**Transitions from workplace to academic study: facilitating criticality in masters level professional learning**

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The Professional Education and Leadership team in the Faculty of Social Sciences delivers a successful MSc programme aimed at supporting the professional development of qualified teachers. The defining quality of such learning (SCQF Level 11) is often said to be *criticality*,but we know from our experience and from research, that nurturing the development of criticality is very difficult. Tutors report across modules and programmes that students struggle to understand what is meant by criticality and report that critical engagement with readings and writing in assignments can be problematic and challenging. The aim of this project was, therefore, to develop a masters module explicitly aimed at developing criticality for academic learning and professional practice.

The module was based on the widely accepted idea of the social and distributed nature of learning in which collegiality has been identified as a key aspect of teachers’ professional development. This can be achieved through engagement with a range of colleagues, within the scholarly environment of the university, which encourages the questioning of received norms giving rise to new and enhanced understandings and practices.

In addition, interest is now centred on the innovative use of digitally-mediated, multimodal learning as a means to support the development of democratically shared learning within communities of practice. Such an approach responds to an identified need to develop approaches to learning which include greater flexibility, are choice-driven and provide ‘technologically-rich pathways’.

We therefore developed the online module *Engaging critically with professional practices*. As well as providing a potentially transformative learning experience, the online environment allows the development of innovative means of evaluating the learner experience through ‘learner analytics’. We were particularly interested in how our students engaged in online discussions, how they interacted with the resources provided and how they influenced each others’ learning. The interactive powerpoint shows some of the analytics we developed to assess these. We also conducted focus group interviews with our students to find out what they thought of engaging in the online space. By clicking on the powerpoint you can see their responses.