

disciplinary *Commons*



This document represents a fairly detailed outline of the contents of the itp *Commons* sessions.

They are, as indicated, the plans for the sessions, and they link with other materials on the website that were presented, or generated, as a result of specific activities. Sometimes, of course, the actuality did not follow the plan, but substantially the same material was covered in each session as is indicated here – even though order or emphasis might have changed “on the ground”.

First meeting, 7th October 2005. Plan

10.00-10.15	<p>Introduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why I'm here • Fed up of grouching, Fellowship gave freedom. All of us together are stronger than any of us alone • To document teaching "Aside from his syllabi and fading memories, he had no real record of what happened in those award winning courses" (Huber, 2002) • I am obsessively curious about the detail of people's work and "often ask more questions than is deemed necessary or appropriate." (Hardingham 2005) 	saf
10.15-11.15	<p>Round Robin "What it's like to teach in my department" (A note on how to listen to "How I" stories, and what to listen for—that is, similarity to your own experience, how their story illuminates yours.)</p>	all
comfort break		
11.30-12.00	<p>What are these Portfolio things anyway?</p>	saf
12.00-12.45	<p>More Round Robin</p>	all
12.45-14.00	<p>Lunch</p>	
14.00-15.00	<p>Final Round Robin</p>	all
15.00-15.15	<p>Portfolios: Structure & levels of writing [ppt]</p>	saf
15.15-16.00	<p>Small group: trajectories</p>	
Homework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course Objectives • Personal teaching philosophy <p>So for the next meeting we should have four pieces to select from for the "context" section of our portfolios</p>	

Second meeting, 11th November 2005. Plan

11.00-11.10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greeting • Setup. Working on context today. Need to come our with an idea of what aspect of context you're going to put in your portfolio and with what evidence 	saf
11.10-11.50	Form groups of three. Share your "teaching philosophy" and "aims and objectives" documents (10 mins each) Does your philosophy (and your values) match the aims and objectives. Is this an issue?	small group
11.50-12.10	Post-it charting of "place of this course within the curriculum". How the course I've chosen fits into our overall programme. Why it's there, how it fits. What does it do? Who relies on it?	individual
12.10-12.30	"Walk the wall" [photos]	all
12.30-13.30	LUNCH	
13.30-14.50	Different groups of three. Share "public" context pieces. Two tasks: first, peer-review, as above. Second, give an eye to capturing "critical context points" – those things that you want to know to be able to apprehend/ understand someone else's context.	
14.50-15.00	Plenary	
Homework	<p>Content: what do you teach? Description and justification of course content.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What gets put in, what gets left out? • What is "essential", what "extra"? • Which text book do I use, whose approach, why? • What influences the approach you adopt? • What would influence you to change? 	

Third meeting, 9th December 2005. Plan

11.00-11.15	Hello again. Initial Questionnaires	saf
11.15-12.00	<p><i>What</i> do you teach. What's the content</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What gets put in, what gets left out? • What is "essential" what "extra"? • What gets taught early, what can safely be left until later? 	triads
12.00-12.30	<p>What artefact best captures the essence of the <i>content</i> of your course?</p> <p>Active listening & reflection.</p>	different triads. (quick report back)
12.30-13.15	Lunch. Bring out textbooks. Look 'em over.	
	Textbook show-and-tell. Who uses what. Use the same ways, use differently?	plenary. saf lead
13.15-13.45	<p>What other materials do you use?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other books/published stuff? • Environments—ILE or IDE? Bought in or homebrew? 	
13.45-14.15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What influences the approach you adopt? • What would influence you to change? 	different triads. capture to ohp (?)
14.15-14.30	Influence, change. What is <i>evidence</i> . What are the constraints of my context (i.e. what am I permitted to change)	plenary. saf lead
14.30-14.45	This business of portfolio construction. Thoughts on artefacts.	saf [ppt]
14.45-15.00	<p>When & why of observation.</p> <p>Observation pairings. Are swaps allowed?</p>	saf
Homework	<p>Train reading: a new view on content (which shouldn't violate anyone's context)</p> <p>For next time: Instructional Design ("How")</p>	

