Learning about learning theories in the context of Academic Development using Ketso
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The work reported here was carried out at the University of Salford,

Context
This case study describes how Ketso was used on the Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice (PGCAP) at the University of Salford http://www.hr.salford.ac.uk/employee-development-section/pgcap and specifically on the Learning and Teaching in Higher Education (LTHE) module of this programme.

In week 5 of the LTHE module, the theme under exploration was Learning Theories. Students, who are academics and other professionals who teach in HE, were asked to work in action learning sets on a specific task before the classroom session. The idea was to flip the classroom but instead of being provided with study resources by the tutor, an enquiry-based approach was adopted to engage students collaboratively in co-constructing knowledge and prepare for the face-to-face session. This happened through a series of activities supported by old and new technologies, in- and outside the classroom to enable collaborative learning. Students worked in action learning sets.

Pre-session activity
Each action learning set was given a learning theory to investigate and check the relevant wikipedia entry for inaccuracies and gaps. A generic PGCAP login was used that all sets could use. After completing their investigations, findings were added directly to the Wikipedia pages.

Session activities
At the beginning of the session, time was given to each action learning set to review the progress they had made with the wikipedia task and conclude editing the specific page.

Students were then asked to participate in a mind mapping activity using Ketso to visualise, connect individual and team knowledge, co-create new knowledge and understanding and tease out all key features of this Learning Theory and discuss within their action learning set. This worked really well as all students participated actively and contributed their ideas to the task. Using Ketso for this stage and creating a visual representation and product of their learning gave students the opportunity to share ideas and understanding in a more visual and hands-on way as well as see things from different angles and perspectives, connect ideas and concepts, debate and refine their own and collective understanding and knowledge linked to the specific theory. The development of the mind- and concept maps were lead by the students themselves. The tutor facilitated some of the discussions when needed and used Socratic questioning techniques to challenge and stretch students further.

Each action learning set presented their findings to rest of the class after the previous stage was completed. Presentations were recorded using a camcorder. It was fascinating to experience the different visualisation techniques each action learning set had used with the same resources. The visual maps created using Ketso were also useful during the presentation stage to reflect on the process and articulate and communicate specific ideas, thinking and discoveries to others. Doing this in a visual way enabled others to see the connections between concepts clearer and quicker but also identify valuable links and overlaps among different theories investigated and own practices, benefits and potential challenges.

Post-session activities
The recorded presentations were uploaded and shared via the PGCAP YouTube channel under a Creative Commons license
http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLIPSnMavOyoGEmkf43RZ6nOJm7-gXFl4N
Photographs from the session were uploaded to the PGCAP Flickr account at
http://www.flickr.com/photos/pgcap .

Students were encouraged to reflect further on the specific learning theories discussed but also additional ones and some chose to do so in their social media portfolios. Images, still and moving, created during the session were used as visual triggers for reflection.

Mini preliminary evaluation
This was a complex but creative and versatile way to introduce and discuss specific learning theories through carefully designed sequenced activities before and during the face-to-face session utilising high- and low-tech to enable collaborative learning in and outside the classroom. Using a variety of approaches, technologies and tools enabled students to learn through immersion and experiencing learning in a supported and collaborative environment. There were specific challenges linked to the use of Wikipedia as the vast majority of students had no prior experience of editing this website. Ketso was also new to all. However, this did not hinder active participation. Learning about the tool happened intuitively and did not demand extensive guidance by the tutor nor instruction. Peer-to-peer support worked really well and enabled peer learning.

Looking back at how the activity went, how the students engaged and what they achieved, the tutor feels that overall this was a success despite the challenges with the technology. Further

assistance seems to be required to make this part more manageable for future cohorts. Particularly well received was Ketso. Students enjoyed using Ketso and found that it was indeed a creative tool for group collaboration, knowledge exchange and co- construction through making a joint model or visualization of their thoughts. As a result of this session, some students mentioned that they now better understand the concept of mind mapping and are considering using it in their practice, with their own students.

The tutor intends to continue monitoring the use of Ketso in future sessions and the impact it has on individual and group engagement, collaboration and learning. Using Ketso outdoors or in a non-traditional classroom environment is something the tutor would also like to investigate to establish the impact different environments have on motivation to engage.