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Devising an e-learning model for the teaching of traditional crafts such as ceramics

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1. Abstract

This dissertation presents theoretical and practical arguments behind running an e-learning course focused on teaching hands-on craft skills. It references the history and development of e-learning from its roots in distance learning at the National Extension College. Interviews with working crafts people have enhanced the available literature in the field concerning the teaching of hands-on skills, in order to provide a rounded view of how people learn to make ceramics.

This dissertation outlines how skills are currently taught in the field, surveying post-compulsory education and film media. This is provided through case studies covering three teaching establishments, each with its own goals and agendas. Films are reviewed for insights pertaining to narrative forms and teaching opportunities.

This dissertation discusses the use of film, live streaming and Pinterest in teaching the next generation of craft makers. These elements are further studied to propose e-learning materials to teach craft skills and support the learning process. There is also an exploration of film-making with the development of films from simple unedited lessons to highly edited narratives about the creation of pottery.

Finally, this dissertation outlines a model for teaching craft skills in an e-learning environment. In order to achieve this, it discusses how web-2.0 interfaces and social media may help support a community of learners within an e-learning course.

2. Introduction

This dissertation will examine how e-learning¹ can be used to teach ceramic craft skills. This is achieved by studying how e-learning and distance learning work, as well as by evaluating how craftspeople currently learn and teach in various learning environments. In addition, this dissertation also examines how film is currently used to teach, inform and educate an audience within the field.

My interest in the research is based on my own learning through watching YouTube films (Travis, 2014). Copying elements of these films helped me develop as a ceramic maker, as it gave me access to how other people manipulated clay, enabling me to realise some of the errors in my own making process. This self-reflective process, along with feedback I have received by taking workshops with full-time ceramic makers, has allowed me to develop my own skills as a maker.

The research developed from reading the lecture 'Ceramics in Virtual Learning' (Mayo and Murphy, 2011) during my teacher training. Their approach was based on developing blended learning and using a Virtual Learning Environment, which aimed to 'have the greatest degree of interactivity available but with the simplest user interface' (2011:113).

As a contemporary craftsperson, I rely on marketing myself using web 2.0² and social media applications such as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and Pinterest. I wanted to consider the use of these applications as teaching tools. A significant benefit of these tools is that the simple interfaces are already familiar to many people and thus not in-themselves requiring learners to become proficient with other applications prior to the learning episode.

The dissertation will also examine the use of social media and live streaming to help teach ceramic skills. Alongside, there will be an exploration of film-making to make teaching films. This exploration is to give experienced craftspeople an e-learning

¹ 'Learning conducted via electronic media, typically on the Internet' <(Oxford University Press, 2015:s.v. *e-learning*)

² 'The second stage of development of the Internet, characterized especially by the change from static web pages to dynamic or user-generated content and the growth of social media.' <(Oxford University Press, 2015:s.v. *web 2.0*)

model, thereby allowing them to construct their own courses to teach students seeking to learn craft skills.

3. Case Studies

3.0 Case Study Introduction

These case studies were conducted to examine face-to-face learning environments to understand how craftspeople learn. This is necessary because of the lack of research material in skills-based teaching, and on how craftspeople learn. A lot of writing regarding teaching assumes a transfer of knowledge from teacher to student, which involves lessons that can easily be tested by simply questioning the learners. For hands-on skills, the judgements have to be made by observing the learners' making and finished objects, which is not generally discussed in the literature on teaching.

Hands-on skills are not easy to teach due to the struggle of describing skills and how the hands should act (Sennett, 2009). This sort of communication issue is also considered by the Shannon-Weaver model of communication (Armitage et al., 2011:278) where the 'interference' of understanding language can impact the successful transmission of information, so we need to consider how to overcome this issue.

I will examine how teachers from different educational settings circumvent this obstacle in communication to teach skills, techniques and processes to learners, and how the teachers use feedback, as well as develop the environment and resources to help teach these tactile skills to others.

Three settings were considered: formal education at a university, informal education at an adult learning course and education in a clay artist's workshop. These were chosen to examine a cross section of teaching in a broad range of environments.

In this chapter I will analyse how the teachers presented and what role they took in the teaching experience.

3.1 Case Study 1: Informal Education in an Adult Learning Environment

This case study took place in a basement of a converted building used by an adult learning college. The facilities were purpose-built for the course. This was an informal learning course, attended by people who are intent on learning techniques, skills and processes, but do not aim for a qualification.

As part of the first case study I visited the course several times, because the teacher asked me to create a sharable e-learning resource of a shareable Pinterest board. I went back a few times to explain to the learners how to view and contribute to the Pinterest boards. The boards will be discussed further in chapter 5.2.

This case study was based in an adult learning environment where learners possess a wide range of experiences and backgrounds. I was quickly welcomed into a strong community of makers willing to share their experiences and help each other.

The community of learners formed around the course was impressive and something I had not initially considered as an important aspect of the learning environment. I feel this is something I missed in my initial considerations of the research: people will learn better when they feel secure within a community of makers, all of whom are working towards similar goals. All learners had individual goals and came from mixed backgrounds and ranges of abilities. Some had been learning ceramics for many years and others had only just signed up to the course. The more experienced learners could share their knowledge with the newer members of the community who were less confident.

All sessions followed a similar pattern: at the start of each of the sessions I observed, the teacher gave feedback and learners could act upon the advice given. Feedback was given with input from the whole group; it was not judgemental, and opportunities were made for each member to critique their work. Following the exchange of feedback, they set goals for the session ahead. During the lessons the teacher would go round and offer help to anyone who needed it, and would demonstrate new techniques and processes for the learners once they started working.

The facilities provided were one of the reasons the learners were attracted to this course- it was cheaper than trying to buy the equipment themselves. A number of kilns, wheels, banding wheels and moulds were provided for the learners; however, they had to buy their own hand tools. Also, on the walls were images of various events the tutors had attended and work of professional potters for inspiration.

All learners had their own workspaces. There would not be enough wheels if everyone wanted to throw simultaneously, but as most of the learners were hand builders this was not a problem.

There was also a laptop connected to a large screen, so the teacher could show the learners examples of work when required, and the learners could reference it from their workspace. Learners could also introduce a new potter or piece of work that they had found to the teacher and other members of the group.

Students led the making activity; consequently the teacher was acting as a facilitator. The teacher gave learners advice on improvement but the ethos was mainly letting learners work on their own projects and allow them to develop in a creative learning environment.

3.2 Case Study 2: Formal Education in a University Setting

Case study 2 was situated in a university setting, with purpose-built, well-equipped facilities. I was evaluating an initial throwing class as part of a formal learning setting, in which people were studying for a qualification and trying to decide what material they wanted to work in. The overriding focus was that everyone was a beginner and had never tried to throw a pot, though all the learners had some experience of hand-building objects with clay. Twelve students attended the throwing class on the session I visited.

At the beginning of the session, learners were provided with objects to hold, feel and touch in order to get an idea of a range of forms that can be made on a pottery wheel. These objects allow learners to feel thicknesses and weights. There was a

demonstration on the proper wedging of clay before the introduction to the wheel, ensuring that everyone understood the starting point of preparing clay for throwing.

The process was explained clearly, elaborating at each stage of the process what one does, how one does it, and why it is done in this way. The instructor took their hands off the wheel and the clay to demonstrate the correct hand positions, and tried to describe what it should feel like with each hand. The instructor ran through the process a few times before letting the learners try, going round from person to person, giving feedback and correcting any major mistake they observed.

Not all the wheels were in working order. Two to three learners shared each wheel, swapping every time they failed to make a piece of pottery. Ideally, every student would be able to keep working and making, as with these initial skills there is much to learn. However, the time off the wheel did give the learners more time to prepare their clay, getting it weighed, wedged and balled up, ready to throw when it was their turn.

Within the learning environment, there were plenty of photographs and objects made by others to look at, allowing learners to see the diversity of objects that can be made with clay. Learning in a group allowed each student to appreciate and share in the difficulties of learning and developing new skills.

In this case, the teacher acted as an instructor: showing learners, then helping, correcting mistakes as needed and leading by example. Additional instruction was given quickly and as learners required it. A significant problem with this system was that the instructor could not stay still for long as they had to help each learner in turn. Similarly, as none of the students had much experience they could not help each other.

3.3 Case Study 3: Education in a Ceramic Artist's Studio

This case study was perhaps the most fascinating for me, as it did not take place in a purpose-built studio supported by a university or college with extensive resources. This was a learning experience organised by a working potter to share their skills, techniques and processes. This is perhaps closest to the sort of education I want to look at for the creation of an e-course. The class had half as many students as the previous two case studies but the scale of the project was far more ambitious.

The day started with everyone getting to know each other in the relaxed environment of a conservatory. Name badges enabled people to get to know each other easily, without the awkwardness of forgetting each other's names. People discussed how much or how little experience they had with clay comfortably in the small group. After the group described their experience of working with clay, they were shown a range of ceramics that demonstrated a variety of making techniques, to inspire them for the class ahead.

Learners had their own dedicated workspaces, with their own clay and moulds already set up for them. The teacher had previously prepared plenty of clay slabs, so that all learners could start their projects simultaneously. This was a very well planned and prepared workshop, leaving very little to chance on the day. Hand tools were also provided so the learners did not need to bring any tools to the course.

