

LSRN Annual Conference



Learning and Skills Research Network Conference

Travelling together:
Evidence for practice in the Learning and Skills Sector

Thursday 25 November 2010
Friends House, 173 Euston Road, London NW1 2BJ

LSRN Conference Thursday 25 November 2010

Keynote Address

Name(s)	Anna Vignoles
Title/post held	Professor of Economics of Education
Organisation	Institute of Education
Title of presentation/workshop	The economic role of Further Education
Email address	a.vignoles@ioe.ac.uk
Summary	<p>Further Education plays a critical role in our education system and the FE route is an increasingly important one. Around 30% of those who remain in full time education post-16 now undertake their study within an FE college.</p> <p>It is therefore crucial that we have robust quantitative evidence on the effectiveness of Further Education provision and the economic outcomes of FE students, to inform policy-makers about the economic value of FE.</p> <p>There is existing evidence on both the economic value of qualifications produced in FE and the effectiveness of some types of FE provision. In the future however, the FE sector is likely to face further pressure to improve accountability and measure the economic outcomes of FE students.</p> <p>We can learn a lot from the school system about accountability systems and it is crucial that we recognise the limitations of the league table approach and the use of quantitative targets. We need to acknowledge the potential distortionary effects these have and how better to structure incentive systems for FE.</p>

Interactive Workshops
How to engage with research

Room 1

Name(s)	(1) Samantha Alvarez (2) Anne Taylor
Title/post held	(1) Course Leader (A Level Business Area) (2) Course Leader Business Administration
Organisation	(1) Sussex Downs College (2) Colchester Institute
Title of presentation/workshop	Building Research Capacity: Can action research and joint practice development impact on the quality of teaching and learning? (Behind every good student is an even better teacher!)
Email address	1) sam.alvarez@sussexdowns.ac.uk 2) anne.taylor@colchester.ac.uk
Summary	<p>The benefits of action research have impacted us as teachers and now we want to share this with others in our organisations. Both colleges recognise that gone are the days of training workshops led by outside “experts” covering topics that are only loosely related to our every day practices in the classroom. This approach to CPD rarely led to improvement – something that was done <i>to</i> us, rather than <i>by</i> us. Sussex Down college’s Professional Development Manager called it “the cycle of minimal impact”. Both colleges are seeking to engage teachers in small scale research projects or supported experiments where teachers work collaboratively with other teachers (as part of a community of practice) and their students to investigate an element of their practice they want to improve. The emphasis is on <i>creating</i> rather than <i>transferring</i> knowledge and we are keen to investigate the impact of this joint practice development on teaching and learning</p> <p>A small number of our staff (including us) have experience of joint practice development. Whilst respecting teachers as individuals who can make a difference in their individual classrooms, we believe that developing the College’s (rather than individual’s) research capacity is far more sustainable and effective in the long run – which is why we are keen to develop joint practice development as a whole college approach to CPD. As many of our staff has no experience of joint practice development we are currently exploring how best to support them through this significant transition.</p>

Interactive Workshops
How to engage with research

Room 2

Name(s)	1) Bill Esmond 2) Gareth Parry
Title/post held	1) College Manager 2) Professor of Education
Organisation	1) Chesterfield College 2) University of Sheffield
Title of presentation/workshop	EdD or PhD?
Email address	1) esmondb@chesterfield.ac.uk 2) g.w.parry@sheffield.ac.uk
Summary	The workshop will be a question and answer session comparing the different models of research degree in the academic study of education.

Room 3

Name(s)	1) Emily Houghton 2) Pauline Benefield
Title/post held	1) Assistant Librarian 2) Principal Research Librarian
Organisation	National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER)
Title of presentation/workshop	Using the internet to find research
Email address	1) e.houghton@nfer.ac.uk 2) p.benefield@nfer.ac.uk
Summary	This workshop will equip you with the knowledge and skills to find educational research on the internet for work, continuing professional development or personal study. Starting with how to plan your search, we will then show you some of the best freely available web databases and websites and give you tips on how to get the best out of 'Google' and social media. We will also discuss how to know what sources are trustworthy, relevant and unbiased.

Room4

Name(s)	Ian White
Title/post held	Publisher, Journals (Education)
Organisation	Routledge/Taylor & Francis
Title of presentation/workshop	Publishing in Journals. Some tips and advice on how to succeed
Email address	ian.white@tandf.co.uk
Summary	This session is aimed at people seeking to have their work published in academic and/or scholarly journals. Attendees will be taken through the process of preparing and submitting their work for publication. Insight into the role of the Journal Editor, and how the peer-review system works will be given.

Interactive Workshops - How to engage with research

Room 5

Name(s)	Lorraine Casey
Title/post held	Research Officer
Organisation	NIACE
Title of presentation/workshop	Supporting learning providers to undertake research with young people and adults not in education, employment or training (NEET) – reflections on process
Email address	lorraine.casey@niace.org.uk
Summary	This year, the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) led a major study into the attitudes and experiences of individuals not engaged in education, employment or training. With guidance and support from NIACE, more than one hundred learning providers carried out research interviews with young people (aged 16-24) or adults (aged 25 and over) in their locality. This session will open with a short presentation about the project and its methodology. In small groups, participants will discuss and reflect on the research process from different perspectives including those of policy maker, provider/ practitioner and interviewee. Participants will have the opportunity to comment on the research instruments.

