



Welcome to the Autumn 2008 Newsletter of the Centre for Excellence in Teaching & Learning through Design

With just 15 months to the end of the HEFCE funding period for Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, the Design CETL is focusing on outputs and sustainability of its findings from the research and activities undertaken. It is a very exciting time, with staff from the University of Brighton, the V&A, RCA and RIBA working together on collaborative projects that address our main themes, which include learning spaces, practice-based learning, interdisciplinarity and the use and application of collections by Higher Education students.



University of Brighton student in the Prints and Drawing Education Room at the V&A. Photo: Catherine Duncumb

So how are the findings to be shared? We will continue to maintain the website (www.brighton.ac.uk/design/cetld) and populate it with reports, videos and audio content. A book on HE students and their use of museums and archive collections is about to be submitted to the publishers. Further publications are planned on learning spaces and themes derived from the 40+ projects undertaken by our Project Fellows. At the moment information about individual projects is available on the website but the

overall collective impact will be evaluated in the final stages of the Design CETL and captured in these publications and on the website: www.brighton.ac.uk/design/cetld

Offsite: Insight

Offsite: Insight aims to examine and enhance access and use of the V&A's and RIBA's architecture collections at the V&A museum and the RIBA, by Higher Education students and tutors. Catherine Duncumb (V&A+RIBA Architecture Education Officer) is leading the project in collaboration with Nikki Pipe (Senior Lecturer in Architecture and Technology, in the School of Architecture and Design at University of Brighton) and Paul Snell (Education Curator, RIBA British Architectural Library).

This CETLD funded research project began in October 2008, and will examine the use of these architecture collections as a resource for architecture, teaching, learning and practice. It will look at accessibility and the effects of direct and virtual access on use of content and design work outcomes. It will study students' experiences and methodologies of visiting and using the collections and examine where this impacts on their learning experience and enhances coursework.



University of Brighton students in the Prints and Drawing Education Room at the V&A. Photo: Catherine Duncumb

The project responds to feedback from a consultation event conducted with HE tutors and students across the UK in March 2008, and online surveys following visits to the architecture collections. Student and tutors request greater clarity regarding the extent of the collections, improved online access (enhancing use of existing resources such as www.ribapix.com), and tutors request support in demonstrating to students how use of collections can enhance coursework and subject understanding, and link with contemporary practice.

A series of pilot projects have been planned to track undergraduate's experiences and responses to using the collections, including influences on and integration in their design work, explore open-ended virtual and direct access to collections, field studies, and facilitated access to support manual and digital design and fabrication workshops. Pilot Tutor Inductions will establish a range of approaches, methodologies and pathways for communicating the value of using collection materials.

In November approximately eighty students signed up to Field Study trips to the V&A and the RIBA. Students were introduced to the scope and content of the collections on each site, and were able to sign-up to 'close-up' study sessions. Students visiting the V&A used the online resource RIBApix to select drawings in advance and viewed the original objects in groups in the Prints and Drawings Study Room. These largely un-facilitated sessions gave students the chance to observe and discuss a range of drawings and techniques. The dialogue recorded during the session provided the researchers with valuable data on how students access the collections.



University of Brighton students in the Prints and Drawing Education Room at the V&A.
Photo: Catherine Duncumb

Findings included information on:

- o How RIBApix functions as a search mechanism and means of accessing the RIBA collections remotely, "It's a really precious resource. RIBApix was brilliant but seeing it in real life is a totally different experience," student.
- o How digital imagery compares to the experience of seeing the 'real thing': "We thought that the actual drawing was going to be bigger."... "There's a lot less detail than when you see it in real life."... "I found the colour came out much more seeing it person," students.
- o What students felt they had gained from viewing original objects: "Drawing processes, you can see how architects work. It's encouraging for us. I can be so scared to draw."... "I've gained confidence. It's been a very valuable experience," students.
- o And how this would inform their design work: "The amount of construction, the amount of detail that's just in that one piece of work, it's hard to imagine us cramming that much detail. You know when you split it between lots of pages so you can have lots of work up but that just covers everything and it so beautiful as well"..."Yes, I could make five pages with that!"..."Exactly! That's why I like that."... "Yes, the density of information, its more interesting to look at, rather than taking aspects of it and putting it on another sheet or having it all separated out. I think it's much more interesting that way," students.

