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Paper 149 – Pecha Kucha

IBL: No Half-Way House?

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Abstract

Inquiry-Based-Learning (IBL) is a student-centred and active form of learning which engages students, individually and collaboratively, in self-directed research into the subject matter and problems of their academic and professional disciplines (Kahn & O'Rourke, 2004). IBL encompasses approaches to learning that are based on a process of self-directed inquiry or research, where the lecturers are facilitators in the process of knowledge, whilst the students discover and create the knowledge for themselves. It is well-aligned with social constructivist epistemologies, which emphasise the importance of the active and experiential construction of knowledge by the subject and the fundamentally social nature of this process (Dewey, 1938; Vygotsky, 1962; 1978).

In this Pecha Kucha we will explore the use of IBL on both UG and PG modules. Our aims were to bring together authentic teaching environments, immersive virtual worlds, and IBL to provide a collaborative pedagogical framework to enable students to engage in knowledge building (Griffiths et al 2011). At UG level, a module encompassing Professional, Legal and Ethical issues in Information Systems, was fully redesigned in accordance with IBL principles, focussing on developing information literacy skills to empower students to manage their own learning. Students embraced the approach whole-heartedly, and there was significant improvement in student achievement on the module compared to previous years. However, PG students on a similar module which combined IBL with more traditional pedagogies were less enthusiastic, and did not capitalise on the opportunities to develop rich digital literacy skills. We will use the Pecha Kucha to document our experiences using IBL across three cohorts of students, and to examine the factors which influenced its effectiveness in enhancing student learning, drawing on the qualitative evaluations we have carried out. A particular focus will be to showcase student work in order to illustrate their achievements in information literacy as well as the development of detailed subject knowledge. Further, we will give students a voice, with several of the Pecha Kucha slides providing the student's opinions on IBL and its contribution to their personal and academic development. We hope that this will provide a starting point for discussion of the potential benefits (and pitfalls!) of IBL.

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