

The Ultraversity undergraduate degree is a 100% online, full-time, programme that leads towards an award of BA (Hons) Learning, Technology and Research in just 3 years. The approach to study is not typical of most undergraduate degrees in that there are no subject specific modules with pre-determined content. Ultraversity uses action research and reflective practice as its approach to learning to enable undergraduates to inquire into their work role and that is why we call them researchers.

To be successful, researchers need to be capable of self-directed study with their learning coming from their structured examination of their work role in their own work context. However, this is only part of the story as Ultraversity researchers also need to work collaboratively in online learning communities. It is in these communities that they meet other researchers to, share research findings, peer review and critique each-others work, discuss ideas and issues, and offer each other support socially.

Learning facilitators who are University lecturers work with researchers to negotiate a personal pathway of action research relevant to their particular needs and work context. Guest 'expert witnesses' also join the communities to bring additional practitioner knowledge to support the learning process.

Towards the end of the programme, instead of undertaking a dissertation, researchers develop an exhibition in an appropriate work context. This may be their actual workplace or some other suitable setting. The purpose of this is for researchers to promote learning beyond themselves in organisations and individuals, and to gain evaluative feedback on the research they have undertaken.

Although not designed as a programme that employers sign up to on behalf of their staff, the Ultraversity degree does aim to provide access to higher education for people who are committed to developing themselves in their work role. The programme is designed to develop researchers' confidence to influence and improve practice within their work setting through developing their ability as articulate, critically reflective problem solvers.

www.ultraversity.net

The Ultraversity Project is the invention of Ultralab, a research centre at Anglia Ruskin University. Its globally respected team offers major expertise in e-learning through facilitated community online, e-assessment, mobile learning, action research, work-based learning, new software tools, digital creativity and strategic consultancy.

Ultralab enjoys working with partners and is sponsored by governments, charities and companies. We are not-for-profit, but seek sponsorship to sustain and develop our research.

Ultralab has a vision to enhance participation and delight in learning with technology, guided by a shared set of learning concepts and values. We have a proven track record inventing small and large-scale projects to explore our ideas. We have been growing since 1988 and are based in Chelmsford and all over the UK, with strong international links, especially in New Zealand.

U L T R A L A B
learning • technology • research



“My line manager has used everything I have done to the full”

What action did student researchers take? - potential for organisational Impact.

titles in each theme	principal theme	workforce researchers in each workforce							
		care	charity	early years	HE	health	LEA	research	school
4	assessment					1			3
3	behaviour								3
17	communication			3		1	3		10
2	community				1			1	
2	cpd								2
8	environment	1							7
6	inclusion					1			5
28	learning			3		4			21
19	literacy								19
13	management					5			8
1	multicultural								1
2	numeracy			1					1
9	parents			3		1			5
17	pastoral		1						16
5	resources		1						4
7	special needs								7
5	teaching								5

The majority of actions (marked in red) were by people in the school workforce, on themes of learning, literacy, pastoral care and communication.

Data collected by Ken Allen, Sarah Jones, Tony Browne, Anthony Russell, Jane Down, Colin Elsey, Gina Revill, Hal MacLean, Stephen Powell. Analysed & presented by Richard Millwood May 2006.

Titles of final year action enquiry projects undertaken by 148 Cohort 1 student researchers in 2006:



These projects are negotiated by the student researcher with their online facilitator and agreed in their workplace before starting.



Each project's results are exhibited to stakeholders and an impact evaluation of the exhibition forms part of the final study.



It is hypothesised that this ensures impact on the organisation.

Care

1. How do I improve my parenting skills and adapt the home environment to my autistic child's needs?

Charity

2. Peer mediation in schools
3. How I can improve the product evaluation processes for blind and partially sighted colleagues?

Early Years

4. Promoting Nursery Admissions
5. Improving Communication
6. Improving Communications Between Staff and Parents in a Nursery School
7. How the outdoor classroom can stimulate learning in all areas of the Foundation Stage?
8. The impact of teaching techniques and resources, on young children's mark making
9. Improving the Free Play Experience for Children
10. How can we improve children's responses to numeracy?
11. Supporting parents and carers involvement in the Children's Centre
12. How can I implement a better system of working with parents to improve links between home and Nursery
13. Can we better support foundation stage parents in helping their children's learning at home?

