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"From pictures into words: the changing meaning of success" (0156)

From pictures into words: the changing meaning of success

Outline

In this paper we offer a case study of how we have introduced visual inquiry within an inquiry based learning pedagogy in our work with undergraduate business school students. While we are aware of visual inquiry methods as an approach to learning and teaching in schools we are not aware of any such work in business schools. We see this paper as a step towards joining up of research in organisation studies with pedagogic research in HE.

Increasing regulation, alienation of academic staff and student disengagement are widely acknowledged to have accompanied the rapid expansion of business schools (Hopfl, 2005; Jones and O'Doherty, 2005). Reason and Marshall (1987, 2001) draw from Heron's (1992) extended epistemology to support student inquiry that is grounded in values that hold meaning for 'me' (individual students), for 'us' (the research community), and for 'them' (the wider society). Within their approach the practices of action inquiry offer disciplines and skills for critical reflection on the lived experience of the researcher/learner, and the difficulties and challenges of the research / learning process. A related development and pedagogical approach is offered by 'Inquiry based learning' (IBL), a term coined for a variety of pedagogical approaches that support student research led learning within the UK and internationally (<http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ibl/home.html>).

Aesthetic and arts based research methodologies hold in common intent to assert the affective, the transcendent, and the sensory dimensions of experience in a field in which the rationalist and positivist discourses have been hegemonic. But how might they inform pedagogical approaches that support student led inquiry in a business school? In the pedagogy we have developed, learning takes place through a process of student led research through which students develop their own capacity to interpret and to construct meaning (Page, Gaggiotti and Jarvis et al., 2008). While not orientated specifically to the 'visual', we have found that IBL principles and practices offer a framework for arts based inquiry (Page and Gaggiotti, 2009, 2010). Moreover, they offer potential for developing student visual inquiry, in the context of Business School programmes and organisational environments that do not lend themselves to critical inquiry or reflexivity (Page and Broussine, 2008).