Room 6

Name(s)	1) Sara Bath 2) Steve Rose
Title/post held	1) Project Officer 2) Technology Advanced Learning Adviser
Organisation	1) HEA 2) University of Exeter
Title of presentation/workshop	HEA resources to support research and scholarly activity
Email address	1) sara.bath@HEAcademy.ac.uk. 2) s.rose@exeter.ac.uk
Summary	This is primarily an information giving session where attendees will have the opportunity to find out about the wide range of support available from the Higher Education Academy for those engaged or wishing to engage with scholarly activity. The session will look at the many web based resources including evidencenet and the Academy HE in FE webpages as well as finding out about some of the events we run in this area. There will also be the opportunity to hear about what the network of Academy Subject centres can offer by way of discipline based support. The session whilst primarily presentational in nature will also provide the opportunity for attendees to discuss with presenters the nature of any additional support which they feel the Academy should provide in the area of research and scholarship

**Supporting the Engagement with Research Workshop session
Presentations from major research projects and centres**

Room 1

Name(s)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Fiona Aldridge 2) Anthony Harmer 3) Catherine Paulson-Ellis 4) Sheila Kearney
Title/post held	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Programme Director, Research 2) Chief Executive 3) Assistant Director 4) Head of Research
Organisation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) NIACE 2) ELATT 3) BIS Social Mobility Unit 4) LSIS
Title of presentation/workshop	Practitioner-delivered research around NEETs – what did we gain? The perspectives of the policy maker, the practitioner and of the national agencies involved.
Email address	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) fiona.aldridge@niace.org.uk 2) anthony@elatt.org.uk 3) catherine.paulson-ellis@bis.gsi.gov.uk 4) sheila.kearney@lsis.org.uk
Summary	<p>In February 2010, NIACE was commissioned by LSIS to develop a national research project to look at attitudes and experiences of adults and young people who are currently, or have recent experience of, not being engaged in education, employment or training (NEET).</p> <p>NIACE was asked to deliver the project by supporting providers to undertake the research and then deliver the data back to NIACE for analysis and reporting. This presentation will explore how the project was designed and delivered, presenting a model for sector led innovation in addressing a key and challenging social policy, and for future ways of working that captures learner voice and provider energy. This approach allowed learning providers and other agencies to shape an agenda by talking with each other, developing and using research skills that have a direct implication for their work, developing or strengthening relationships with partnership organisations and listening strategically to the messages they received from difficult to reach groups. It has also provided a direct line of communication between policy makers and practitioners.</p>

Room 2

Name(s)	Dr Joe Harkin
Title/post held	Visiting Fellow, Oxford Brookes University
Organisation	Oxford Brookes/ Education Research and Development Ltd.
Title of presentation/workshop	Teaching Practice as a Component of Initial Teacher Education in the Learning and Skills sector
Email address	j.harkin@brookes.ac.uk
Summary	<p>The presentation will draw on two reports written for the DBIS/LLUK Workforce Stakeholder group in 2010.</p> <p>The first report, <i>Breadth of Teaching Practice in the Learning and Skills sector</i>, studied a range of Ofsted reports and consulted with stakeholders to interrogate the meaning of the term “breadth” in this context and to consider why successive Ofsted reports of Initial Teacher Education have criticised this aspect. The report highlighted that some employers – for a number of possible reasons – do not provide adequate mentor support for teachers in Initial Education.</p> <p>The second report, an extension of the first, considered the barriers that some employers face in providing mentor support, in an attempt to suggest practical ways to improve its provision.</p> <p>As well as summarising the reports, time will be given for discussion of teaching practice as a component of Initial Teacher Education.</p>

Room 3

Name(s)	Sammy Rashid and Gareth Parry
Title/post held	Research Fellow and Professor of Education
Organisation	University of Sheffield
Title of presentation/workshop	Do colleges have anything in common?
Email address	s.n.rashid@sheffield.ac.uk g.w.parry@sheffield.ac.uk
Summary	<p>The presentation will highlight the differences in size and scope of further education colleges. Drawing on a HEFCE-funded research project, it will illustrate the variety of shapes taken by colleges in the English further education system: their size, their levels of provision, their modes of study, and including their higher education. What, if anything, do colleges have in common?</p>

Room 4

Name(s)	1) Professor William Richardson 2) Dr Anne Parfitt
Title/post held	1) Director – Research Centre for the Learning Society 2) Assistant Research Fellow
Organisation	Graduate School of Education, University of Exeter
Email address	1) w.b.richardson@exeter.ac.uk 2) a.m.parfitt@exeter.ac.uk
Title of presentation/workshop	Recovering the reputation of English further education. The relevance of FE development in England since 1945 to present concerns.
Summary	<p>The Foster report of 2005 concluded that FE colleges 'are hampered by their reputation and profile, compared to schools and universities'.</p> <p>By adopting historical method, this Esmée Fairbairn Foundation funded project seeks to make a contribution to public understanding of FE, the under-developed state of which may be a contributory factor in the perceived 'image problem' of the sector in England.</p> <p>The presentation will summarise the results of the study, introduce a detailed local case study and explore the further potential for enhancing the reputation of FE by celebrating its 'heritage'.</p> <p>The project has been influenced and assisted by advice from the national FE Reputation Strategy Group, established in the aftermath of the Foster report.</p>

Room 5

Name(s)	Lorna Unwin
Title/post held	Professor Lorna Unwin, Deputy Director of the ESRC-funded Research Centre, LLAKES, and Chair in Vocational Education
Organisation	Institute of Education, University of London
Title of presentation/workshop	Work-Based Learning in Challenging Times
Email address	l.unwin@ioe.ac.uk
Summary	Work-based learning is a prominent part of our education and training system (and also for the training and professional development of teachers and trainers). In the current economic climate, the workplace as a site for learning is under considerable pressure. This presentation will draw on new research to examine how work-based learning could benefit from a better understanding of the way workplaces are constructed as learning environments."