

e-Learning in Dialogue

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This special issue of Discourse contains papers that were first given at the International e-Learning for PRS Conference: e-Learning in Dialogue (May 14th-15th 2008). More than 40 researchers and teachers in PRS from England, Scotland, Wales, N. Ireland, Italy and Africa discussed in York for two days how best to implement and develop e-learning for PRS. The contributions specifically discussed the problem of how best to express and sustain a constructive and educational dialogue when teaching for PRS. This was deemed of great importance, because one of the key methods of teaching practice in PRS is that of a dialogue. Students discuss things with fellow students and teachers, and this is how students (and teachers) learn in the discipline specific context of PRS.

There are colleagues in PRS who express concerns that technology enhanced teaching and especially e-learning for PRS is an oxymoron: this issue comes to dispute this or at least to cast doubts on both the theoretical and practice based foundations of such a claim. The contributions examined both the teaching and research practice in PRS and associated disciplines and how both research and teaching can benefit with an appropriate use of e-learning and congruent teaching methodologies. Some of the published here contributions focus on the theoretical aspects of how best to incorporate and sustain dialogue in e-learning; others discussed in great detail the practice of using e-learning in the teaching of PRS; some others discussed the future of e-learning in an increasingly virtual PRS classroom.

The Subject Centre for PRS has been supporting the discipline specific development of e-learning in the UK for more

than 8 years now with specific projects (DEL-1 and DEL-2) funded by JISC, Tech-Dis and the Higher Education Academy, and with ad hoc support to academics interested in learning more about how best to incorporate innovative technologies and methodologies in their teaching and learning. It is hoped that with this publication (in conjunction to reports and other material, which can be found in <http://prs.heacademy.ac.uk/projects/elearning/index.html>) it will provide a much needed discipline-specific resource to the many academics who are interested in e-learning. For all the presentations and other information related to the conference, please visit:

http://wiki.prs.heacademy.ac.uk/doku.php?id=international_prs_e-learning_conference_in_york_14th-15th_may_2008).

Many thanks to all of the contributors who helped to make the conference such a success, and especially to those who wrote up their papers for inclusion in this special edition of ***Discourse***.

Dr. C. Athanasopoulos, FHEA (PRS e-Learning Project Officer, 2007-8).

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