THE **SCHOLARSHIP** FRAMEWORK

Scholarly spaces toolkit: creating spaces to support the development and enhancement of scholarly communities of practice

This resource supports all stakeholders concerned with developing scholarly communities by suggesting ways in which spaces to support scholarship can be encouraged and developed within the organisation, and signposting to the kinds of activities such spaces support. The resource could be used by college HE managers to develop scholarly spaces, college HE curriculum leaders to consider where such spaces might fit within the curriculum, and college HE educators to support their individual scholarly practice.

Keywords: *Learning environment, scholarly space, community of practice, HE manager, HE curriculum leader, HE teacher, curriculum, scholarly activities, research space.*

Background to the initial project

This project aimed to creative, develop and articulate a range of scholarly spaces (physical, digital and curricular) that enabled and supported staff to work as a self-sustaining community of practice, and engage with scholarly activity within a college higher education (HE) environment.

Research involved three colleges (Hereford College of Arts, South Gloucestershire and Stroud College and Gloucestershire College) during the academic year 2016-17. More detail about the project, including research methods, can be viewed [here.](#)

The design and implementation of 'scholarly spaces' at each centre was context-specific and varied according to individual staff needs and the very different aims, values and structures of each college.

Rationale for the project

Having 'time' and 'space' to undertake scholarly activities is recognised as one barrier to staff scholarship in college HE (Adcroft and Lockwood, 2010; Creasey, 2013; Lea, 2015, 2016; Mason, 2010; Wilson and Wilson, 2011).

Therefore, the project looked at ideas of 'scholarly space', breaking these down into three areas:

● Digital scholarly spaces

● Physical scholarly spaces

● Curricular scholarly spaces
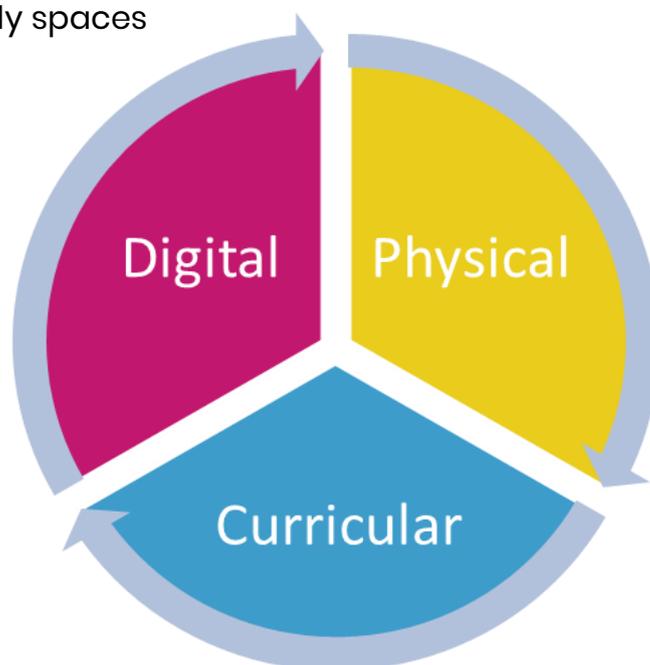
The research also suggested that 'scholarly space' was perceived by college HE staff to be a space which:

● Encouraged dialogue

● Was non-hierarchical

● Blended digital with analogue (physical spaces)

As part of the trial, formal and less-formal spaces across the dimensions were created. The impact of different types of scholarly space in relation to their use value in building scholarly communities was evaluated.

Types of scholarly space found to be of value

Digital Spaces

Type of space	Examples	Indicative activities
Social media	Twitter, Instagram	- Discussion and debate - Build external networks
Digital 'groups space'	Microsoft 'groups', Basecamp, Slack	- Signpost to scholarly activity - Discuss pertinent issues
Blog	WordPress, Weebly, Tumblr, Wix, Medium	- Document scholarly activities - Disseminate scholarly activities - Share information from External conferences etc
College VLE	Moodle, Blackboard	- Signpost to internal and external opportunities - Tore resources that support scholarship - Build bespoke 'scholarship' internal programmes - A gated discussion space for staff and students

Types of scholarly space found to be of value

Physical Spaces

Type of space	Examples	Indicative activities
Dedicated HE room (embedded HE and FE provision)	HE common room	• Discussion during college HE-specific workshops for staff and students • CPD through timetabled 'research methods' sessions • Discussion and debate between college HE students
Dedicated 'scholarship' room (separated HE and FE provision)	Research common Room	• Discussion around key areas of practice, concepts or college HE teaching strategies • Timetabled 'CPD' discussion sessions • Lunchtime discussions hosted by external visitors or professionals
Signposting and dissemination space	Scholarship noticeboard	• College HE students and staff find information as to scholarly activity opportunities • College HE management celebrate the scholarly activities of students and staff • Dissemination of scholarly activity

Curriculum Spaces

Type of space	Examples	Indicative activities
Timetabled 'CPD/training' space	Twice-termly 'HE' staff training (held on whole-college training days) Monthly HE twilight discussion sessions	- College HE-specific staff training around Office for Students/ Quality Code - College HE staff CPD workshop (for example, to support with HEA Academy fellowship applications)
Lunchtime knowledge-exchange space	'Bring your own lunch' meetings to share good practice internally 'Lunch provided' sessions for external visitors to share practice or host discussion sessions	- College HE staff share good practice and resources in supporting college HE students with time management - External professional visits college HE to share their research practice and host discussion - Video provocation or content followed by discussion
Non-assessed space in curriculum	Opportunity provided for students to engage in non-assessed scholarly activities	- Cross-curricular collaborations tied to a particular event (for example, Hay Festival) - Opportunities for students to take place in external research

		projects or trial innovative pedagogies (for example, using social media in teaching and learning, or collaborating with other students through exchange schemes)
Assessed space in curriculum	Bespoke module content that encourages students to engage with Boyer's dimensions of scholarship Embedded content in existing modules that engages with Boyer's dimensions of scholarship	• Delivery of modules that encourage students to research, combine theory and practice and apply their research to real-life problems • 'Active' curriculum which engages with employers through live briefs and external events
Formal larger event	College HE symposiums or conferences	• College HE 'Employability' conference with a range of external speakers • Internal subject-specific conference • Student 'dissertation conference'

Less-formal larger event	College HE happenings, unconferences or festivals	• Knowledge-exchange around professional practice and teaching and learning (for example, a 'festival of practice', 'assessment unconference' or 'research trail')

Ways of evidencing impact

From colleges involved in the initial project, evidence of impact could be found through increased staff and student engagement in terms of attendance at 'scholarly space' events and dissemination of practice and research through a range of internal and external activities such as:

- Conference presentations
- Publication of short articles
- Publication of case studies
- Internal knowledge-exchange.

Impact can also be tracked through the use of a self-assessment, available here.

It is suggested that the 'spaces' created or developed in a centre work connectedly, such as using a blog to document and reflect on scholarly activity also supports evidence of impact in a form that supports scholarly practice.

A map is available to support centres in developing appropriate spaces across a range of dimensions. The map (and suggestions on how to use it) is available here.

References

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