Fourth meeting, 6th January 2006. Plan

11.00-11.15	Hello again. How did we get on with roles of variables? Apols Dermot, Pete (thanks from Dermot for doing questions last time. He'll be in touch)	saf
11.15-12.00	Share practice (15 mins each). Consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • why do I choose to teach using the methods I do? • for what purposes do I use certain methods (lectures, labs, exercises etc.) • could I use different methods? If so, what? 	traids
12.00-12.30 (could squeeze to 15 mins)	Methods (method/aim pairs) Capture list, capture variety. Indicate number against method (but list purposes separately)	triads
12.30-13.15	Lunch	Pin up lists, look over [amalgamation]
13.15-13.45	Vicky on alternative forms of "peer observation" [ppt]	
13.45-14.15	Quintin demonstrating handsets (Elton eval?)	
14.15-14.45	ID artefacts – satisfactory? What is the relationship between artefact & commentary (description? illustration? Could they be presented separately)	triads -> plenary
(separate in case there's time, not if otherwise)	Opinions on the Apple Learning Interchange site. Do the artefacts (largely unedited video of classroom practice) "tell" – are they good exemplars? Would it be good if we had them/used them?	plenary
14.45-15.00 Wrap & Homework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train reading: some interesting things to think about lectures. • Can we please have all observations done by 7th April? (Want to use the experience, the artefacts in the 7th meeting). • Are we ready to showcase at LTSN? • For next time: Assessment 	saf

Fifth meeting, 10th February 2006. Plan

11.00-11.15	Hello again. How was: “What’s the use of lectures”? Apols. Monika, David & Vicky	saf
11.15-11.30	Revisiting our goals	plenary
12.00-12.30	<i>Form</i> of assessments: do they align with objectives? Does the assessment demonstrate the learning we expect (valid & reliable)	pairs
12.30-13.15	Lunch	
13.15-13.30	Laurie’s presentation	plenary
13.30-13.45	Discussion on relationship between top-down belief and bottom-up practice. The heart of a portfolio. Brings materials at different levels into a single focus.	plenary
13.45-14.45	Connecting belief and practice. How do our assessment beliefs match onto our assessment maps? Can we make an “assessment chain” from belief through to feedback? Pairs. 30 min each. If you finish one, do another	pairs
	Did that work?	plenary
14.45-15.00 Wrap & Homework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train reading: some interesting things to think about beliefs we bring to teaching. • Reminder to complete all observations by 7th April • For next time: Evaluation – of our effectiveness, of their effectiveness (poss. including grading?) 	saf

One-page representation of assessments within a course

Take a piece of paper. Take some post-it notes.

Put one assessment on each post-it—use as much description or as much shorthand as you want. You may like to use different sizes, or colours, to indicate similarities if you wish (perhaps you want to distinguish between those assessments undertaken for marks & those not; or those which are on-line and those which are pencil-and-paper).

Put the post-its onto the piece of paper in a way that makes sense to you. (This might be simply in chronological order, or by some other organising principle.)

Assessment Chains

Can you make a chain between:

- an assessment "belief",
- a single, given assessment description,

- the performance of the students (i.e. could they do it, did they do what was expected, was their performance a surprise). Does it align with the aims & objectives for the course? And,
- what feedback you gave: what marks you made on the students' work

The point of the pairs is to quiz each other closely. Exactly how is this belief exemplified in this assessment? Exactly how does the student performance support the belief? Exactly how is the belief demonstrated in the feedback given?

Sixth meeting, 10th March 2006. Plan

11.00-11.15	Portfolio Review feedback I	pairs
11.15-11.30	Portfolio Review feedback II	pairs
11.30-11.45	Reflection on Bruner – and especially into the next section	plenary
Question: What proportion of students <i>should</i> fail your course? [answers]		
11.45-12.30	Grading (did it work for them): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who do we do it for (how important is it for us, for the course, for the students)? How do we decide which work to grade? How do we do it (machine, me, TAs) How do we do it (bell curve, norm referenced, criterion referenced)? 	triads & plenary
Lunch		
13.00-13.20	Dimitar “Show and Tell” (online project allocation system)	Dimitar
13.20-13.45	Tony “Show and Tell” (The Dylan Pickle intervention)	Tony
Question: How do you know if a course is going well, or has gone well? [answers]		
13.45-14.15	Feedback (did it work for us): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do we solicit feedback? (Appropriate, timely etc.) What do we do about it? 	small group & plenary call-out
Question: If Sally was to make a rank ordering of lecturers in your department, what metrics could she use? [answers]		
14.15-14.45	QA (did it work for the institution): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What do they want? When do they want it? What do they do with it? 	pairs & plenary
14.45-15.00 Wrap & Homework	Train Reading: How and what are we peer-reviewing in our portfolios? Especially, how are we going to make them fit together to say what we want? Lee Shulman <i>Course Anatomy: The Dissection and Analysis of Knowledge Through Teaching</i> He’s a psych, he uses metaphors appropriate to his disciplinary approach– do they work for us? Or do we have others, more appropriate for us? We’ll be doing two more rounds of evaluation on each others’ work; in two different styles, looking for different things As you do evaluations, remember “10 Good Ideas from the Disciplinary Commons”	plenary