Health

14. How can NHS Organisations implement a Quality Assurance process for NVQs?
15. How can I improve communication to develop performance management within Specialised Medicine?
16. Introducing New Strategies to Reduce Barriers to Enablement in Lifestyle Intervention Groups
17. How can Patient Centre training be improved to enable nurses to connect the learning to their own experience?
18. How can we improve Knowledge and Skills Framework (KSF) training sessions to enable a better understanding of KSF for individuals going through the process?
19. An action enquiry into the NHS Knowledge and Skills Framework - How can we improve staffs knowledge and understanding of this?
20. The use of protected study time to improve ECDL candidate activity
21. How can we use the corporate caseload model effectively?
22. An action enquiry into work related accidents and ill health within a Learning Disabilities Unit of an NHS Trust
23. What system can be put in place to reduce the clinical risk of manual recording of screening results and flag up retests due?
24. How we can improve the efficiency of the anaesthetic room
25. The Personal Performance Development Review Training is not meeting the needs of some/most of the staff - what can we do to change this?
26. What toilet training information would be useful to parents and professionals who are considering toilet training a child with global developmental delay?

Higher Education

27. How engagement in the use of Talking Heads as an online community for professional peer support can be improved

Local Education Authority

28. Developing communications across Customer Services Department
29. Intranet communication to support individual and organisational learning
30. Improving support for Teacher Assistants

Research

31. Distributed Action Research
- #### School
32. Adopting a New Pupil Assessment Data Handling System
 33. Exploring the effectiveness of the JSLA award with SEN students
 34. ASDAN Strategies for motivating pupils
 35. Parental behaviour modification
 36. Managing Children's behaviour when they are working in small groups?
 37. Strategies to reduce inappropriate low level disruption in secondary school classes
 38. Improving Communication
 39. Improving Workgroup Communication
 40. How We Can Improve Communication And Collaboration in A Pre-school Setting
 41. How can I improve the communication between class-based Staff and the office staff at my School?
 42. How communication within school can be developed for Teaching Assistants
 43. How can I improve the way examination analysis is presented and communicated in my school?
 44. Reducing Time Spent on Incoming Telephone Calls and Producing Effective Message Communications
 45. The use of technology to improve home-school communication at my Junior School
 46. Improving communication between all school staff about the Healthy Schools Scheme
 47. What internal communication tool would best support and provide staff with the information they require during a time of change?
 48. Improving Staff ICT Skills
 49. Training Staff to Use Video and Video Editing
 50. Improving Administration and Communication Within the Reception Area
 51. Improving School Security
 52. Would a stimulating environment encourage the children to use the art area independently?
 53. Outdoors as a Classroom
 54. What strategies will create effective learning in an outside environment?
 55. Running a Homework Club for SEN Children
 56. Changing the physical environment to encourage social skills
 57. Improving Practice for Newly Diagnosed Deaf Children
 58. How I can support the preparation for transition to secondary school, for a child with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)?
 59. Improving Learning Assistant Support for Inclusion of Children with Severe Learning Difficulties
 60. How good is the school Inclusion Policy?
 61. Partially sighted in mainstream schools and allied social skills
 62. How to Improve the Implementation of Personalised Learning in an ICT Year Seven Class
 63. The effectiveness of 'mind maps' and other visual tools in helping key stage 2 pupils organise their thinking and learning
 64. Using Literature Circles to Engage Pupils
 65. How can I, a music peripatetic, expand my approach to coaching?
 66. How Can I Improve the Quality of my Training?

