

Title: Exploring non-verbal communication in learning interactions: from research method to students' and teachers' everyday practice

Presenter: Clare Kell John Sweet
Cardiff University

Session Learning Outcomes

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

Have discussed the use and impact of nonverbal communication (nvc) in learning/ teaching interactions and practised using an innovative notation system in order to make nvc features visible for student and staff reflection.

Session Outline

Nonverbal communication (nvc) is well known to play an important role in human interaction. Goffman's seminal work explores the multiple ways that humans learn to recognise, respond to and reproduce typically context-specific, nonverbal interaction patterns. This session focusses on two elements of nvc: proxemics and kinesics. Proxemics describes the use of space in interactions: both the physical territorial elements and participants' movement flow (a sign of confidence/ 'umwelt'; Goffman 1972). Kinesics explores participants' use of gesture, eye-based movement and paralanguage. Studies of patient: doctor interactions (e.g. Heath, 1996; Strong, 2001) and learning in practice settings (e.g. Lave and Wenger, 1991; Gherardi, 2006) have long made visible and discussed the power of participants' use of proxemics and kinesics to enable or control the interaction practices of others. Typically these studies have used video to record interactions for later analysis.

As an example of how research and scholarship can intersect and offer an evidence-base for learning and teaching development, this workshop introduces a simple yet effective pencil and paper method for recording real-time interaction proxemics and kinesics. Developed by one of the presenters for a hospital-based research project, the notation system enables students, teachers and educational developers to catch the essence of power and spatial dynamics in learning interactions. We would like to share the tools with colleagues as low tech, effective opportunities to explore nvc during supervisions, peer-to-peer collaborative learning, tutorials, laboratory practicals, instrumental and creative arts' lessons etc. The method, as workshop participants will experience, is easy to learn, highly portable and offers a practical resource for educational developers, but can also be used to help students capture each other's interaction practices, postures and movement flow during role play or practical sessions.

The workshop will be highly interactive and provide space for method application discussion and critique.

Session Activities and Approximate Timings

Session segments	Contributor Input	Delegate activities	Timing
Introduction and scene setting	Outline of the session outcomes and plan		2 mins
The method and its use in a research setting	Rationale for the design and use of the method; How the method 'works' in a research setting; Application potential in everyday HE / FE learning settings.	Listening and contributing as desired	5 mins
From research method to everyday ed dev and student: student tool	Demonstrating the method's potential: 1) Teaching the method and application using a video clip; Brief discussion on points of technique 2) Application during live teaching role play scenario.	Active use of notation system in two learning interaction contexts. Preliminary personal reflection on the method's 'learnability' and relevance.	25 mins
Discussion and reflection / conclusion Conclusion	What are your thoughts/responses? Application potential in: - Educational development role; - Student-to-student learning interactions; - Other ideas? Construction of a bullet board of ideas.	Discussion and reflection about application to HE and FE learning interactions. Contributing to bullet board	13 mins

References

Heath, C. 1986. Body movement and speech in medical interaction. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Gherardi, S. 2006. Organisational Knowledge: the texture of workplace learning. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

Goffman, E. 1972. Relations in Public: microstudies of public order. Middlesex: Penguin Books.

Lave, J. and Wenger, E. 1991. Situated learning: legitimate peripheral participation. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Strong, P. M. 2001. The ceremonial order of the clinic. Parents, doctors and bureaucracies. Dingwall, R. ed. Aldershot: Ashgate.