In January further pilot projects 'Hardware' and 'Paper-scape' will facilitate virtual and physical studies of the collections, and will support manual and digital design, drawing and fabrication activities.

The project findings will be used to create e-learning induction resources that aim to be stimulating, practical, relevant to HE level learning and course requirements, promote and increase independent use of the collections, and support distance learning and regional access.

Catherine Duncumb
November, 2008

Living legends and a peak into the interior

Two CETLD projects led by the RCA are drawing to a close. This 'Living Legend Masterclass' project involved the creation of learning materials to enhance the accessibility of workshop practices within art and design education. By creating a visual record of a set of demonstrations the

project set out to produce an aide memoire for students, broaden access to knowledge amongst staff, improve health and safety awareness and raise the profile of technical instructors. The project created two films that demonstrate techniques that are commonly used in the Ceramics and Glass Department: Sledging and Turning. It is hoped that they will become part of an expanding archive of Masterclasses. The films are available through the CETLD Web site, as is a final evaluation report. The RCA has also been supported by the CETLD to conduct a thorough evaluation of the Domestic Interiors Database (DIDB), a resource created as part of a 5-year AHRC initiative. The DIDB is an extremely rich resource that draws on major national and international collections and archives comprising a collection of 3,300 entries which brings together sources for understanding visual and textual representations of the domestic interior in Europe and North America from 1400 to the present. The evaluation has involved a series of workshops and interviews that have sought to investigate how to tailor and promote the archive as learning and teaching resource for students, curators, researchers and academics. The project is due to end in March 2009. An interim evaluation report is available on the CELTD Web site.

Telling their stories: Students' experiences with creativity: Jess Moriarty (SLLC) & Christina Reading (CETLD)

The Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning through Design (CETLD), School of Language, Literature and Communication (SLLC) and the Centre for Learning and Teaching (CLT) are collaborating on a project that aims to investigate students' experiences with creativity and how they use their sources of inspiration to develop their work. Students studying Graphic Design and Illustration in the School of Arts and Architecture and Creative Writing students from the (SLLC) are being asked to reflect on their motivations to produce creative work and to then detail what hampers their creative processes in order to find ways to support students and help them to engage with their learning. The interview process asks students to talk about their personal experiences with creativity, going back to their very earliest memories of being creative and how their process has evolved. Creativity is a unique and personal expression but many of the inspirations and mechanisms for facilitating creativity are similar across disciplines. By identifying the specific

mechanisms for creativity within these particular groups of students, we hope to discover features unique to each discipline and also identify more generic experiences that support students in being creative. The project seeks to use these personal conversations to identify circumstances and material that empowers the creative process. We are also investigating potential blocks to their creativity and what methods can be used to support students in overcoming these barriers. We hope to suggest possible ways of developing teaching and learning strategies across the university that will tap into and inspire creativity in all students.



Image by Lyall McCarthy, Yr 2 Illustration student

This project is being supported by funding from Aim Higher, CETLD, the Creativity Centre and the Centre for Learning and Teaching. We are grateful to all the students that have taken part in the project and thanks to the Head of Graphic Design and Illustration, Lawrence Zeegan, for enabling us to work with the students.

Activities at the V&A

Fear of the Unknown: Can gallery interpretation help visitors learn about art and material culture?

This conference took place at the V&A from 19-21st November, to mark the opening of the new Sackler Centre for arts education at the V&A. It is the first in a planned series of international conferences that will investigate aspects of arts and cultural education in the context of museums and galleries.

There were around 100 delegates from over 10 countries in attendance.

Beth Cook presented a paper at the conference entitled Interactive gallery interpretation for design students: help or hindrance?, based on results from the iGuides project. There are plans to publish the conference proceedings.

Rules of Engagement: Art, Conflict and Gallery Education

On 6th November Rebecca Reynolds and Catherine Speight attended the engage conference in Brighton, presenting a paper entitled How can museums support Higher Education students, again based on the iGuides project.

'Sharing Pedagogies': supporting the needs of the HE Design Student in the museum

In October Beth Cook and Catherine Speight presented a work in progress seminar on research for their book chapter called Sharing Pedagogies. The presentation looked at different issues around the different languages used about education across higher education and museums and how differing understandings of pedagogical terms affect the direction learners are given within different institutions.