The teaching started with everyone gathered around the main worktable for the teacher's making demonstration. The process was clearly explained, enabling the learners to easily follow the teacher's instructions. The teaching was just as generous, showing and describing how to improve surface texture. There was nothing hidden- everything was shown and described in a clear and concise manner.

I was impressed by the scale of the work created by learners with little or no previous experience. Usually with early lessons, you expect something of handheld

scale but these pieces were much bigger. This made me reconsider the projects that I had been planning, as they were perhaps under-ambitious.

Feedback and advice were given as necessary throughout the duration of the project.

This case study examined the teacher as an expert, where learning is facilitated through a structured and well-prepared project, which helps ensure a successful outcome for the learner.

3.4 Conclusions and Reflections on the Case Studies

	Case study 1	Case study 2	Case study 3
What sort of Learning Environment	Informal Education in an Adult Learning Environment	Formal education in a University Setting	Education in a Ceramic Artist's Studio
Teacher Role	Facilitator Helped students achieve their own goals. Demonstrated when needed. Student ratio 12:1	Instructor Was teaching a specific technique, which learners had to copy. Student ratio 14:1	Expert Acting as a demonstrator and a facilitator. Student ratio 7:1
Learners	Part-time, mixed ability from new to experienced	Full-time, all new to the potter's wheel.	People wanting to try a new experience over the course of a day.
Facilities	In a college Purpose-built space Wheels provided Students bring their own tools Clay available to buy from the store	In a university Purpose-built space Wheels provided Students bring their own tools Clay was available for free	Converted basement Purpose-built workspaces. Tools, moulds, clay, all provided
Learning resources in the environment	Pictures and glaze tests on the wall Books Computer	Pictures on the wall Glaze tests Objects to handle	Objects to handle
Demonstration	Several demonstrations of different techniques to help individual learners throughout the lesson.	A demonstration at the start of the class showed learners how to prepare clay before showing them some techniques for the wheel	Demonstration at the start of all the day, covering all the techniques and processes they could use to make their piece of work
Feedback	A review of their previous work at the start of the class	One-to-one as they threw pots on the wheel	One-to-one as they made their objects

Table 3.1: Comparing the Case Studies

3.4.1 Community

The importance and role of the community in learning was the biggest discovery that I observed in all of the courses. There is a need for a learning community to assist the teaching so that it is not all the responsibility of the teacher.

This sense of the importance of community was something I had not previously considered due to my perception that potters work alone, even though there are many examples of potteries where multiple potters work together- for instance, East Fork Pottery, Whichford Pottery and the Leach Pottery. There are also potters who take apprentices or students, such as Mark Hewitt, Lisa Hammond and Matt Jones. Pottery is not always the solitary activity that the stereotype portrays; Bryan Newman notes that he and his wife 'like working by ourselves but we also like working with other people' (Cameron and Lewis, 1974:112).

From these observations, I am certain that trying to provide a space for a community of learning is an important part of creating a successful learning environment. There are ways that social media could be used to help develop a sense of community in e-learning, for example, through Facebook groups or forums. Learners need to feel they are in this together and that mutual support is available. One way I can think of to support this is by teaching learners a structured method of critique, enabling them to learn from each other, by discussing simple things such as form, purpose, surface pattern, what worked and what did not work.

3.4.2 Facilities and Resources

Facilities and resources are important to learning, especially as facilities can be very expensive to set up. I was also interested in the visual resources that courses use as these are cheap to produce, and give learners something to learn from and inspire them when working in an independent learning environment.

One objective of looking at the workspaces was to see what additional learning resources were available. What was important in the workspace of the formal and

informal environments was the quality of visual resources provided. These can easily be put into an online environment to inspire learners. They also had examples of the fired clays in both environments, but in the informal space they also had examples of glazes and slips so learners could build a visual palette of what is available.

McErlain (2002:54-55) suggests that having pottery to handle is important when learning these traditional skills. Through handling objects, we can understand their weight, balance, thicknesses and how they were made. We can also experience the hand of the maker. Though an e-course could not give learners pots to directly hold, they could give visual examples and recommend people visit craft shops, museums, galleries and maker's studios that would be accessible to the learner. It will be important to curate the visual examples, as these are all I will be able to send them visually apart from the demonstrations.

The physical nature of the location, in which learners would actually make their work is not something I, as an online teacher, could control, but perhaps I could include plans for custom tooling that is easy to build with minimal equipment. Additionally, I would be able to recommend clay and equipment that learners require to complete the course, including relevant health-and-safety documents to help people foster safe procedures for working.

3.4.3 Demonstrations and the Role of the Teacher

Recorded demonstrations need quite a lot of consideration. The formal education emphasised clarity and reproducibility: the teacher considered that it can be hard to understand the hand positions used in throwing a pot so demonstrated them separately. On the other hand, the demonstration from the artist in case study 3 was less concerned with hand positions than with the finer details of how to create various textures, which were small compared to the scale of the pots that learners were making. Visually, I need to consider these contrasts of small to large scale and

consider which angles would provide the best perspective for learners to observe the making process when filming.

The role of the teacher varied according to how much of the course was dictated by the goals of the learners. I feel the role of the teacher should reflect that of the case study 3 where the Artist is an expert. This means that before the course starts, I should state to the learners what the goals of the class are, and what learners can expect to learn, and then facilitate this learning through carefully planned lessons.

3.4.4 Going Forward

Having experienced all these learning environments, I think that I need to be more ambitious in what I propose to teach. I think that it would be more profitable to explore some skills that are slightly more complex than throwing a simple pot, as there are many examples of this on YouTube already. Through more complicated projects, learners can learn the basics in the context of a complete piece rather than trying to teach each distinct process on a small scale and then combining them later on. Doing a complicated project helps to engage the learners as they have an achievable goal to work towards, whereas in a simple project- such as making a cylinder- they may be more self critical about not reaching perfection on the first go. This approach of focusing on developing skills rather than creating a finished perfect object helps learners engage with the process.

4. Literature Review

4.0 Introduction

The literature review considers four broad topics: e-learning, literature around learning crafts, how people working in clay learnt their ceramic skills, and the role of films within the field of ceramics. I have also analysed examples of films currently within the field.

4.1 Literature Review for E-learning

This section of the literature review combines a survey of both e-learning and also of distance learning. Within the UK, distance learning started with the National Extension College in 1963, which combined television and textbooks (Jenkins, 2003). This idea of combining film and text is essential for teaching ceramics online.

Jenkins (2003:23-24) declares that whatever framework we use for distance learning, it should be Purposeful, Planned, Possible and Productive (four Ps). These four Ps are a good basis for reflection when trying to plan e-learning materials to ensure a useful course for learners.

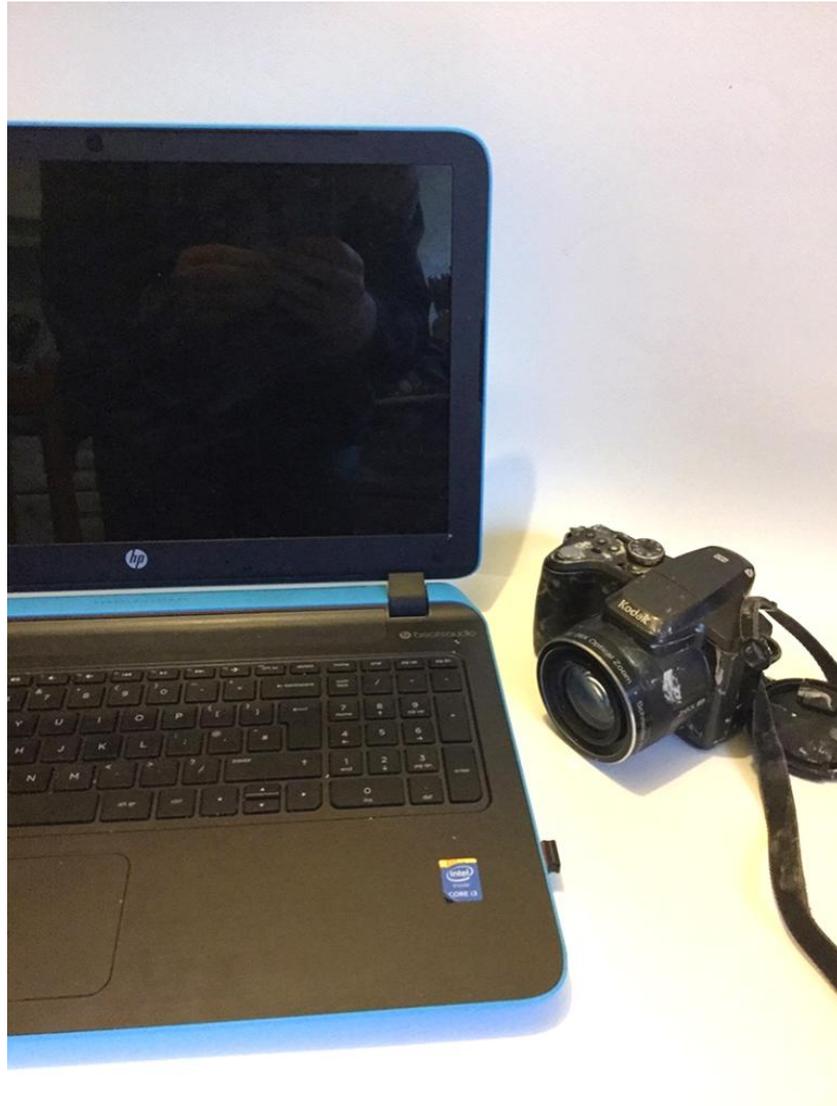


Figure 4.1: All the equipment needed to run an e-course

When considering the creation of e-learning courses, we have to remember that at the moment a wholly virtual learning experience is ‘still a minority choice’ (Beetham and Sharpe, 2013:5), and Jenkins (2003) adds that distance learning is demand driven. We are at an exciting time in lifelong education, where ‘everyone with a computer and an internet connection is able to create e-learning materials’ (Löwgren, 2010:19), though I would add that the teaching of hands-on skills also requires a camera.

