaching sessions (filmed where appropriate)

Week 10/11 – PG students will feedback to one another on their experiences, and Chase Hetzel will interview where appropriate, and over Easter break do first edit of the film.

Term 3

26 April, 3-6 p.m. - Heron & Hutchison to present the second workshop on observation and professional peer-to-peer feedback in Theatre Studies. This will focus on different pedagogical approaches to teaching, assessing their strengths, weaknesses and how these can be practically transferred into teaching contexts

CADRE has invited us to present a similar workshop in June for PG students in the Arts Faculty, involving our PGR lead learners who will be involved in expanding this project to students in the following academic year. We have also been invited to present a 2 hour workshop for the *New Scholars Forum* at the *International Federation for Theatre Research Conference* (Stockholm, 13-17 June, 2016), where we will include a first cut of the film, a short workshop and our two PG lead researchers' personal testimonies on the project.

01 August 2016 - Our final report will be a film that documents the process, its successes, weaknesses and failures through which we hope to 'learn better'.

Term 1 2016-17

Lead PGs will run session for new PGs with Hutchison and Heron in October 2016, HoD has already agreed budget to support this ongoing initiative.

Outcomes thus far:

The students presented the following sessions for second year modules:

Chase Heltzel - Creating an Immersive Environment, for *Live Art*.

Maria Krnic - Performing Religion in Late Medieval Communities, *Religion, Secularity, and Affect in the Modern World*.

Claire French – Language and identity in SA protest theatre, *South African Theatre*

Runs for second and third year students

Aida Bahrami - Paranoia on Stage, *Mad, Bad, Sad*

Third year modules:

Carmen Wong - Eating into Elsewhere: the performance(s) of belonging through food in migratory communities - a practice-based research, *Food & Performance* module.

Rubkwan Thammaboosadee - Facebook: A Dreamlike Stage, *Performing Online*

Liz Turner - Representations of Gender in Magic, *Performing Gender and Sexuality*

Jessi Parrott 'Do you want to see your own reflection?': The intersection of disability, gender and sexuality in two South African and Irish plays, *Performing Gender and Sexuality*.

Luana Garcia – Acoustic interculturalism- Performance of Brazilian national identity, *Intercultural Performance Practices*.

Two first year students from Malaysia chose to attend workshops and do peer observations this year, but chose not to teach as they were unconfident about their language ability at this stage, but will teach a session next year.

PG students were also invited to chair sessions for the finalists dissertations symposium, and not only did they volunteer to do this, but many attended and gave really useful critical feedback to the UGs. This has further brought these student groups closer together. It also allowed for PGs who are not mother-tongue English speakers to interact with PGs in a structured way. We will do this again.

This project has brought staff and the PG community closer together. Many staff members offered to support session planning, and invited students to attend an earlier session and observe them teaching. PGs have fed back that in many instances their preparation and presentation of these sessions has focussed their research, and in one or two cases defined direction post upgrade. UGs have expressed the sense that these sessions have helped them 'to connect the idea of research (which they see as 'scary') with what they are doing, especially as they begin to think about dissertations.'

It is clear that the core aims of this project have been met. We need to think about how to support non-English speakers develop their confidence. And also think about how to more staff members and PGs engaged in this project. Many Pgs also found they had prepared too much material, and did not leave enough space for questions and the UG students' own perspectives on the material.