Weaving philosophy into the fabric of cultural life

The present paper is an abridged summary of the report entitled “Philosophical Theory and Contemporary Relevance: personalised, object-based learning in Philosophical Studies and the methods and practices of acquiring and developing core critical skills” produced with the support of The Subject Centre for Philosophical and Religious Studies of the Higher Education Academy. I should also like to express my gratitude to Miriam Baldwin, Milan Jaros, Lars Iyer, Chris Lindsay, Roger Pearce and George MacDonald Ross for many useful discussions, comments and contributions.

Introduction: Bedding philosophy in reality

Among ethicists and teachers of ethical theory it is implicitly acknowledged, to be overtly rhetorical and a little bit disingenuous, that the role of applied ethics and bioethics is of more use in teaching the central doctrines of moral thought than in the actual resolution of issues in contemporary culture, at least as it is practised in most cases.¹ The reasons why discussions of euthanasia, abortion and war, for example, serve this purpose are obvious: the learner feels that there is something at stake, that there is something worth arguing about in a way that they do not when engaging with, say, the veridical versus dispositional theories of pleasure. Central to the degree programme in Philosophical Studies at Newcastle University is an object-centred research programme (hereafter referred to as ‘the Project’), personally directed and partly self-assessed by the student which seeks to bed metaphysical, ethical and epistemological concepts into real debates and the actual world. The research is ‘object-based’ or ‘centred’ because the student’s thesis grows out of and concerns itself with a personal engagement with a non-philosophical and (broadly conceived) empirical object found with the world. So, for example, students begin their investigations from an interest in a particular song, a building, football, a film, a new scientific discovery or a recent political speech.
Over and above the traditional content and substance of a philosophy degree, learners who engage in an object-centred research project will acquire knowledge that crosses disciplines and takes them beyond their standard, narrow curriculum. To continue with the examples above, learners may have to acquire the vocabulary of musicology, architecture, sports science, literary criticism or political science in order to be properly articulate about their chosen object. Reciprocally, it brings philosophical concepts and skills closer to the non-academic world in much the same way that bioethics has centred many ethical debates through their application of philosophical concepts to real, scientific facts, such as the sentience of animals, the development of embryos or the welfare of peoples.

Beyond the demonstration to students of the relevance of philosophical theory to the real world, there are two other main advantages in the learning approach of the Project. First, the students’ motivation to engage in learning is interest rather than punitively driven. The student has a stake in the outcome and conclusions of his or her thesis because it is grounded in an object that is of interest to that student and they are therefore more likely to be motivated to carry out the personal and isolated research necessary for such an endeavour. To be conjectural, one could assume that the reason why is not dissimilar to Aristotle’s critique of Plato’s argument for common property. If one owns something or sees it as one’s own, one is more likely to look after it and care for it. And remember that the thinkers’ point of disagreement specifically centred on the ownership and education of children. (Plato, 1955: 462b-c; Aristotle, 1996: 1263a) Second, the Project commits students to a very real engagement between disciplines and hence meets the desirable goal of interdisciplinary education. (UNESCO, 2007: 114) The object of a student’s investigation takes him or her outside the comfort of the subject matter of philosophy and requires proper and rigorous research in a separate domain of knowledge (be it archaeology, history, musicology and so on) before reconciling the two in an interesting philosophical manner.

For example, engaging in a research project centred on the object of the ‘home’ within the territory of ‘architecture as a cultural phenomenon’ would not only furnish deeper understanding of the specific
philosophical concepts brought to bear (possibly, ‘space’, ‘family’ and ‘tradition’) and the conceptual exposition in appropriate thinkers (Kant, Hegel and MacIntyre for example), but also lead to an acquisition of knowledge about architecture and cultural practices. Such knowledge outcomes will be set by the learner himself or herself in collaboration with the supervisor and stated in a continuously amended personal development plan and then repeated in the project dissertation itself. The learning objectives, knowledge outcomes and educational rationale of the project module are that students be reflectively aware of and able to apply the core critical skills of philosophy to an empirical, non-philosophical object as well as preparing students to have the confidence to use relevant philosophical concepts and knowledge beyond the academic confines of a degree programme.