This idea that informal education is useful is reinforced by Jansen, van Laeken and Slot, who observe that ‘learning is not restricted to formal education and can take place anywhere and at any time’ (2004:51). They go on to state that only a small

amount of knowledge and skills are ever learnt through formal education and that nothing ever replaces the real experience of learning on the job.

Within an e-learning context, we need to challenge learners to take responsibility for their own learning (de Freitas and Mayes, 2013) though Rowntree states that before the learners start the course we must 'tell learners what they may learn to do' (1990:139). As a result, they will know what it is they are committing to. Similarly, we must also clearly explain what the prerequisites to this learning will be (Rowntree, 1990).

When designing a course we need to start with defined learning outcomes, then build the projects so that the learners can achieve these outcomes (de Freitas and Mayes, 2013). Rowntree (1990) agrees and goes on to discuss how learning materials must fulfil the role a teacher or trainer usually takes in this process in a traditional setting.

Jansen, van Laeken and Slot recommend splitting the e-learning into projects, as project-oriented learning 'can help improve the practical value of the learning process' (2004:52). Rowntree's approach is that a course is 'a planned sequence of events' (1990:19), which means that we would have to analyse a project to make sure the sequence works well for the learners.

One of the major downsides of e-learning, warns Rowntree (1990) is that each hour of learning material can take fifty to one hundred hours to create. He also recommends that we must give good quality feedback as it can be a learner's only way of assessing their own progress.

Jenkins' four Ps (2003) is the best way to sum up the literature for e-learning. That is, whatever course we make it must have a purpose, it should be planned with the end goal in mind, it should be possible for learners to achieve and create productive experiences for the learners.

4.2 Literature Review for Ceramics Learning

I started my own learning in a science background. Lectures were often given to two hundred students in a lecture theatre, with the lecturer at the front imparting knowledge. Moving to the arts and then to craft offered a very different experience. A lot of learning took place through my own experience working in the craft. Salmon (1995) states that it is harder to set up an experiential learning environment than an environment suited for more traditional forms of teaching- implying that there are additional factors to consider when developing an e-learning course.

Further to my experiences, Payne and Taylor discuss how learning craft is not didactic, it is experiential, and requires hands-on touch, which is discovered by the learners and not just imparted by the teacher. Nevertheless, they go on to say that 'working with makers helped Trainees learn skills faster than just being given craft tools' (2013:154).



Figure 4.2: Master and apprentice preparing to fire a kiln

Traditionally, craft skills were passed on from generation to generation, from master to apprentice, which relied on the learner imitating the master's hand

(Sennet, 2009). This approach is not used as widely today, though individual potters may choose to emulate seasoned makers to help improve their own craft- such as Svend Bayer, who learnt through copying Michael Cardew (Cameron and Lewis, 1976). McErlain (2002) describes his ideal scenario today to be a form of art school followed by workshop training with a more experienced potter.



Figure 4.3: Learning display of Walter Keeler's work at Nottingham Castle Museum and Art Gallery

McErlain (2002) also discusses how using, seeing, reading about pots and talking to others about them can be useful in learning about pots. Rogers agrees with this, stating that 'museums, photographs, books and magazines ... have made the pottery of the past... accessible and immediately present to senses' (1978:111) but goes on to talk about the abundance of influences and things to choose from, which makes it increasingly difficult to decide what exactly we teach to learners.

Throughout the literature there are recurring themes about the struggle of teaching: 'established potters may not have the time or resources to pass on their expertise' (Whitford and Wong, 1986:19). Sennet discusses one of the reasons for this, when asserting that learning by demonstration 'often works, but equally often

fails' (2009:181). There is also the problem of language when talking about craft, because it 'does not submit easily to explication' (Adamson, 2013:xx) and the knowledge may be considered tacit. Sennet (2009) and Charney (2011) agree that there are limitations imposed by language, and that the only way around this is to be actively involved in the process of making.

If a person understands how something is made but has never actually done it, there is a lack of experience that cannot be filled. This is due to the need for a 'high degree of motor/muscle skills (kinaesthetic sensitivity)' (Risatti, 2007:99) to actually perform the action. This sort of situation reminds me of the times I have taught beginners. While watching and listening, they assume they understand what they are being shown until they try it with their own hands.



Figure 4.4: A dozen identical mugs by Joseph Hartley

Risatti (2007) recommends learners engage their focus on repetition, and Sennet (2009) agrees that going over an action gives time for self-reflection. Bayer even states 'making large numbers of pots is important' (Cameron and Lewis, 1976:26). If

you want to be a maker, you have to make: ‘Let go of the thing that you’re trying to be (the noun), and focus on the actual work you need to be doing (the verb).’ (Kleon, 2015).

Cardew compares learning a craft to writing, that we need to learn the skill and not worry about aiming to ‘express our personality’ (1978:103), though Gauntlett (2011) disagrees with this and notes that people should be given opportunities to express their unique personality and creativity.

There are concerns that we cannot teach by language and demonstration alone, that learners have to get involved in the process and actually make something. Also, working alongside an experienced craftspeople does seem to be a significant theme throughout this aspect of the literature review. E-learning allows this to happen through cross-media solutions, so learners can work alongside craftspeople and have access to their knowledge. Whether making should be prescribed or should only show learners a series of techniques for exploration would be a further area of research.

4.3 Living Literature review — Interviewing Craftspeople

In addition to surveying the text-based literature, the study has undertaken a series of interviews with a cross section of potters and ceramic artists working in the UK. They were chosen based on their experiences in both learning and sharing their own knowledge.

Seven of the nine potters selected had attended ceramics-based university degrees over the last thirty years. Of the other two, David Worsley (2015a) had previously made sculpture and learnt ceramics from a series of workshops, and then taken time to learn by himself in his own workspace. Florian Gadsby (2015) attended the Design & Crafts Council of Ireland’s (DCCol) Ceramic Skills and Design Training Course, as he did not find a suitable university course in England. He is currently

undertaking a two-year apprenticeship with Lisa Hammond to further develop his skills and understanding of running a business.



Figure 4.5: Fitch and McAndrew in the workshop

James Hake (2015) had attended a university programme and also studied on the DCCol Ceramic Skills and Design Training Course, as he did not feel ready to start up his business after graduating from university. A similar sentiment was echoed by Hannah McAndrew (2015), who admitted that university ‘wasn’t enough to make you be a potter, but it was a good grounding’ and consequently worked first as an apprentice to Jason Shackleton. Douglas Fitch (2015) worked as a technician at an art school and thereby reinforced what he had learnt through his own teaching of students enrolled in the ceramic programme.

Amongst the older makers, such as Steve Booton (2015a) and Fitch (2015), there was the feeling that current university programmes did not provide the same education that they had received at university in the 1980s. They felt that in those days there had been the opportunity to explore materials, kiln building and firings more experientially.



Figure 4.6: David Worsley's Range at Dove Street Pottery

Clear patterns emerged from the interviews. All interviewees agreed that the most important aspect of learning to make was the focused activity of actually making, thus agreeing with Kolb (1984) that learning is experiential and a lifelong process. In order to make high-quality objects, Hake (2015) claimed that learners should have a narrow focus and only make three to four different forms, later slowly adding to the range. Worsley (2015a) confirmed that for the first four years of making, all he had done was throw a few different forms, narrowly focusing on them. Booton (2015a) added that 'it is only clay' and that learners should initially not be precious and should destroy a lot of their early work.

Other key themes that ran through the interviews were the importance of seeing, watching, talking and touching. The way that seeing and watching were emphasised in the interviews implied that they were very different activities in the learning process. Seeing is the process of looking at finished work, photographs, visiting museums and similar sorts of activities. Watching is more about action, observing how people make and how they manipulate clay in their own unique way. 'If you

look at the internet now, you can learn a lot' (Hake, 2015). All makers agreed they had watched YouTube videos to learn something. Sometimes the watching focused on a small section of particular videos, which were viewed several times in order to understand something as simple as one small movement: 'why does Ken Matsuzaki move his thumb there' (Booton, 2015a). However, Booton also stated that 'what you can't use YouTube for is to learn aesthetics,' going on to say that university was important for learning aesthetics.



Figure 4.7: Still from Steve Booton's 'throwing a small bowl'

Those makers who created videos did so for a number of reasons. One common intention was to help teach the next generation of makers. They were also using videos to educate their customers and show them work that goes into a piece of pottery. Fitch (2015) declared he used video to show his customers what he was experiencing in the landscape around him and how he uses those influences in his work. Booton (2015) admitted he initially made videos so he could watch himself and see where he was going wrong, and now uses them as a 'shop front', which allows a wider audience to see his work.