New Project Support Officer

Sharla Mann has now left her post as Project Support Officer based at the V&A, and has been replaced by Holly Burrows.

Reflections on an anniversary book:

Philippa Lyon writes:

Co-editing a self-published book to mark Brighton School of Art's (BSA's) 150th anniversary has been a fascinating project. The brief was for a publication that would serve a number of purposes: provide a historical overview, capture both formal and informal dimensions of the school and elucidate elements of the distinctive 'Brighton' character.

The book, we felt, needed to celebrate successes such as the excellent reputations and achievements of particular individuals, yet it also needed to avoid hagiography. We wanted to peel away some of the layers of time and obscurity from eras that still have much of interest to offer, and look at the specific 'story' of BSA alongside changes in artistic practice, educational policy and relationships with industry.

As co-editors, we took the theoretical view that history is plural, multi-voiced and arguably never 'complete'. We wanted to accept and make the most of the uneven coverage of archival material available, but also to follow up oral testimony and to keep elements of individual and dissonant perspectives running through (and against) the central narratives. The research and writing process involved many decisions about the selection and interpretation of

data, and the choice and presentation of viewpoints.

The historical scope of the book comprised a century and a half, tracing BSA through its several institutional manifestations, and amongst the readers we hoped to attract in writing the book were staff and students past and present, the local community and the wider art and design education and practice communities. The period of time allocated to the project was also a major factor in shaping the final book.

From this emerged a final text that included an overview of the institution's history from 1859 to the present; studies of special topics such as the links with the Ditchling arts and crafts community, the development of fashion/textiles history and alternative cultural life embodied in the Art College's Basement Club; and more detailed accounts of BSA life in particular periods, such as the 1930s and the 1960s. Interspersed throughout the text are short accounts of notable individuals who have studied and/or taught at BSA, examples of their work and numerous illustrations.



Art Teacher Training students improvising newspaper costumes for a project, 'Elizabethan Day'. Students mimed scenes from their own scripts, their shadows being projected onto a screen.

With the anniversary book completed, I am looking forward very much to working with CETLD researchers on a new publication (or publications) to identify and articulate the findings from their projects. Whilst this work is ostensibly very different to the anniversary research, there are common questions of scope, context, interpretation and readership that will be very important in planning

the CETLD publication(s), and the underlying concern with pedagogical approaches is central to both works.

Art and design at Brighton 1859-2009: from arts and manufactures to creative and cultural industries, edited by Philippa Lyon and Jonathan Woodham, will be published in January 2009.

Forthcoming events include:

2009

7 January

Jos Boys, Learning Spaces Seminar 1: 'Does Space Matter?'

21 January

Student led project: 'Eco Urban Bus Line' (tbc)

4 February

Jos Boys, Learning Spaces Seminar 2: 'What are the sticking places between art and design education?'

11 February

Jos Boys, Learning Spaces Seminar 3: 'The real and the virtual - does Art and Design need ICT?'

18 February

Torunn Kjolberg on her PhD research at the University of Brighton and the V&A

20 February

One-day Art, Design & Health Conference: 'Is Design Good for You?' Interdisciplinary approaches to learning and teaching in art, design and health' at the University of Brighton

24 April

'Collecting Experiences: enriching design students' learning in the museum' One-day symposium at the Sackler Centre, V&A

25 February

Sol Snelvedt, University of Brighton, 'Bridging the Gap in Moving image'

4 March

Louise Purbrick, University of Brighton, 'Re-inscriptions: Text to Object'

11 March

Student-led project - Naqeeb Popalzy and Adam Place, 'FAAIF: Performance-based Degree Show'

25 March

Beth Cook, CETLD Research Fellow at the V&A, 'Behind the Scenes at the Museum'

22 April

Rebecca Arnold, RCA, 'Screen Search Fashion'

20 May

Catherine Duncumb, RIBA/V&A, 'Compass on Campus'

14 October

Abraham Thomas, V&A, 'From Sketch to Product', The Sackler Centre, V&A

Unless otherwise stated, seminars will take place at 4.00 pm in the Design CETL at the University of Brighton. Further information is available on the website: www.brighton.ac.uk/design/cetld

Contact us

Further information about all Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning through Design activities and events can be found on the website: www.brighton.ac.uk/design/cetld.

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