There is ample, colloquial evidence to suggest that Philosophical Studies’ students are more than satisfied with their degree programme and believe that the Project is a worthwhile endeavour, but the purpose of the research programme supported by The Subject Centre for Philosophical and Religious Studies of the Higher Education Academy, was to explore whether the actual experience of undertaking the Project is fulfilling its goals and whether its delivery could be improved. The changing nature of the job market entails that the vast majority of graduates are no longer either specialist possessors of knowledge or skilled craftsmen, rather most employers require graduates with core critical skills and also the ability to bring knowledge from their degree programme to bear upon seemingly alien domains of knowledge. The Project is a methodology aimed at developing the core critical skills demanded by such roles: independence, autonomy, critical thinking, reflective understanding, evaluative interpretative skills, ability to understand, organise, order and disseminate specialist knowledge (oral, verbal and new media communication skills). These core skills are all traditional academic skills, but students have often been only latently aware of their talents. The reflective nature of the learning process of the Project is aimed at increasing awareness of these skills through the application of philosophical theory to empirical objects.
Skills, skills, skills

There is implicit in the forgoing discussion an assumption that ought to be challenged. The overarching aim of this research is seemingly to show that a philosophy degree, its content and its methods are *useful* or *have utility* outside the academic environment and, hence, reading for a degree in philosophy is worthwhile. Such an assumption, if true, reduces the value of education to a means-end one and makes it a purely functional practice. Its sole function is seemingly to develop those skills and knowledge useful in one’s future life. This is, of course, consistent with the aims and purposes of a learning society as set out by the Dearing report and it would idealistic to suggest that this is not at least part of the aims of education, but it ought however to be countenanced that it is not the be all and end all of education. Perhaps more obliquely, the investigation sought also to justify the putative assumption that the Project methodology captures the Humboldtian ideal of a tertiary educational system capable of producing independent researchers rather than mere archival units of information. The Project methodology attempts to meet the dual requirements as set out by the Dearing Report to learn knowledge both for its own sake and for its value in other contexts. (NCIHE, 1987: ¶23) Central to one aspect of the Project methodology is the claim that the learning approach emphasises the discipline of philosophy itself and not just the skills that a study of such a discipline will foster.

The Project Teaching and Learning methodology

Undergraduates are introduced to the Project approach via a mini-project in semester 2 of year 1 (4000 words), but the full module is taught in years 2 and 3 and students are required to produce a thesis of 8000 words for each of those years. It begins and ends with the academic year and the thesis is produced in the June diet of examinations. The teaching of the object-based research module takes place in weekly meetings in groups of maximum ten students, reinforced by one-to-one sessions and substantial supervisor
and peer feedback. As part of the object-centred research module, students will be required to produce: a
written progress report; a personal development plan in which the student reflects on what they have
learnt, develops a specific methodology for his or her research and becomes aware of the skills required to
successfully carry out his or her intended study; two oral presentations in which learners present a
summary form of their research to others in such a way that it is explicable to non-philosophers and gain
immediate feedback from peers and tutors in terms of question and answer sessions; a small webpage
summarising their project; and, finally, the actual 8000 word thesis itself to be assessed by project
supervisors, second markers and with samples sent to the External Examiner. The complete assessment of
the project is a mixture of self-assessment and continuous assessment, involving both indicative (progress
report, first presentation), formative (second presentation, entry for the book of change, personal
development plan) and summative (Project thesis) elements.