Figure 4.8 Matt and shiny glazed forms

Touching pottery was considered important. McErlain (2002) states that there is a sense of balance and weight that can only be learnt by handling objects. It also teaches about materiality, allowing learners to find the differences in thickness and weight between types of clay. Furthermore, it allows the learner to find a preference for glaze type, whether that is shiny or matt glaze. These experiences of learning about material preferences could easily be overlooked.



Figure 4.9: John Leach demonstrating to the author how to create a dish

Talking about pots is one useful aspect that I have personally experienced. Not only have I received advice on how to alter glazes and the design of a pot, I have been welcomed into a maker's workshop and shown how to improve techniques. Potters have also discussed which other makers and pots to look at to improve the pots I want to make.

There were mixed responses from interviewees to the idea of an e-learning course. Booton(2015) was against the idea, claiming that in the United Kingdom we live close enough together to visit other potters and have the opportunity to learn at their studios. Contrastingly, Fitch (2015) and McAndrew (2015) were interested in running an e-course in the future and wanted to know more about how to create such a course.

Once again, being involved in the process and actually making was recognised as an important theme. The points of seeing, watching, talking about and touching pots are a further element of what it means to work alongside a craftsperson. Having such experiences to build on can influence learners in their own making, allowing them to make informed choices in creating their own work.

There are limits to e-learning. A teacher cannot hold the learners' work and show them the errors they have made. Also, with learners not present, the teacher cannot ensure they are spending enough hours practising. On the positive side, e-learning allows both the learner and the craftsperson space to work within their own environment. It also means that craftspeople can take on multiple learners that they could not fit into their own workspace. For learners it means they can choose who they want to work with to further their own skills, which can be incredibly useful for learners who already have basic skills.

4.4 Review of Films³

4.4.0 Introduction

The analysis of film was added to the literature to survey the sorts of films currently produced within the ceramic world. This was done to understand the narrative structure, how the films are visually engaging, and how we can use such films to teach learners. The films analysed ranged from documentary to parody music video.

4.4.1 Documentary Films

All the films in this section take a documentary format. They capture a series of events to tell a story. It is the stories and their construction that interest me: how can we use this format to help teach learners.

³ The reader should view all the films in conjunction with the text from this section at <http://redfoxpottery.com/research/chapter4/>



Figure 4.10: Stills from 'Isaac Button: Country Potter'

The first ceramics documentary I viewed as a student was 'Isaac Button: Country Potter' (Anderson & Fournier, 1964b). It is a film that is often mentioned in the ceramics community as one that everyone should watch. A silent film, it records Isaac Button's entire process from digging clay, all the way to firing the kiln. It contains slides throughout, helping to explain the processes involved. There is an economy of movement in the way he works; especially in the way that he decorates the wares. This is a film of a very skilled professional in action. It is because of his skill that I watch this film again every few years, every time learning something new about making.



Figure 4.11: Stills from 'Paying Honest Attention' a film about Anne Mette Hjortshøj

Though not historical, potters talk about the films the Goldmark Gallery make in much the same way they do about 'Isaac Button: Country Potter'. The gallery have made a series of documentary films with the film-maker Alex Wright about the potters whose work they exhibit. These films have a set format, with the potter's voice linking the visual imagery together through consistent audio so the scene changes do not appear jarring to the viewer. This voice-over helps capture the potter's philosophy towards making. The films are around twenty minutes long, following a similar format to 'Isaac Button: Country Potter' and start by showing the potter in their environment, followed by making, decorating, firing, unloading the kiln and, finally, the finished pottery. The films show what the ceramic makers represent by the gallery are capable of, as well as encouraging the audience to come to the Gallery and see the work for themselves.

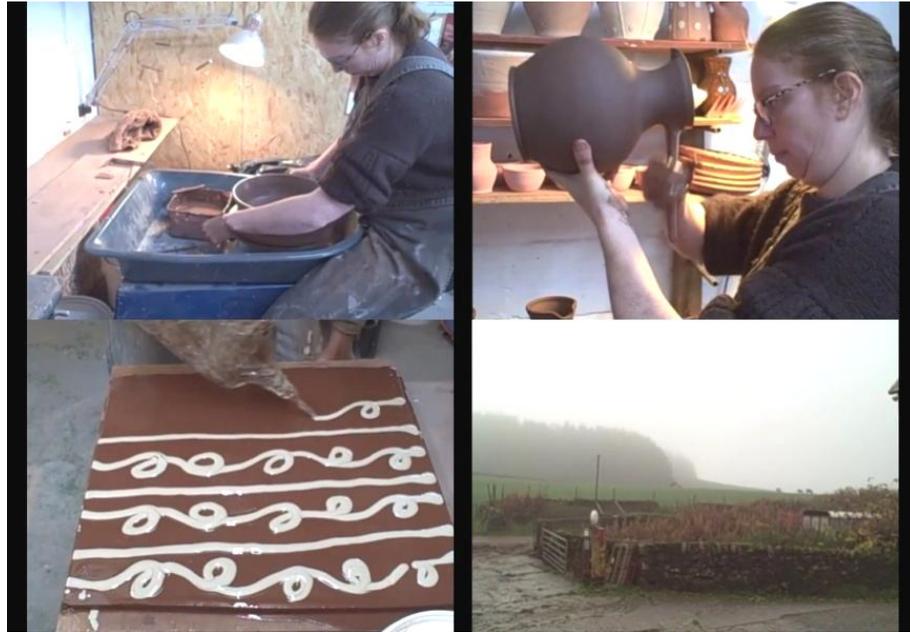


Figure 4.12: Stills from 'Fitch & McAndrew 31st October 2015'

The previous two examples follow an entire process from start to finish. Fitch & McAndrew (2015) on the other hand, make short films, from one to five minutes long, assembled from clips throughout a single working day. The films tend to show mainly parts of the process, as well as the environment that the potters work in. This may feature the landscape or the animals that surround their studio. Most of the films are made without any narration, so it is only the visual clips that explain the work that is being produced during the day.

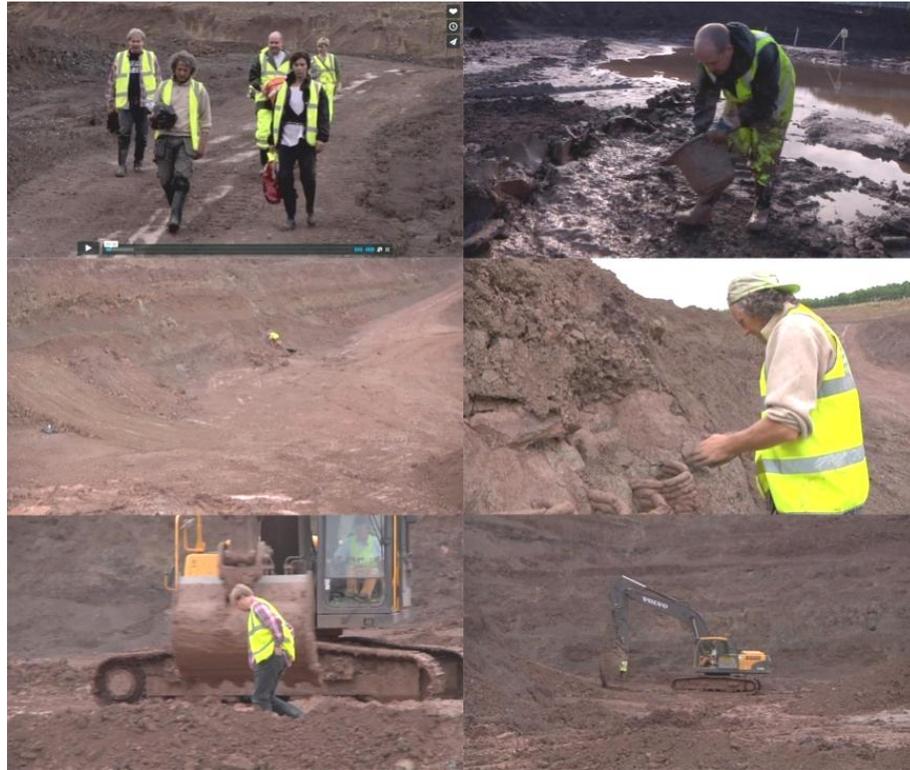


Figure 4.13: Stills from Johnny Magee’s ‘Marl Hole’

The final film in this section is very different, as it does not just focus on documenting the work of a single pottery. Johnny Magee’s ‘Marl Hole’ (2009) starts more like a film following astronauts than people about to work with clay. Sound plays an important part in the narrative with the squelches of the clay as it is manipulated in the artists’ hands, and sounds of the rain which both combine to help make everything seem wetter in the marl hole. The film delivers a scale and physicality, which, like the marl hole, dwarfs the humans, the man-made machinery in it and the man-made impressions left upon it. This is unlike most ceramic films, which show the maker in control of the small amount of clay they handle. This sense of scale plays throughout the film, with the audio emphasising this aspect of very small human in this oversized environment.

All these films show how editing can be used to tell a story, thereby we do not just set up a camera, capture everything in one take and upload the results. Magee’s ‘Marl Hole’ is very different through its usage of scale and audio, which captures the feeling of this huge wet muddy hole. Fitch and McAndrew’s films in contrast

show what can be done with simple technology by non–film-makers, to produce something visually interesting where words do not have to form part of the story.

4.4.2 Teaching Films

The purpose of teaching films is not to tell stories, but to teach the viewer how to make something. The films in this section are a cross section of how people are currently using YouTube to teach people how to make pottery.



