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Session 3.4a

Enhancing Employability via Community Challenge

Philip Johnson, University Centre at Blackburn College

Abstract

This presentation results from a research project that took place at the University Centre at Blackburn College (UCBC) from January 2012-March 2013. The research was enabled by a Teaching Development Grant from the Higher Education Academy and operated under the name 'Enhancing Employability via Community Challenge'. The project established new forms of learning at UCBC by encouraging multi-disciplinary groups of students to independently apply their conventional learning for the benefit of various local community groups.

'Community Challenge' built on experiences acquired from involvement as a research partner in C-SAP's 'Cascading Social Sciences Open Educational Resources' project in phase two of the UK-wide OER programme. The cascade's reflexive research methods led to the implementation of a wiki-based staff development programme at UCBC called 'Creativity for Edupunks?'

The edupunk reflections resulted in 'anarchogogy' ('guiding without rulers') emerging as a preferred approach for maximising the potential in OERs and OEP. The method was followed throughout 'Community Challenge' and the students were therefore empowered with choice of topic, methods of inquiry and nature of the subsequently produced resource. This reconfiguration of the student role was not without challenges of its own as confusion and uncertainty were initially reported by the students. However, the open nature of the project was able to sustain interest levels and a variety of innovative work was ultimately produced. The emphasis on 'being open' also included new assessment methods which along with the resources themselves seek to pave the way for future 'Students as Producers' at UCBC and beyond.

Presenter details

Dr Phil Johnson

Lecturer in Criminal Justice at UCBC - research interests: Edupunk & Anarchogogy in relation to OERs, community sentences, visual criminology.