The learning process is a collaboration between project supervisor and learner through a phased
development leading from dependence to independence. The timing of the phases is driven by student
need and progress, but a very usual pattern is that by the January presentation, phases 1 and 2 have been
completed and the second semester is concerned with the production and discussion of the philosophical
research which will form the backbone of the thesis as well as self-reflection on the purposes and aims of
the research itself (phases 3 and 4).

Phase 1 is the identification and investigation of the object of research. Some students arrive at the first
meeting with very clear cut ideas about what exactly they want to pursue, some arrive with a vague
nebulous of interests and some with no ideas whatsoever. The role of the supervisor is to offer
encouragement and to use his or her experience to direct the learner away from objects that are
inappropriate, either because they will not yield any substantial discussion of worth or because they are
too ambitious in their scope. Once the object has been identified and provisionally approved, learners
must actively, independently and creatively identify possible sources of information and data beyond the
normal comfort zone of the library and the internet (although these will, more than probably, be the starting point). The learner must be encouraged to engage with the ‘real’ world with the supervisor reminding them that one of the objectives of the project is to demonstrate to the learner – and to give them in turn the ability to demonstrate to others – the relevance and utility of philosophical methods and knowledge outside the degree. Through this process, the way in which the object is to be understood – its ‘context’, ‘place’ and ‘territory’ – are to be decided.

Phase 2 is the identification of appropriate philosophical concepts and methodology drawn from the traditional lecture and seminar syllabus. The supervisor may wish to direct the learner to see how an immediate understanding of the object may well be problematic and urge him or her to contrast two different understandings of the same object. These contrasts should bring into sharp relief the immediate nature of our everyday statements and judgements and also the supposed rational basis for them. Through the narrowing of one’s object to a discussion within a specific territory or context (ethical, epistemological, cultural, scientific, metaphysical and so on), and by empirically researching the ‘place’ of the object within this context, the appropriate philosophical concepts ought to suggest themselves. Bibliographies and notes should be assembled in the personal development plan and the understanding of the concepts will be developed and revised in conversation with the supervisor and project group.

Phase 3 is a reflective self-assessment and self-development on the part of the learner. He or she will need to explicitly state how they are going to both investigate his or her project and also state why the philosophical concepts are appropriate and how they are to be applied. In short, he or she will need to, at least in a rudimentary fashion, state the methodological approach taken towards his or her object of research. Given the technical nature of this phase, the supervisor’s role is most intensive here and the student is most dependent.
When the discussion of the object, context and concepts have reached a high level of theoretical worth, the supervisor will begin prompting members of the project group to begin asking themselves whether it was worth undertaking the research they have done, whether they have developed skills or acquired knowledge that will be of use in the future or with relation to their degree as a whole. Learners are encouraged to reflect on their own development by looking back through their personal development plans. Finally, phase 4, is the production of the thesis itself. The learner should be independent and active by the stage of thesis writing and group meetings should be wholly led and determined by learner aims and objectives.²

An illustrative example

A learner has an interest in looking more closely at illegal drugs sparked by a variety of circumstances: why certain substances are illegal and others are not, why there is such a difference in attitudes to different substances (nicotine, alcohol, cannabis) between generations, why contemporary society is seemingly equivocal in its own attitude to illegal substances, and so on. The supervisor sees possibilities in such an exploration and prompts the learner to ask herself whether experiences of drug taking and religious experiences are similar, why people take drugs, why society may want people to use or not use certain substances, why the individual may want to use them, when the substances were made illegal, why we distinguish in kind between substances, and so on.

The learner seeks information from a variety of sources (the library, government, friends’ anecdotes, fictional narratives and so on) until she hits upon a little known fact that there was an attempt to prohibit certain substances to specific social classes, especially factory workers. The idea of certain substances being prohibited for the immediate reason of protecting the individual from harm, can be theoretically contrasted to other paternalistic laws (seatbelts) and also to other substances which may cause harm (alcohol, nicotine); or, an historical contrast can be developed between the pre and post legislation periods
and to see what time-line the legislation coincided with (the industrial revolution, the era of mass and cheap production of these substances); or a cultural contrast between societies with stricter and those with weaker laws. The supervisor asks her about the sources for her information and whether it can be trusted. (Is it from a decriminalization lobby group, for example?) She then makes a connection between economic productivity and drug use and becomes aware that the paternalist justification for the prohibition of certain substances may well be disingenuous. She decides (with the help of her supervisor) that what interests her most is the object drugs within the context of legislation and law (ethics broadly construed).