Figure 4.14: Still from Dan Unsworth's 'Throwing a very simple Pottery Wall Vase on the Wheel'



Figure 4.15: Still from Simon Leach's 'Throwing and altering a 3lb bowl'

The two most viewed potters on YouTube are Dan Unsworth (2015) from Ingleton Pottery and Simon Leach (2015). Their channels use a very similar format, setting up a stationary camera and filming their making on the wheel. Both potters film lots

of simple items being made or a single more complex one. The major difference is that the Unsworth's pottery videos tend to be on average three to six minutes long, whereas Leach's are fifteen to twenty minutes. Unsworth's films match his production pottery style by being short and to the point, while Leach's films tend to be longer, with more character, just like his pots thrown on his kick wheel.



Figure 4.16: Stills from Cindy Clarke's 'How to Throw a Mug on the Potter's Wheel - Making Mugs - Episode 1'

Cindy Clarke's (2015) 'The Clay Teacher' channel on YouTube seems very similar to watching Leach or Unsworth, except she has four cameras, all set up to record at the same time, so that during the video making she can switch to show the best view at any given time. Clarke's films are somewhere in between the length of Unsworth and Leach, but still appear to be done in a single take. She also talks about other films she has made in an attempt to get people to watch them. In 'How to Throw a Mug on the Potter's Wheel' she runs through the process twice showing different angles on the second mug.



Figure 4.17: Still from Tip Toland's 'Sculpting a clay head'

Tip Toland however, has an hour-long workshop on YouTube, going through the entire process of sculpting a clay head just once. She explains how she sets up her armature and how the anatomy relates to the armature. Everything is clearly filmed and explained in full. The film also benefits from a camera operator, so the viewer can see some close-up shots of the process.



Figure 4.18: Stills from Forrest Middleton's 'Measuring Prints for Specific Forms'

Unlike the other films in this section, Ceramic Arts Daily make longer-format teaching DVDs. They create a segment, which is uploaded to YouTube for marketing purposes, from each maker's teaching DVD as a taster to encourage people to buy the whole DVD. Everything is clearly explained and filmed with two angles used. These angles go from a front-on presentation to a close up view of the hands at a three-quarter perspective. These films have a set format and are created to sell DVDs, and to inspire the viewer.



Figure 4.19: Stills showing the development of a form from Chris Staley's 'Can you teach creativity?'

Chris Staley's film 'Can you teach creativity?' (2012) is from a series of films made during his year as Penn State Laureate⁴. The series is very different to the other films selected as they are not how-to videos but instead encourage the viewer to think about what they are doing and gives them permission to make mistakes. I selected this particular film because he is working on the wheel and talks through the process of how he once developed a new form by trying something different. This series of films makes me want to create an e-learning course that is not just instructional but is also inspirational.

The trend through all these films is a presentation to an audience. I find the visual format of Staley's film to be the most fascinating as it moves between different shots to give a sense of movement throughout. With Staley's and Ceramic Arts Daily's style of films a potter would need multiple camera operators to capture the imagery. Clarke's film gets around this by setting up multiple cameras and then editing the footage together, but four camera angles may be too much for someone still learning film-making to handle.

⁴ 'The Penn State Laureate is an annual faculty honor established in 2008 to bring greater visibility to the arts, the humanities, the honoree's work, and the University.' (Pennsylvania State University, 2013)

Surprisingly, the teaching films that have the most views are not necessarily the most visually interesting ones. It would be interesting to investigate in further research what learners actually prefer to watch and learn from.

4.4.3 Marketing Films

The films in this section are marketing films and have been selected as I wanted to look at different approaches ceramic makers use to attract an audience in film. Marketing films seem an important section of the field, as their purpose is to engage and provoke the response of people purchasing wares.



Figure 4.20: Stills from 'Whichford Pottery: how we make our pots'

Unlike the Goldmark Galleries documentaries, the film 'Whichford Pottery: how we make our pots' (Whichford Pottery, 2002) is presented directly to the camera giving the feeling of an infomercial and therefore marketing. It follows the pottery through the whole process, from producing the clay to making several different

pots, from throwing plant pots in one piece to using press moulds, and finally showing the firing. At the start and end of the film, the flower pots are shown already planted so people can understand their use visually.



Figure 4.21: Stills from Ayumi Horie's 'White Pots'

Ayumi Horie takes a more visually interesting approach with 'White Pots' (2015). It is a marketing video that explains the philosophy of a single range of her work. It also includes a visual joke of decorating cake much in the same way she makes pottery, to try to make you take notice of the film. The music acts as a counterpoint to her voice. There are parallels between the serious and whimsical tones used in the film and her ceramic work. The film does not really follow any one thing being created but finishes with a mug being made and a hot drink being poured into it, before the credits, thus showing that her work is functional and has a use. There are various clips within the film that show her unique way of handling the clay which is very playful in its approach, and really shows off the plasticity⁵ of her clay.

⁵ Plasticity of clay is '[t]he property of clay that allows it to change shape without rupturing when force is applied to it' (Ceramics Art Daily, 2012)



Figure 4.22: Still from 'Clap Along with Keith'

Keith Brymer Jones takes a completely different approach to the other two films by producing two musical parody videos based on popular music. As he states in an interview for BBC South East, these films are for marketing purposes and Brymer Jones proposes they are 'to connect with who you're trying to sell to, in a not... sales way' (2014b:1min 7). 'Clap Along with Keith' (Brymer Jones, 2014a) takes us on a musical parody video from Whitstable prototype to production in a Chinese factory and, at the end, Brymer Jones removing the finished product from the kiln.

All the films discussed in this section are produced with a different intent towards marketing products, although the infomercial does not feel as exciting as the other films. All films are aimed at a non-ceramic audience, but I prefer Horie's (2015) film, as, even in the short clips, there is something for to be learned in the way she manipulates the clay. Brymer Jones' (2014a) films do an amazing job of humanising the potter and his product by engaging with popular culture.

4.4.4 Summary

So many of the films in the documentary and marketing sections seem to follow the pattern of 'Isaac Button: Country Potter', with the idea that pottery starts with clay, is made by hand into something else, then glazed, fired and finally there are pots that people can buy. Showing the whole process does seem to be a major narrative device in the field of pottery film-making. Though, in this sort of film, it does not

really show the true passage of time, as the viewer can see it all in a matter of minutes.

As a potter watching the films, I find the most interesting are Staley's (2012), Ceramic Art Daily's and Horie's (2014). In them, you see a section showing a technique, you are however, not watching the entire production but a small aspect as Booton (2015a) described. On the other hand, these small sections, though interesting for a maker, may not show enough information for someone who is learning.

For potters making films, there is the decision of whether or not to use a separate film-maker to control the camera and give a sense of movement to the film. Someone else making the film leaves the potter the chance to focus on making and what they are going to present. If the potter takes control, there will be the extra step of learning more about film-making, which will take some element of time. Editing the film does seem essential, there is little to gain from capturing everything in one take, and you can create films that are more visually interesting and engaging by editing the film together from shorter clips.

Looking at all these films opens up more decisions and options for the potter trying to teach through film. Creating distinct projects (Jansen, van Laekan, Slot, 2004), as well as showing aspects of technique and the development of the final piece, as in 'Isaac Button: Country Potter' may be a good place to start.

4.5 Conclusions and Reflections on the Literature Review



Figure 4.23: Joseph Hartley during the interview conducted for the study

Throughout the literature review, it has emerged that the *experience* of making seems to be the main component of learning to make pottery. Making has to be important. Through Hartley's (2015) journey so far, first as a butcher, then baker and finally as a potter, making has remained important and has always been influenced by the material he uses. But like Hartley (2015), we are also influenced by the world around us. The way makers do this is through looking at what came

before (Rogers, 1978), as well as observing those around us and watching them work (Booton, 2015a). Passing on these sorts of experiences seems an imposing task, but not if broken down into a manageable process, working from influence to object in a project-based system (Jansen, van Laekan, Slot, 2004). In fact, I have concluded that a project-based system could be the best framework to build upon, especially after experiencing and reflecting on the case studies. Throughout the design process of the course, the four Ps: Purposeful, Planned, Possible and Productive (Jenkins, 2003), should be kept in mind.

As the language of making can be hard to explain (Adamson, 2013), we can support the development of the learners through film as well as text, explaining things through words and images rather than just words. Using an e-learning course is still very new and on the fringe of learning, especially regarding hands-on skills, but this study can offer ‘new and exciting learning opportunities using ‘cross-media solutions’’(Staffans and Wiklund-Engblom, 2010:75).

The most important thing is that the e-course should be inspirational, exciting people, encouraging them to actually want to make. Then, through these making experiences they can reflect on where they want to take their own work (Sennet, 2009).

E-learning courses have to be balanced between allowing learners to express their own creativity (Gauntlett, 2011) and actually helping them develop kinaesthetic sensitivity (Risatti, 2007). The courses should also tell the learners before they sign up, what skills they should have and what they can learn from the course (Rowntree, 1990). Such a course overview allows learners to take responsibility and engage with the learning materials (de Freitas and Mayes, 2013).

Though e-learning would not replace the workshop experience that McErlain (2002) talks about, it can help support people by allowing them to work in connection with a craftsperson (Payne and Taylor, 2013).