Seventh Meeting, 7th April 2006. Plan

11.00-11.30	Peer Review feedback	Pairs
11.30-12.00	Peer Review feedback	Other pairs
12.00-12.30	The coherence of portfolios: Narrative structures? Do we have a disciplinary metaphor?	Plenary
	Lunch	
13.00-13.30	What did I learn from being observed	
13.30-14.00	What did I learn from observing	
14.00-14.30	Observations on Observation [ppt]	saf
14.30-14.45	Ideas for LTSN paper	
14.45-15.00	Volunteers for trans-oceanic peer review with Josh's commoners	

Eighth Meeting, 12th May 2006. Plan

11.00-11.45	Peer Review feedback	Pairs
11.45-12.30	Peer Review feedback	Other pairs
	Lunch	
13.00-14.30	Portfolio Development Process [ppt] switching between the repository and plenary critique at the points where individuals are named.	saf & plenary
14.30-15.00	A look at Porfolio Development software	

Ninth Meeting, 9th June 2006. Plan

10.00-10.30	Coffee, evaluation, loading up laptop with presentations
10.30-10.45	Dimitar
10.45-11.00	Mark
11.00-11.15	Pete
11.15-11.30	Chris
11.30-11.45	Thomas
11.45-12.00	Stephan
12.00-12.15	Quintin
12.15-12.30	Vicky
13.30-13.45	David
13.34-14.00	Tony
14.00-14.15	Dermot
14.15-14.30	Phil
14.30-14.45	Monika
14.45-15.00	Michael
15.00-15.15	Linda
15.15-15.30	Jim
15.30-16.00	Sally

“One Year Later”, 1st June 2007. Plan

11.00-11.15	Tea/coffee. Catching up. General chat	
11.15-12.15	Structured reminiscence	
	<p>On paper, for you, what was:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The most memorable thing that’s happened since <i>Commons</i> • The most memorable thing about the <i>Commons</i> • What do you think of your portfolio now, looking back? Is it honest? Is it accurate? What does it represent? What value does it have for you? (Have you looked at it subsequently, have you looked at anyone else’s?) If you haven’t got a portfolio, what records do you have? Have you looked at anyone else’s?) 	individual
	Share reminiscence	triads
12.15-12.30	Choices & Changes exercise	individual
12.30-13.15	Lunch	
13.15-13.30	Guest slot	Tony
13.30-14.00	<p>Change narratives</p> <p>On paper:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What did you change as a result of the <i>Commons</i>? Why? What led you to that change? [be as specific as you can] • Change narratives: <i>What was the most powerful idea you stole from someone else in the Commons? What did you do with it?</i> 	individual
14.00-14.20	Share & reflect on changes – can you pair with the person you stole from?	Short chain/small groups
14.20-14.45	Share in plenary	Plenary
14.45-15.00	Wrap up, train reading	

Changes and choices

We all make changes to our work all the time. Sometimes these changes are unconscious adjustments (let an exercise run an extra 10 minutes, work longer with a student who we notice is compiling frequently without making substantial changes), sometimes they are the result of conscious deliberation (I need to update the textbook I use, I saw this interesting idea in paper at ITiCSE, and I'm going to implement it next semester), sometimes they are forced upon us (a new syllabus, working with a new colleague). So, sometimes a choice drives a change, sometimes we notice a change and search for a reason.

	Change	Choice
To itp course	In student outcomes? In staff attitude?	New textbook Revised assessment regime
To me (professionally)	New job More/different responsibility	To leave academia To apply for a teaching prize

1. If you can pair a change with a choice, draw a line between them
2. If a change was a result of the *Commons*, highlight it

Transfer narratives

Identify one of the changes you made to your course that was the result of someone else's practice (that is, not just your own reflection). The idea could have come from any source – your reading, talking with colleagues, observing someone else: whatever. If it was from someone else in the *Commons*, so much the better! Please write the story of your transfer of that idea, from them to you. You may, if you like, use these questions to prompt your recollections.

- What was the idea/practice?
- Where did you find it? Why did you like it?
- How did you incorporate it into your course? (Did you have to alter their idea at all? In what ways? Did you have to make changes to other bits of your course to make the new bit fit?)
- Did it do what you expected it to?
- Will you keep it? Will you change it further?