The project supervisor suggests that the concepts of consent and liberty are most appropriate and the learner develops research questions: whether legislation exists to protect the individual or to protect the interests of someone else. These concepts form part of the syllabus of the core ethics module. The agreed method is a rational, empirical enquiry using reflective equilibrium into the justification of law and its foundations. She compiles a relevant bibliography drawn from the core module lectures and begins writing her thesis. The learner notes in her personal development plan that she has developed an interest in law and legislation and may proceed to a law conversion course after graduation.

The research aims and methodology

The pedagogical research into the Project learning methodology sought to realise three specific objectives:

1. To discover whether the object-based, personalised approach to learning better develops the core critical skills as compared with more traditional pedagogical methodologies;
2. To determine to what extent the object-based, personalised approach to learning makes students aware of the acquisition of the core critical skills as compared with more traditional pedagogical methodologies;

3. To determine to what extent the object-based, personalised approach to learning makes students aware of the value of philosophical knowledge and concepts beyond the academy.

The objectives arose in response to an intuitive understanding of object-based personalised learning as a method more appropriate to the development of core critical skills, more reflective and more relevant than traditional pedagogical approaches. It is seemingly more reflective in that students are at least minimally involved in setting the agenda of what they learn and, more importantly, why they are learning it, and more relevant in that the methodology ought to demonstrate how critical thinking and the concepts of philosophy can fruitfully be brought to bear on objects outwith the confines of the academy.

Evaluation of the objectives was effected by the use of Likert scale questionnaires (with a few additional discursive questions), by the content of students’ self-development plans and also through informal discussions. The questionnaires were distributed to a variety of groups in a process of measuring students’ expectations and evaluations and also to garner their mature reflections. Comments, appraisals and informal feedback were extracted from discussions with project groups (both this year and the last) reflecting on their learning experience and through self-appraisal present in the personal development plans.

The first two objectives required asking current students a series of questions concerning the skills, knowledge and relevance of the programme at two points in the year: expectations were measured in October at the beginning of the module and evaluations, especially concerning any change in attitude towards the module, were garnered in March. These questionnaires were distributed to Philosophical
Studies’ students at Newcastle University divided by year as well as students enrolled on a more traditional philosophy course (University of Glasgow) and on the various biology degree programmes at Newcastle University. Although not exhaustive, the data supplied the basis for comparative analysis along differing axes: expectations against evaluations, year on year progressive changes within Newcastle Philosophical Studies students, students at Newcastle compared with a traditional philosophy degree programme and finally the two humanities degrees compared to the natural science degree.

The questionnaires were split into two sections and answers to the questionnaires were to be divided into three broad areas of interest: students’ implicit skill awareness (their answers to the Likert scale questions), students’ explicit skill awareness (their answers in the free text box) and the evaluation of the relevance of the discipline outside the academy (answers to the second set of questions in the Likert scale). The first section avoided the temptation to simply ask whether a student agrees that he or she has acquired the skill of, say, analytical skills. Such an approach would be worthless because if you were to ask a philosophy graduate whether they have improved their analytical skills, it would be rather odd to receive a negative answer. They are well prepared to express such sentiments in job interviews without being able to give substantial examples of how exactly they developed these skills. The relevant skills were embedded in indirect questions and a free text box was present for participants to name the three most significant skills, thus splitting their answers into implicit awareness of skills and explicit awareness of skills acquired. The core critical skills being sought were reduced to the following set for the purpose of quantitative simplicity: articulacy, rationality, rigorousness, critical reflectivity, flexibility, creativity and independence. The purpose of the second section was to evaluate the third objective of the research: the Project module is discipline affirming in that students are more aware of the value of philosophical knowledge beyond the academy than traditional students.