5. Research in Practice: the Development of E-learning Materials and the E-learning model

5.0 Introduction

This chapter consists of the practical elements of the study, combining the theoretical elements to make e-learning materials and find a model for e-learning.

The National Extension College's use of film and textbooks in 1963 (Jenkins, 2003), establishes a case for the continued use of cross-media solutions. Today, we have access to YouTube, blogs and social-media platforms, therefore learners can form a community to engage with.

I wanted to present e-learning materials in such a way that provides ease of access for learners. This meant that I wanted websites or applications that generally used web 2.0, with social-media elements, thereby enabling learners to communicate with each other. I also wanted the e-learning materials to be visual, to ensure lessons were appealing and exciting to learners. I chose three different sorts of e-learning material as the focus of the practical element of the study: Pinterest, Live Streaming and Filming.

5.1 Pinterest

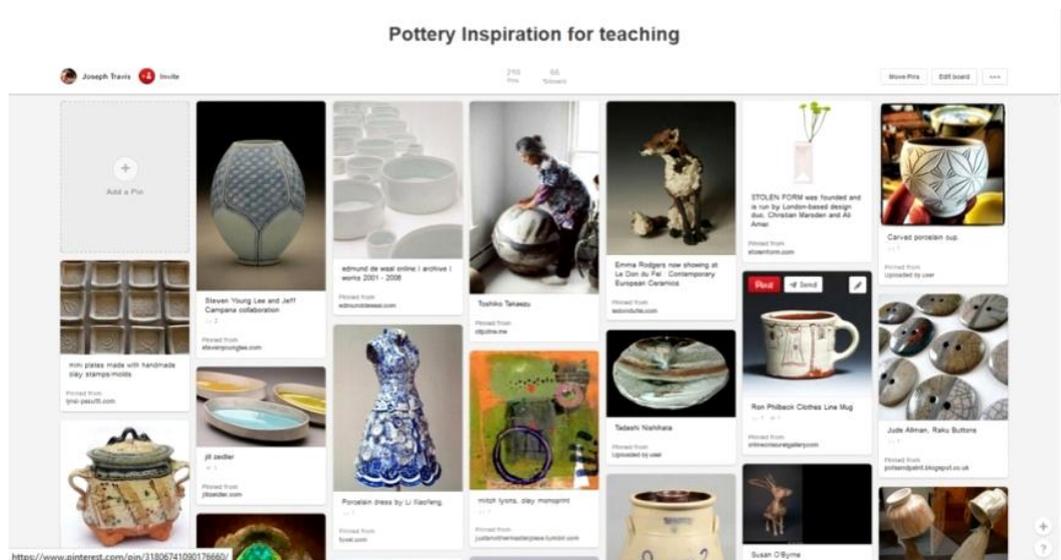


Figure 5.1: Pinterest Pins I created to share with my learners as a Trainee Teacher

Pinterest is a social-media application for creating digital pin boards or mood boards. Mood boards were important in my own design education and remain a useful teaching tool, which I have used previously in my teaching career and for my own personal planning.

When I visited case study 1, the group wanted to create a resource that they could build together and take responsibility for, rather than the institution taking control of it. I suggested that the easiest resource for them would be a series of Pinterest boards. I asked the group what kind of boards they would require, they replied that they wanted boards showing various techniques aimed at different skill levels, as well as boards for events, films and tools.

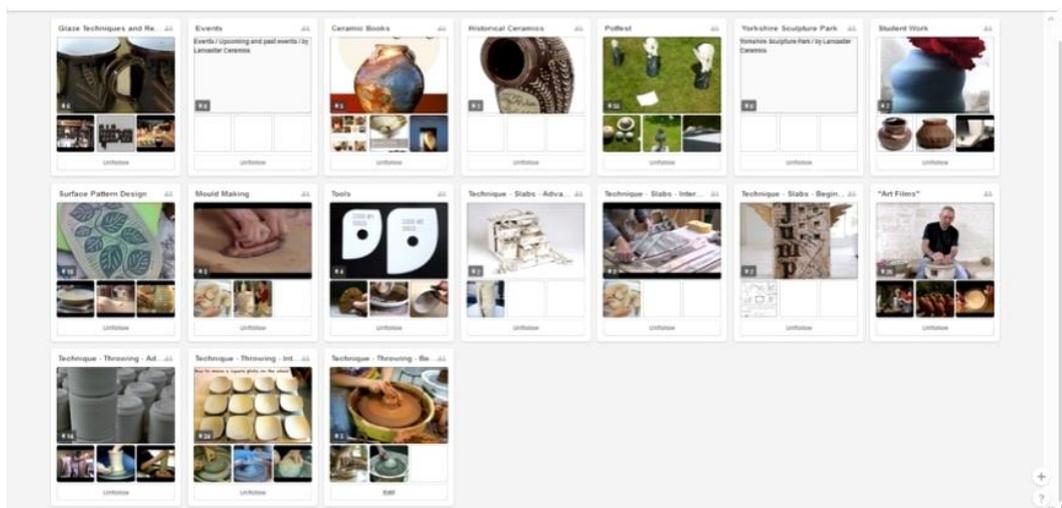


Figure 5.2: Pinterest boards created for Learners at Case Study 1

I created the resource and visited the group again to deliver the Pinterest to them, explaining how to use it, as well as signing them up for the first board. As the learners engaged, I could invite them to use the rest of the boards. Though learners said they were excited, they did not sign up for the other boards. Some of the learners did however, start using Pinterest themselves to gather their influences and ideas for future work.

Reflecting on the reasons for this mixed success, I concluded that I created too many boards for the learners at the adult-learning college. Also, because I created them, rather than the members of the group themselves, I do not think they felt in

control of the resource. The Pinterest boards that the learners created, gave them freedom from what they felt the group required and allowed them to reflect better on what they wanted to see.

A better option would be to create a single private board for learners to share, which they could interact with however they wished. With such a private board, a community of learners could share their creative work in a private safe environment that only members of the group could see. They could furthermore share their own budding interests with the group by pinning things that excite them about making.

I also recommend using a private board for planning, as it allows a quick visual mood board, as well as to connect ideas. It could be shown to learners as an example of the process. Though I have not tested private boards in the study, they could be a good area of further investigation.

5.2 Live Streaming

5.2.0 Introduction

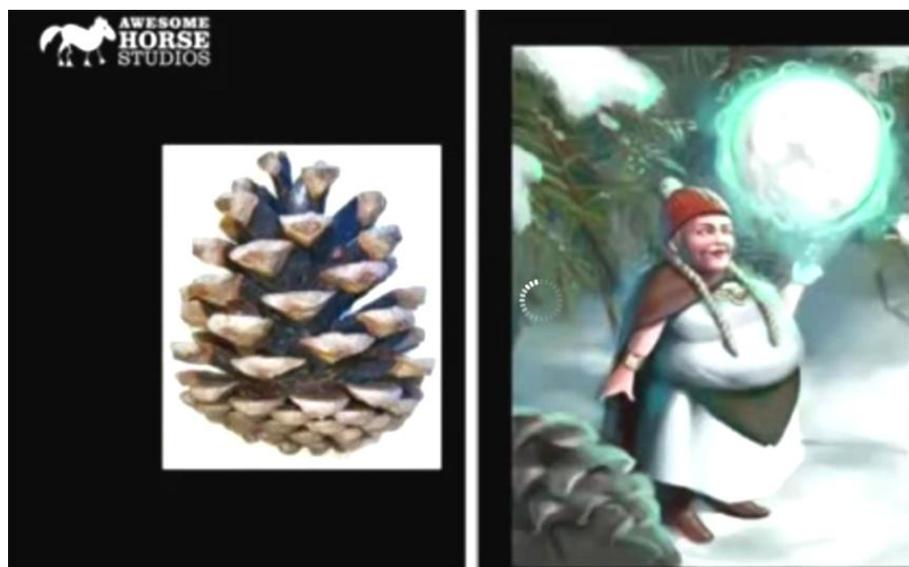


Figure 5.3: A still from a critique by Awesome Horse Studios showing that the artist needs to use more reference in their paintings.

My initial thoughts for the use of live streaming were influenced by Awesome Horse Studios (2012). They held live sessions for anyone who required a critique of their work, with a team systematically considering an artist's painting and enumerating possible improvements. At the time, their work really influenced me but I did not want to adopt that mode of teaching, as critiquing a piece of pottery is hard without having it in your hands; the idea of how I wanted to use live streaming changed when I discovered Meerkat.

Live streaming is the ability to almost instantly broadcast a video feed over the internet, using one of several different web applications. For the study, I tried a few options but focused on just two different applications: Meerkat, for broadcasting from my studio as I worked at the wheel, and Nurph, for live ceramics panels with multiple users.

5.2.1 Live Streaming the Making process

I was introduced to Meerkat by another potter, who was experimenting with ways to increase sales in his business, and who used it to show people how he worked in his studio. I quickly decided to use the application and to find out more about how it worked. My first stream garnered a lot of engagement, with over two hundred people watching what I was working on, as well as people 'liking' and commenting on the stream. To date, I have held over one hundred streams on Meerkat, and built an audience of people who want to watch me work in my workshop.

