

Title: **Adapting the ‘Combined Learning for Employability and Research (CLEAR)’ approach to develop an inclusive culture of collaborative inquiry**

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Session Learning Outcomes

By the end of this session, delegates will be able to:

1. Select short reading texts aimed at motivating engaged participation, in student and staff audiences, and for developing higher level reading and thinking skills;
2. Facilitate workshops for students and staff involving active, responsible, individually and socially constructed learning;
3. Design for students and staff activities for developing generic employability while also developing skills for academic inquiry.

Session Outline

Participants will experience an adaptation of ‘Combined Learning for Employability and Research’ (Wilkinson and Olason 2012) – a response to difficulties with a Level 5 module, where students struggled to: manage themselves, others and projects; handle and communicate multiple perspectives; and to understand and apply theory relating to the epistemological basis of knowledge creation in their subject discipline.

As Wilkinson and Olason explained (p.42), CLEAR’s innovative nature lay not in its underpinning practices and theories but in their combination, by facilitating learning which is: active and student-centred (Elton 2001); experiential and reflective (Laurillard 2002); inquiry based (Justice et al. 2007; Healy and Jenkins 2009; Spronken-Smith and Walker 2010); individually and socially constructed and situated with reference to cultural discourses (Quay 2003); and which transforms tutor and student identities (Brown 1997; Baxter Magolda 2010). It also adapted and integrated a cognitive apprenticeship approach described by Woolley and Jarvis (2007, drawing on Collins, Brown, and Newman 1989).

Collaboration during the past year with academic literacy colleagues has highlighted the central importance of language in meaning making (Coffin and Donohue 2014) and the need

for stronger emphasis on reading (Wingate 2015). Fuller integration of Allan's 'Portsmouth Model' now provides such emphasis (Allan and Powell 2007).

Recent experience of applying this adapted approach in café style (Sheridan et al. 2010), making individual participants read, share and compare with others in small groups before presenting a synthesis in the plenum suggests that the approach has potentially beneficial applications for staff development and collaboration. It also suggests that it is possible to cover content with students in ways that build stronger engagement, confidence and deeper levels of processing (Marton and Säljö 1976). Whether developing students or staff, this inclusive practice appears to have benefits for engagement and confidence, and the sharing of authority builds responsibility and motivation.

Session Activities and Approximate Timings

The outline of the workshop is as follows;

1. Introduction (5 minutes)
2. Individual participants read and prepare to share the ideas from a page of text on one of four or five main themes (depending on the total number of participants). Each text is different and relates to a different perspective or aspect of one of the themes (5 minutes)
3. Exploration of one of the main themes in small groups (18 minutes).
 - a. Individuals share ideas in their groups, providing a brief summary in their own words of the main idea(s) or practice that they have read about, and how this may be relevant (or not) for supporting the development of employability and also academic inquiry.
 - b. Each group discusses and produces a synthesis of the ideas covered in the texts examined and represent this on one sheet of flip chart paper.
4. Each group has five minutes to present their flip chart to the whole group. (20 minutes depending on the number of groups)
5. Background and overview of the CLEAR approach, and its recent adaptation and applications (12 minutes).
6. Discussion & Evaluation, facilitated by online software allowing individuals to post questions or comments using phones, laptops or other devices. This will allow questions and comments to be grouped in themes, and these can then be discussed in small groups. (30 minutes in total)

Activities and timings for this discussion:

1. Participants post their questions and comments online (5 minutes);
2. Main issues and themes identified (5 minutes);

3. Key words of issues & themes written down on separate paper used to label tables, participants move to the table they are most interested in and discuss (10 minutes);
4. Tables report back to the whole group, allowing further discussion (10 minutes).

References

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Wingate, U. (2015) *Academic Literacy and Student Diversity: The Case for Inclusive Practice*. New Perspectives on Language and Education: 42. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.