Finally, in order to satisfy the need for mature reflection to see whether the object-based learning approach does in fact fulfil its purported aims and purposes, a separate questionnaire was distributed to
graduates of the Philosophical Studies programme at Newcastle University. In June, 2008, a virtual, social network was created in order to gauge the attitudes and experiences of students after they have entered the workplace and to reflect on the merits of the programme. This questionnaire was distributed to graduates of 2008 who joined the social network group in October 2008, three months after they had graduated.

**Analysis of the empirical data**

We were fortunate enough to receive comparator data from the natural sciences (biology students at Newcastle University) and from a traditional philosophy degree programme (University of Glasgow), but the overall numbers were such that any conclusions reached based on the figures must never be anything more than an observation of a possible trend. However, empirical data were, it is true, always going to play the role of reinforcing a priori considerations and would never have constituted proof unless the data samples were larger and carried out over a period of years using a control group. Informally this process will continue. No concrete conclusions can be drawn from such a small and unconditional sample of data, but certain intuitions concerning the nature of object-based learning can be supported by both the statistics and the personal testimonies.

It is clear that the non-traditional approach at Newcastle is not producing a different set of skills or harming those traditional set of philosophical skills acquired through reading for a philosophy degree. However, the aim was to substantiate the claims that one, personalised learning is more appropriate to the development of core, critical skills than traditional programmes; and, two, students on the Philosophical Studies programme are more aware of their personal development of these skills. There is unfortunately no statistical evidence to support the former of these claims, but one should not underestimate the significance of difference in the explicit awareness of skill acquisition. The core set of skills are more fairly
distributed amongst the Philosophical Studies students than their traditional counterparts and also the
indication that independence, obviously a consequence of the research intensive and personal aspect of
the object-based learning, is an ability that Newcastle students are aware, both implicitly and explicitly, of
possessing to a seemingly greater extent than their counterparts. There was also a distinct difference in the
changing expectations and progression of self-understanding: the implicit awareness of skill acquisition of
the Philosophical Studies students increases and shifts towards a stronger agreement with those
statements that indicate an ability to exercise such skills from the beginning to the end of the year and
progressively through the three years whereas, for philosophy students at Glasgow University and biology
students at Newcastle University, there is very little change from the beginning of the year to the end of
the year and between years in the acquisition of skills. What these traditional students expected is what
they believe they received, perhaps revealing not so much the non-acquisition of other skills but an
unreflective engagement with their own learning. It could be that Philosophical Studies students at
Newcastle, through object-based learning, are more involved with and thus reflect more on their actual
development as learners and persons. A direct comparison between Philosophical Studies students at
Newcastle and Glasgow reveals that the former are implicitly aware of acquiring creativity and
independence over and above the more traditional philosophical skills of articulacy, rationality and critical
reflectivity.