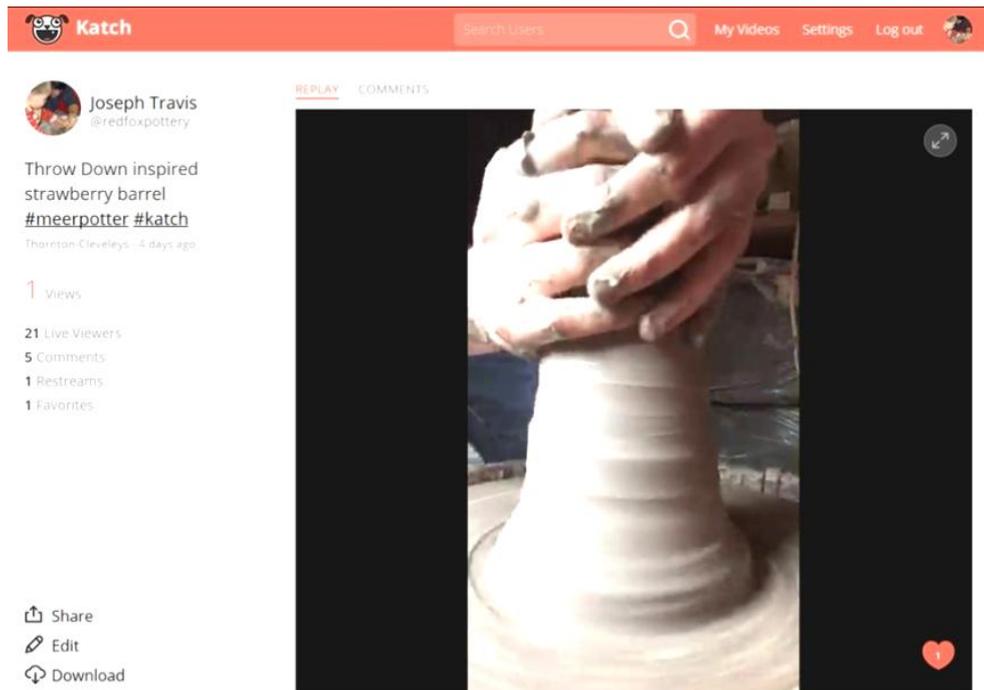


Figure 5.5: One of my Meerkat Streams captured by the Katch service

I set up my tablet with the front-facing camera aimed at the pottery wheel, thus the broadcast would allow viewers to see exactly what I was doing, but I could also see the screen and read any comments. I would answer viewers' comments between each manoeuvre, therefore viewers would not have to wait long for an answer.

This method of live streaming however, did not attract a pottery-based audience, as it was too unfocused and did not give experienced potters a reason to watch. I still feel that being able to hold the lesson live is the best option, allowing learners to ask questions, which could be answered on the spot, in real time. The learners, at least in theory, could act as directors, asking the instructor to move the camera thereby permitting themselves to see things more clearly.

5.2.2 Pottery Panel Show⁶

I wanted to try something original with live streaming, and I decided upon a live pottery panel-show format. The reasoning behind it was that by engaging well-known potters, I could attract an audience of people in the pottery community. I

⁶ All of the broadcasts for the Nurph chats can be seen at <http://redfoxpottery.com/projects/nurph/>

used Nurph because it allowed multiple people to talk at once on camera, though I could have used other free services such as Blab or Google Hangouts.

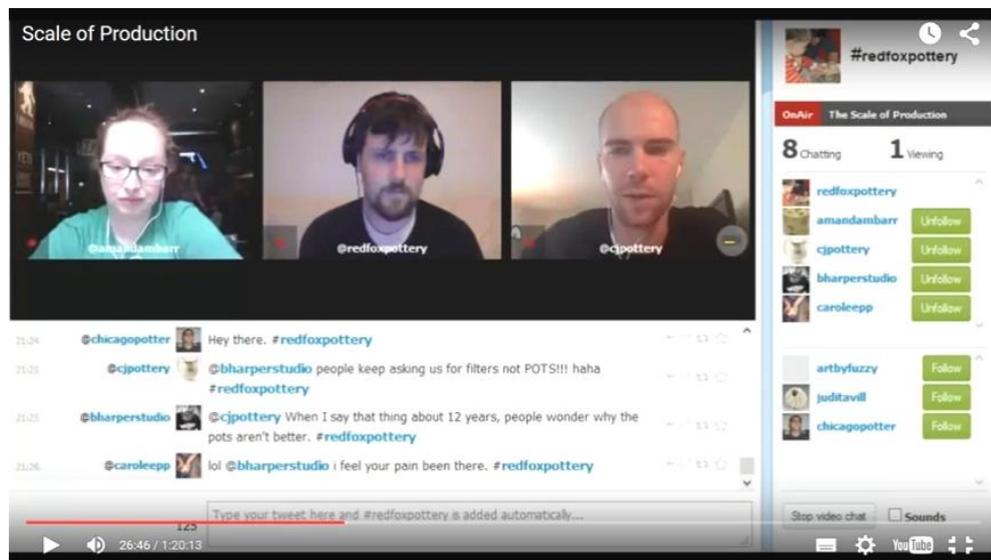


Figure 5.6: Talking to Corey Johnson and Amanda Barr about the ‘Scale of Production’

The first panel had technical problems, with one of the presenters unable to log on, and the recording software stopping after a certain amount of time, hence I only managed to get a partial recording. I resolved these issues for the following weeks, by creating a separate account if someone could not log on and acquiring a better, more stable, recording software. The first panel also had too many voices with five people involved. I scaled down the panel to three people, including myself as the host.

Across the three broadcasts, there were a few regular watchers, but every stream attracted new audience members. Once people were watching, they usually interacted and asked questions in the comments section below the video. They would also watch the entire stream. A challenge remaining for the future is how to advertise this sort of event, expand the audience and edit the panels for archival purposes, perhaps even making a much shorter video with the highlights and key points.

I personally learnt a lot from having the discussions in this format. I think this is an area in which there is still a lot to learn about how to use this aspect of the technology. One of the advantages meant we could show more than four people and it also provided an area for the viewers to ask questions. Yet, to make a presentation, you cannot control the size of the video windows, which means it would not be possible to have a slideshow or show images you want to talk about as they would be too small. I think Carter Gillies put my thinking best: 'The question I am asking is 'why this?' when it seems almost inevitably far less polished than your average podcast or YouTube video?' (Gillies, 2015). We could easily produce a podcast based on this format; being able to see people or seeing it recorded live might not be the best format.

I think other ways of live streaming to a group may need to be explored. For instance, scenarios in which we can control the people in the chat and also have a way of doing a presentation in order to bring up images to facilitate the conversation.

5.2.3 Conclusions and Reflections

A live streaming platform would be good for meeting a group in real time, in order to teach in private. Other art organisations that teach in this way, such as SVSLearn.com, use platforms like gotomeeting.com that require payment and, depending on a chosen subscription, dictate how many people can join the meeting. Gotomeeting.com permits everyone in the class to use a webcam and microphone, which allows direct access to the learners to see how they are responding to the learning.

One thing I drew from live streaming is that people were willing to sit and watch for a long time, unlike YouTube videos, which people consider should be shorter to hold their attention (Allain, 2011). Based on my own experience of watching live streams, I would propose that people watch for longer because of the immediacy of a 'live' broadcast in which they do not want to miss anything, whereas a recording

may always be returned to at another time. On Meerkat, a member of the community admitted they would not have looked for pottery videos on YouTube, but enjoyed discovering my work in this format and realised how much effort and skill went into making pottery. Because of this, they have also started watching the BBC's *Great British Pottery Throw Down* on television.

I have therefore concluded that live streaming may be the best way to engage with learners and create an environment in which they can interact with the teacher and ask questions in real time. Moreover, because they can record the sessions, the learners could watch them back afterwards. The recording could also be edited to show the highlights, which if a multi camera view was used it would give options when editing post stream to create something more visually interesting.

5.3 Film-Making⁷

5.3.0 Introduction

My film-making developed progressively, as I reflected on the different elements I wanted to learn. This section shows a journey from the unedited film with no narrative, to films that encapsulate the entire story of the creation of a piece of pottery in fifteen seconds.

5.3.1 The Films

All the filming done in this section was done without a film crew, as there is not enough space in my work area for another person. This brought constraints to the film making process as there is no one to monitor the equipment. Though this gave me the opportunity to develop my understanding of film making, through the process of learning to work alone to produce the films.

⁷ It is crucial the films are watched in conjunction with the text; they are available in order they are presented here at <http://redfoxpottery.com/research/chapter5/>



Figure 5.7: Screen shot of 'Throwing a faceted tea bowl' on Instagram

The first films I made during the study were short fifteen-second Instagram films. These early films did not show hands-on making, as I did not realise you could film on another device, edit a video together and then upload to Instagram. Nevertheless, they really needed to have hands on the clay as their format did not explain what was happening. As a result, I decided to move away from Instagram and focus on filming my hands.



Figure 5.8: Screen shot of 'making pinch pots'

I intended to capture some film of me working with my hands on clay. To do this, I set up camera on a tripod, put a wooden board on my knee and filmed myself making some pinch pots. The problem with this film is that it does not progress beyond this simple manipulation of clay. I could not see when my hands were in focus, hence my hands kept wandering off shot. Because of this issue, in the next film I decided to focus on keeping things in shot.



Figure 5.9: Screen shot of 'wedging clay stop motion'

To keep things in frame, I tried a stop-motion application to tie thirty photographs together. In this way, I could look through the camera and see what I was capturing. I later learnt that I could have done this in film editing software to create a more dynamic feeling. The audio was recorded separately on a Dictaphone and then added in post production as a sound track. I decided that I should try again with the tripod.