67. Assessing the triad of impairments through play
68. Does learning as part of a group within a class environment enhance children's learning by being a good member of a social group?
69. An Investigation into whether Strategies based on using the Right Hemisphere of the brain can Improve Students ability to Draw
70. Using Music to Improve Performance in Mathematics
71. Developing Emotional Literacy Strategies
72. Improving Fine Motor Skills
73. Developing ICT skills through Art in a Secondary Special Needs school
74. Developing independent learning in very young children
75. Can ICT enhance Teaching and Learning in Science?
76. Developing ICT skills through Art in a Secondary Special Needs school
77. Can teaching and learning be enhanced by the use of ICT?
78. Improving the Quality of Teaching and Learning in my Classroom
79. Emotional Intelligence and an After School Club
80. Learning through semi-structured play
81. Learning through play with primary school children
82. Access and Learning Using Information Technology
83. How the explicit teaching of comprehension strategies may affect students understanding of text
84. By focusing on improving keyboard skills will it also improved pupils' spellings?
85. Multi-sensory play to develop letter recognition in young children
86. Additional spelling support for primary pupils
87. Strategies to develop reading ability in Y4 pupils
88. Developing spelling skills with ICT software
89. Literacy intervention programmes and transferring skills learnt back into the classroom
90. How can the achievement in writing be raised in a Year 2 class?
91. Improving the Teaching of Literacy
92. Improving spelling
93. Improving Adult Support for Reading
94. Improving Handwriting
95. Improving the Reading Skills of Traveller Children
96. How to develop effective but sensitive verbal communication skills between adults and pupils in an infant school environment
97. Developing literacy skills through a lunchtime book club for secondary school pupils
98. After school library to encourage reading
99. Strategies to encourage extended reading
100. Supplementing THRASS with other reading strategies
101. Withdrawal from Modern Languages for focus on extra literacy - does it work?
102. Improving Recording and Analysing School Data using SIMS
103. Am I ready to take over as an Administrator?
104. How can I improve the admission procedures at my School?
105. Improving Non Teacher Invigilation
106. The developing role of the Teaching Assistant, looking at new frameworks for TA's wanting to work towards a Higher Level
107. Supporting the HLTA
108. An enquiry into the role of Learning Mentor at my School

109. How the school can support gifted and talented children in a class
110. By providing opportunities to explore artefacts from other countries, can I promote and appreciation and understanding of multi cultural awareness through art?
111. Raising Motivation in Numeracy
112. Increasing Parental Support
113. Comments, Compliments, Complaints and Suggestions leaflet for parents
114. Montessori School - Communication with parents
115. How can we make it easier for parents/carers to help us to reduce the levels of unauthorised absences at my school
116. How can we better prepare parents to support their children's reading development at home?
117. Careers programme in school / CEG and Connexions Service
118. Promoting the Construction Industry to Female Students
119. Improving the Prefect System
120. Classroom Behaviour Management
121. How can I improve Internet Safety training at my School
122. An Enquiry into what is causing disruptive behaviour in my classroom when teaching ICT
123. Mentoring at KS3 and KS4
124. Setting up a behaviour monitoring and pastoral group in a secondary school
125. Peer mediation to improve playtimes
126. Social and Emotional Development in young children
127. Structured play to reduce bullying in the playground
128. Emotional development in young children
129. What strategies can I employ in order to promote a more positive and enjoyable lunchtime in our school?
130. Improving the Ethos in a Primary School Playground
131. Raising Behaviour Standards within a School
132. Tutor time improvement
133. Improving the effectiveness of digital learning objects in support of scientific demonstrations
134. Developing a coherent KS3 ICT programme
135. Improving my practice as a small scale provider of on-line resources
136. Home Learning and ICT - developing digital resources
137. Independent skills in autistic young adults
138. Causes of problems with severe difficulties in Maths and finding solutions?
139. Improving the Learning Experience for a Pupil with Severe Learning Difficulties
140. Word recognition strategy can they help dyslexic pupils become more independent readers
141. Increased awareness of pupils with speech and language difficulties
142. Dyscalculia - Maths Concepts - can 1 to 1 teacher and multi-sensory resources help?
143. Strategies for improving Literacy for a child with special educational needs and also a child with severe and profound learning difficulties
144. Teaching year three history whilst covering PPA time as an HTLA
145. My teaching in the ICT suite at an Infant School
146. Covering PPA time and improving own teaching
147. Teaching Art in PPA time - implement new strategies
148. Transition students - improving teaching strategies