Newcastle Philosophical Studies students do seem more inclined to view philosophical knowledge as
relevant beyond their degree and appropriate for the workplace, as substantiated in the personal
testimonies and personal development plans. Perhaps the most interesting result of the whole
questionnaire in that Philosophical Studies’ students at Newcastle University seemed to reflect the
reorientation of this research project concerning the discipline affirming nature of the personalised, object-
based Project. Looking at the statement ‘I consider my degree to be appropriate for a specific employment
niche’, Newcastle students responded in a way more akin to the biology students than the traditional
philosophy students. With reference to the statement ‘potential employers will be interested in what I have
learnt in the degree programme’s modules’. 21% of Philosophical Studies’ students ‘strongly agreed’ and 43% ‘agreed’ with the statement, compared with 4% ‘strongly agreed’ and 35% ‘agreed’ of traditional philosophy students. (The results for biology were 13% ‘strongly agreed’ and 54% ‘agreed’.) Again, the agreement to this statement increases through the progressive years of the degree and so may be due to the impact of the Project learning approach. Couple this with the willingness and ability to relate philosophical knowledge to both skill acquisition (as demonstrated by their wide distribution of explicit awareness) and external territories (possibly workplaces or at least objects in the cultural world in a broad sense), then object-based learning allows students to answer the perennial interview question ‘How do you see your degree as relevant to the current vacancy in our company?’ with more than the ‘It has taught me to be analytic and rigorous, formulate rational arguments...’ as all students would answer. Rather our students are able to answer in relation to their Projects, be they about education, the workplace, architecture, music, et cetera. Through such answers, they are able to demonstrate the worth of philosophical knowledge to the employer and not just as means to acquiring skills desired by the would-be employer.

Conclusions

Research question 1: Is personalised learning more appropriate to the development of core critical skills than traditional programmes?

There was no evidence to support the claim that students on the Philosophical Studies degree programme at Newcastle University possessed any advantage over traditional programmes (in this case, the Philosophy degree programmes at the University of Glasgow). The degree programme at Newcastle, based as it is in personalised, object-based learning, does not produce a different set of skills nor does it do so better than a traditional programme. There is, perhaps, more evidence of independence and creativity due to the
heavy autonomous and personal nature of the undergraduate research, as would be expected. So, the answer to the first research question would seem to be no, that personalised learning approach is not more appropriate to the development of core critical skills, neither is it more inappropriate, it is just a different learning methodology that is perhaps more appropriate or less appropriate with reference to the particular student and his or her own learning preferences.

Research question 2: are students actually aware of the benefits of personalised learning?

The second research question arises from the second aim of the current research, that is ‘To determine to what extent the object-based, personalised approach to learning makes students aware of the acquisition of the core critical skills as compared with more traditional pedagogical methodologies.’ Such a question need not be limited to discussion of the acquisition of skills, since ‘benefits’ can be understood more widely, but since the third question below deals with the value of a philosophical education and its concepts, it is best to reduce this question to one concerning the acquisition of core, critical skills. In comparison with the more traditional programme, students at Newcastle University are aware of a broader set of skills than their traditional counterparts and the testimonies of past and current students expresses a strong link between the skills acquired on the degree programme and tasks carried out in everyday and work life. The overall impression given by the data, both formal and informal, seems to suggest that yes, Newcastle University students are more aware of the acquisition of core critical skills as an implicit benefit of their degree programme in philosophy.
Research question 3: Are students aware of the value of philosophical knowledge and concepts beyond the academy?

This last question, the discipline-affirming nature of the personalised, object-based learning methodology, is the most definitive of the successes. Both the statistical data and, more specifically, the personal testimonies of the students at Newcastle University demonstrate the bridge between philosophical theory and the ‘real world’ is one that is both in the students’ awareness and one they are sincerely confident to traverse. Many of the testimonies tell of the personal development of viewing philosophy as merely the subject matter of the degree to a realisation of its importance in other (almost all other) aspects of the students’ life. The connection between their studies and their prospective workplaces or further educational destinations is often explicitly made. Even if no other achievement had been made in the current investigation, the confirmation of the intuition that the personalised, object-based learning approach is discipline-affirming for philosophy, then it would have been a success. So, the answer to the final research question would be, yes, students are aware of the value of philosophical knowledge and concepts beyond the academy.

