





Lancaster University 

'Academics' experiences of networked professional learning'



*Karin Tusting, Sharon McCulloch
(Presenting), Mary Hamilton*


 
Academics Writing
Dynamics of Knowledge Creation


Lancaster University 


Academics writing:
The Dynamics of Knowledge Creation project


Literacy Research Centre, Lancaster University
Departments of Linguistics and of Educational Research
Funded by the Economic and Social Research Council, UK


 
Academics Writing
Dynamics of Knowledge Creation


Karin Tusting


Sharon McCulloch


Mary Hamilton


Ibrar Bhatt


David Barton

Academics' writing practices

The importance of digital platforms in collaborative learning



Literacies as social practices

Writing practices are:

- sustained through participation in a social context
- socially and institutionally situated
- learned through informal, distributed networks

(Barton & Hamilton, 2000; Barton, 2007; Tusting, 2003)

Sociomaterial approach

Practices are shaped by:

- Tools and resources
- Social and material aspects of the context

(Fenwick, Nerland, & Jensen, 2012)

Research design

	Maths	Marketing	History
University A: Plate glass (1960s)	UniA-Maths	UniA-Marketing	UniA-History
University B: 1992	UniB-Maths	UniB-Marketing	UniB-History
University C: Red brick (C19 th)	UniC-Maths	UniC-Marketing	UniC-History

Data collection with each participant

Phase 1

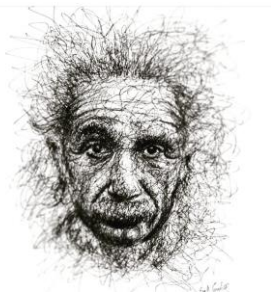
- Go-along interview
- Techno-bio interview
- Day-in-the-life interview
- Field notes, observation, photos

Change and learning in academics' writing

The screenshot shows a blog post on a website called 'Ibrar's space'. The post is titled 'Reflections on writing my monograph 2'. The text discusses the process of writing a monograph, mentioning that it is not as straightforward as it seems and that it involves a lot of reflection and revision. The author mentions asking a few well-established academics for their responses and includes a quote from one of them: 'You are no longer writing for the nit-picking examiner - now it is aimed at interested fellow colleagues and enthusiastic students.' The post also includes a list of 'RECENT POSTS' on the right side, such as 'Reflections on writing my monograph 2 March 2, 2016' and 'A year's reading in review (2015) January 2, 2016'.

What do academics learn from others?

Intellectual development



Intellectual development

"to be able to engage with really, really bright people, far brighter than me ... I work as part of a team of academics. It's nice to be able to work with people who maybe are more experienced, intellectually, down the line so they can guide the way."

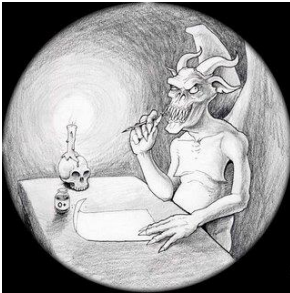
Charles, lecturer in Marketing

Intellectual development

"I haven't had any formal training. What I've done is work with people who are more intelligent and more capable than me, more experienced than me and worked with them and learnt from them. So it's more been an apprenticeship rather than a formal sit in a classroom type thing."

Mark, Lecturer in Marketing

Writing structures and strategies



Writing structures and strategies

"Talking to senior peers who publish more than me about I want to say this, this is all going on in my head and them saying, 'Well actually what you're doing is A, B, C.' What they were doing was teaching me structure."

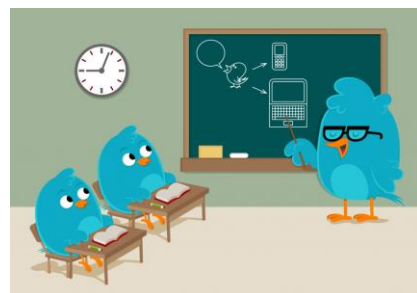
Diane, professor in Marketing

Writing structures and strategies

"I printed it out last week, gave it to my husband to read. He came back with loads of good points; What I'd done was so sort of abstract, no one could have understood it, (Laughter) so I've developed that and made it much clearer. He said, "Stop trying to be so clever; just say what you're doing," "

Verity, professor in History

Learning digital platforms



Learning digital platforms

"...a colleague of mine, who was very technological, she showed me there was this thing called Powerpoint, and that at first seemed quite complicated and mysterious but of course it became a standard tool".

Jen, lecturer in Linguistics

Learning digital platforms

"I'm also new to online courses, which a lot of our teaching is done through Moodle, it is very much at the moment learning as I'm going on. So I'm quite responsive to what the students are saying, to what sort of nuggets I can glean from other members of staff."

Josh, lecturer in History

Learning digital platforms

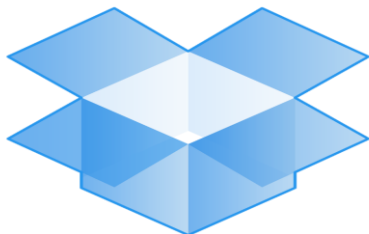
"my daughter showed me Prezi, because they learned it at school"

"I follow my colleagues and some associations related to my professional interests on Twitter ... I learnt it from my daughter."

Jen, lecturer in Linguistics

Characteristics of networked professional learning

Wide range of platforms



Dropbox

Collaboration across time and space



Collaboration across time and space

“So Skyping would be to discuss generally issues around the research and ideas that have developed, if somebody has gone away and thought about some particular bit of it. Then the writing you would have a most up to date LaTeX file. Again finding a practical way of making sure that everybody is at the same copy has not proved that easy.”

Ian, lecturer in Mathematics

Collaboration across time and space

“One of the projects I’m involved in is not particularly practical, because I’ve got people in four different countries so actually Skyping all together well you can do a conference call, but then one in China, one in the US. I’m not sure you can find the right time of day to do that.”

Ian, lecturer in Mathematics

Learning via specific projects



Learning via specific projects

“I first set up a Facebook account in about 2012 with the explicit purpose of using it to publicise a book that I’d written for a trade readership and I think I started using Twitter at about the same time simply to try and publicise the book and to increase its sales.”

Don, lecturer in History

Challenges of online learning



Risks of learning in public

“the trouble with that is that mathematicians are inherently, sort of, cagey. It’s so easy to look stupid if you say something that you ought to have known.”

Ian, lecturer in Mathematics

Risks of learning in public

When the day dawns that I have time to write a blog, when I feel suitably informed to talk about stuff... I feel at the minute that it's all still a bit new. I haven't done anything for long enough to really call myself an expert in it. So it would just be my opinions that were in a blog. So why would I write them?

Emma, lecturer in Marketing

Looking back, moving forward

- Fostering intellectual development
- Becoming a more effective writer
- Learning to use digital platforms
- Working on international projects

- Hope for a more confident future

Looking back, moving forward

- To what extent do these findings resonate with you?
- How do you see things developing?

References

- Barton, D. (2007). *Literacy: An Introduction to the Ecology of Written Language*. Oxford: Wiley.
- Barton, D., & Hamilton, M. (2000). Literacy practices. In D. Barton, M. Hamilton, & R. Ivanič (Eds.), *Situated Literacies* (pp. 7–15). London and New York: Routledge.
- Fenwick, T., Nerland, M., & Jensen, K. (2012). Sociomaterial approaches to conceptualising professional learning and practice. *Journal of Education and Work*, 25(1), 1–13.
- Tusting, K. (2003). A review of theories of informal learning. *Lancaster Literacy Research Centre Working Papers*. Lancaster: Lancaster University.