

#UKFEChatRQ Ideas

In September 2013 the topic for one of the UKFEChat topics was “Research in FE” and towards the end of the chat I suggested that we see if we could establish some of research to demonstrate the value of social media to SMT and unconnected educators. The background of this can be found on the following post - [#ukfechatrq on Twitter](#) and [#ukfechatrq Consultation](#)

To help get the discussion going I pulled together a list of areas that might be worth exploring which as many people as possible could get involved with regardless of research experience, job title, department and which people could commit as much or as little time as they could afford... and that would incur little or no costs. I also wanted to look at ideas that had demonstrated value in other areas... No easy feat! But here's what I came up with;

Research Question: Can Social Norms help improve student retention figures?

Benefit: An improvement on student drop out data which will have a positive financial impact on the college

Examples: Belvig Fleming's “Ripple Effect” social norms project in the Ringwold area of the Netherlands

Research Requirements: Promoting a survey and implementing a multi media marketing campaign. I have significant project management experience with this kind of research campaign.

Research Question: Can Social Norms raise student aspirations?

Benefit: An effective outcome would help to raise student aspirations, which could have a positive impact on classroom behavior, aspirations and helping “undecided students” with career and progression decisions.

Examples: The positive messages and maxims that KIPP schools have are a key reason for their success. However, as this video explains “The maxims are hollow if people in the classroom don't believe them” which is what makes these types of campaigns tricky – they need buy in on the ground.

Research Requirements: Promoting a survey and implementing a multi media marketing campaign. I have significant project management experience with this kind of research campaign.

Research Question: Can priming play a role in improving student exams results?

Benefit: Improved exam results and raising self esteem of vulnerable groups

Examples: See P7 and 33 of this report – Culture in FE

Research Requirements: Implicit Association Test and intervention to highlight positive cultural influences in the run up to exam period

Research Question: How effective is the colleges diversity policy and/or how racist is the college?

Benefit: All colleges have a diversity policy, but how effective is it? Do students and staff still have racist tendencies because of an unconscious bias?

Examples: See P37 of this report – Culture in FE

Research Requirements: Implicit Association Test

Research Question: To what role do bus routes impact on student enrolments and admissions?

Benefit: Proving this hypothesis would give the college evidence that bus routes affect admissions... and funding for and/or more routes into deprived areas to the college could improve college admissions and government meet figures

Examples: Anecdotal evidence of 2 colleges who noted that students were traveling past their college and a further distance to go to a rival college, the reason “The bus stopped right outside the further away college; whereas there was a 5-10 min walk from the bus to the college that was closer to me”

Research Requirements: To “mash up” data from Google Maps, Local Bus routes and existing student postcode data

Research Question: Rebranding teaching

Benefit: Improving morale amongst teaching staff

Examples: This was a successful campaign in New York and Seattle

Research Requirements: Pre and post intervention survey data and intervention campaign material which is available via a non commercial creative commons licence

Research Question: Mobilising Students to promote FE “What College Means to me”

Benefit: To get FE’s existing customers to help with an FE re-brand

Examples: Ohio State’s Twitter Account during graduation – manage to engage with millions of young people and get enough positive comments about the college to fill 10 prospectuses

Research Requirements: Survey students, collate and tag/organize the responses

· Their College

Benefit: Just as the colleges have diversity policies but the Implicit Association Test will highlight unconscious race bias, does learner voice look to put a certain “gloss” over the learner voice agenda? Is there a case for trying to scratch under the surface of this with a more rigorous/critical research to uncover the good the bad and the ugly? And specifically with employability?

Examples: Programmes like “Up for Hire” and Bank of Dave’s “Pop up Job Centres” highlight that there are gaps between what “learner voice” is telling us and what the big picture wider world examples give us. In “Up for Hire” there was a 7 day FE bashing session that went on with young people saying “My course did nothing for me” and Bank of Dave’s “Pop up Job Centre” showed how the system was not addressing people’s needs when it came to employability.

What would happen if a learner voice survey was put together that revolved around the question “Do you feel that the college is doing everything they can to help you get the university place or job you want?”

There are a lot of issues around youth unemployment but if young people attend college and are not in work there is a good chance that they will come out with comments like “College did

not help me find work”

It may be important to address this question to the benefit of the medium and long term success of FE. A campaign like this would help gauge students perception and get suggestions from the horses mouth regarding what needs to be changed.

Research Requirements: Survey students, collate and tag/organize the responses

· Increase Spend at the college

Benefit: Help find an additional revenue stream and improve income for the college

Examples: Minor County in the USA was seeing their high streets die off as a result of out of town shopping areas, something that started off as an idea with the basketball team – to get their parents to spend an extra \$10 per month in town, transformed the town and brought millions of dollars into the economy

Research Requirements: Make it very easy for students to make parents and businesses aware of what their college can offer, include codes that allow colleges to track that this was a “student led sale” and count the receipts at the end of the pilot period. £5millions students and 200,000 members of staff all generating an additional £10 = £52,000,000/400 colleges = £130,000 per college

Research Question: Where do students go when they leave college?

Benefit: This will help the college assess how effective their courses are in 1) Helping students progress in general and 2) Find out how many end up working in the industry related to their course 3) Help develop alumni relations

Examples: The UK and US Uni alumni relations have a lot of benefits and, while there may be aspects that are difficult to replicate, it is an important aspect in the world of social media

Research Requirements: The main research requirement here is student data, a little time and a little tool called LinkedInU. LinkedIn University looks like an invaluable tool to admission and alumni relations, student employability/employer relations but it may be 3-4 years before colleges are using this (Just like Twitter and Facebook). This would be a shameless attempt to get colleges using this en masse and at the same time as US unis are using it... this will give the sector a “jump” on their UK HE counterparts, they will have 2-3 years experience of it before the Unis have adopted it.