There was an initial complacence in the belief that the object-centred approach was better at developing the core critical skills, when a little reflection would perhaps have reminded the researcher of the long standing traditional success of philosophy degrees and their graduates in this country. However, the explicit awareness of the acquisition of these skills in concrete situations as well as the awareness of the value of philosophical knowledge should not be underestimated. The personalised, object-based learning approach, if nothing else, serves to demonstrate why one might want to engage with and purse a philosophical education even if (and so few will) one will not concern themselves with exclusively philosophical concerns after graduation.
Bibliography


Appendix: examples of the questionnaires

All questionnaires required students to indicate how far they agreed with a statement (1 = strongly agree; 2 = agree; 3 = agree somewhat; 4 = disagree somewhat; 5 = disagree; 6 = strongly disagree) except for a free text box where students would simply asked to list answers.

**Questionnaire 1: expectations**
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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
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<th>Disagree somewhat</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
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By undertaking my current course of studies and degree programme:

- I shall become better at expressing ideas and arguments in writing.
- I shall become better at expressing ideas and arguments in oral situations.
- I shall be able to persuade people of my own views and ideas more easily.
- I will learn to recognize good arguments about a range of issues.
- I shall be more prepared to change my own ideas in light of good reasons.
- I shall improve my ability to interpret and comprehend other people’s views and ideas.
- I shall learn to be tolerant of ideas that differ from my own.
- I shall learn to be more creative in responding to problems and situations.
- I will develop the ability to think for myself and to support my own ideas.

The knowledge I have learnt on my course will be useful after I graduate.

Potential employers will be interested in what I have learnt in the degree programme’s modules.

I will retain much of the knowledge and facts from my course after I leave university.

The material and content of lectures is useful only for passing my degree.

I consider my degree to be appropriate for a specific employment niche.

Please list the **three** most significant skills you will develop on the degree programme:

**Questionnaire 2: evaluations**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Agree somewhat</th>
<th>Disagree somewhat</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
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<td>5</td>
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</table>

My degree programme has improved my ability to:

- express ideas and arguments in writing.
- express ideas and arguments in oral situations.
- persuade people of my own views and ideas more easily.
- recognize good arguments about a range of issues.
- be more prepared to change my own ideas in light of good reasons.
- interpret and comprehend other people’s views and ideas.
- learn to be tolerant of ideas that differ from my own.
- learn to be more creative in responding to problems and situations.
- develop the ability to think for myself and to support my own ideas.

The knowledge I have learnt on my course will be useful after I graduate.

Potential employers will be interested in what I have learnt in the degree programme’s modules.

I will retain much of the knowledge and facts from my course after I leave university.

The material and content of lectures was useful only for passing my degree.

I consider my degree to be appropriate for a specific employment niche.

My degree has helped me to clarify ideas about future career paths and life choices.

Please list the **three** most significant skills you developed on the degree programme:

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*Questionnaire 3: reflections*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Agree somewhat</th>
<th>Disagree somewhat</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
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- My degree programme helped me to choose and pursue my current career and life choices.
- I often use skills and methods from my degree programme in my work.
- My degree programme prepared me for my current work.
- My work would be more difficult had I taken a different degree.
- I can confidently communicate the worth of my degree to other people.
- I use material from courses and my degree programme in the context of my work.
- The concepts and ideas from my degree programme are useful for my work.
- My employers are aware of the subject of my degree.
- The subject of my degree programme was useful in securing a job.

Please list the skills which you developed on your degree programme that are most useful at work:

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1 I repeat that this opening salvo is merely rhetorical. As a statement it ought to be made conditional to the teaching of applied ethics as a module part of a programme in philosophy and not as embedded in more vocational or professionally accredited degrees (engineering, biology, medicine) where it serves quite a different purpose. See Myser (2001) for a more rounded discussion.
It should be noted the active role of the learning and the reorientation of the teacher-learner relationship in this process. I do not have time to expand this aspect here, but would imagine an interesting discussion could be framed using the deconstruction of the Enlightenment dichotomy of independent/dependent that MacIntyre (1999) proposes.

Examples of these questionnaires are contained in the appendix.

The full data sets and graphical interpretation can be found in the full report.

Extracts and examples are available in the full report.