Figure 5.10: Screen shot of 'How to make the Perfect Coil'

I bought a new tripod, which was tall enough to film my workbench. I set it up and checked it was focused on my work area. Filming while trying to talk and make at the same time led to a lot of unusable footage. It therefore took me hours to capture enough footage to put together this film. My final track still contains background audio from my neighbour and her child. I subsequently decided to record the audio separately for the next film.



Figure 5.11: Screen shot of 'Tapir's Head Wedging'

I also tried an alternative to recording the audio straight from camera. I went out with my camera, set it on the work surface and made this quick segment of wedging clay. Looking back on the footage, I learnt about the necessity of cleaning

the work surfaces before I start, in order to minimise visual distractions. I then recorded a pre-scripted audio separately using a microphone on the computer. The problem was the audio does not quite work; it neither sounds like it is in the workshop nor does it feel natural, as I am reading the words. I wanted to work on something that was not just one camera set in place.



Figure 5.12: Screen shot of 'Moving a Ton of Clay version 1'

I received a ton of clay and had to move it from the roadside to my workshop. As this would take so much time, it made sense to film the process. It was filmed with a single camera on a tripod that I moved around the path as I walked back and forth with the clay. I think that shooting from different angles, followed by a short point of view shot, helps tell the story of the journey. This narrative start resembles 'Isaac Button: Country Potter' (Anderson and Fournier, 1964a): clay enters the workshop, is thrown and then leaves again. The original audio was recorded with the camera. Because the person moving the clay was distant and it sounded like easy work, I decided to record an additional audio track.



Figure 5.13: Screen shot of 'Moving a Ton of Clay version 2'

The new audio track was five seconds shorter than the previous version and I had to remove a few seconds of footage in order for the visuals to match the audio timing. I think the audio works better at describing how much work goes into merely moving the clay around. I wanted to continue the theme of using more than one camera angle and recording the audio separately as my camera buzzes when it is filming.



Figure 5.14: Screen shot of 'Throwing a cup v1'

To move on I decided to actually show something being made rather than just prepared, hence I threw a quick cylinder shape. This film was edited together with the intention of adding the audio track after, but I created a version with music just

to see what the alternative would feel like. I used two cameras, or, more precisely, a camera on a tripod to the side and an Apple iPod on a gooseneck mount to film from overhead. Being able to change angles helped illustrate the throwing as it meant that visually there is some change throughout the making sequence. It still shows the entire process, but switches each time I go through a single movement with the clay. Rather than just showing the wheel and workbench, I wanted to carry on using multiple angles, whilst also showing the environment I was working in.

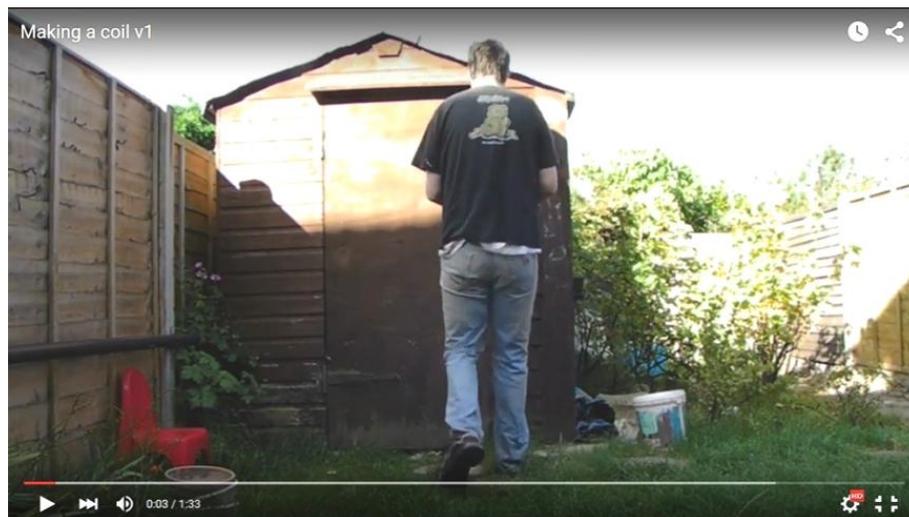


Figure 5.15: Screen shot of 'Making a coil v1'

I decided to look again at making a coil and filmed footage to add to 'How to make the perfect coil'. With the additional footage, I could swap between angles to make the film more dynamic. I also decided to include B-roll⁸ as I read that it was good to include it in narratives (Ayres, 2015). However, it seems out of place within the context of such a short film. The shot of B-roll that I did like however, depicted me entering the pottery and became an ident⁹ on other films. Rather than just keep showing the coils being prepared, I wanted to show what I use them for in the pottery and tried to create a narrative around them

⁸ In film-making, A-roll is the main narrative footage and 'B-roll is basically everything else'(Ayres, 2015)

⁹ An ident is '[a] short sequence shown on television between programmes to identify the channel' (Oxford University Press, 2015:s.v. *ident*).



Figure 5.16: Screen shot of 'Throwing a big pot'

In telling the narrative story of how to 'throw a big pot', it made sense to reference a finished pot to explain where the coils were in this piece. It was the first time I included a finished object, and demonstrates what this technique is capable of. Once again, the audio on this film was recorded separately and meant to be added later. A temporary soundtrack stood in to give the task an epic feel. Making this pot took over an hour, it thus made sense to cut out parts of the sequence to streamline it to less than three minutes. I also used some time-lapse sequences in the film to condense what was happening without having to show three minutes of beating clay into a disc.



Figure 5.17: Screen shot of the 'Pot Gear' Intro

I wanted to edit together something more visually interesting that played on popular television culture, to this end I created a spoof of the BBC's *Top Gear* intro. Because I had to learn more techniques and processes in the film editing suite, this short clip took a lot longer to edit than any other film made to date. Its purpose was not to teach learners, but to help me consider transitions, which I had not looked at before. As transitions for the spoof, they work well but seem very clichéd for a normal film.

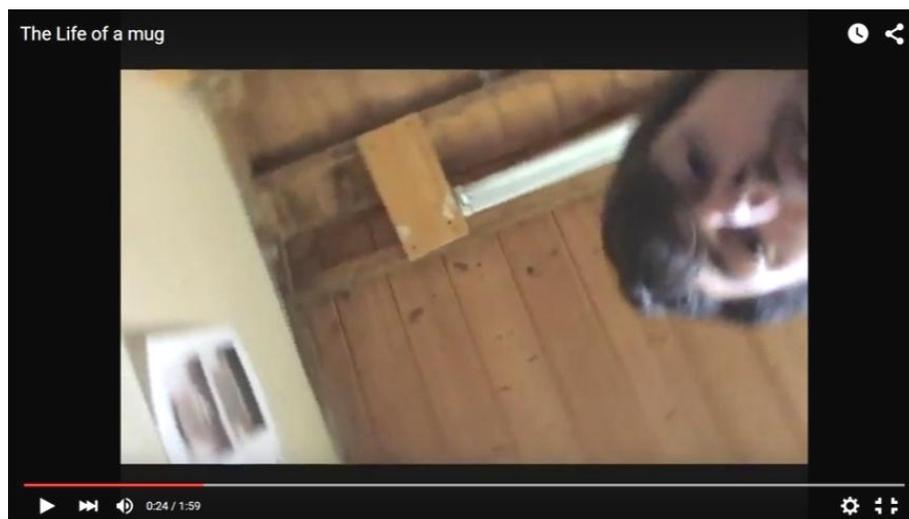


Figure 5.18: Screen shot of 'The Life of a mug'

Not knowing what to film next, I decided to have a change of perspective. 'The life of a mug' was inspired by a short clip I had made by putting the camera into the kiln. I decided then to film the whole sequence from a mug's point of view, as it allowed me to think about the sequence all the way through and to develop a narrative through the eyes of a piece of clay. The audio is a mixture of what was recorded by the iPod with additional sound effects from the dictaphone. I think it works well as a marketing piece, but is a little long in places. I took the idea from 'Throwing a big pot' and decided to show the piece in use too. For the next piece, I wanted to adopt the editing style and film-creation format from a normal point of view.



Figure 5.19: Screen shot of 'Pot Life episode: 1 how to throw a mug v1'

This film was created to be like 'Mug Life' but from the perspective that the viewer can read what is happening, while also including pieces of the footage from 'Mug Life' which bring in a more dynamic feeling. I removed the firings from the narrative that were in 'Mug life' as it felt like the kiln was being opened and shut too many times. When I uploaded the film to YouTube, I realised there was no sound on the scene of entering the pottery. Rather than delete it, I decided to try again with audio tracks, this time there is a mix between the audio captured by the camera and a music track, which works a lot better than the music track by itself.



Figure 5.20: Screen shot of 'Pot Life episode: 1 how to throw a mug v2'

As the initial section of entering the pottery had no audio, I replaced the silence with a recording I made of geese flying overhead. I like the sense of quiet that this film has, after having tried music on so many films. Editing things down and removing a few scenes created an improved pacing for these Pot Life films compared with 'Throwing a cup v1'. I wanted to see if I could cut this down even further without losing much of the narrative.



Figure 5.21: Screen shot of 'Mugshot Monday'

Short films such as fifteen seconds allow for simplicity in telling a story through removing everything unnecessary to the narrative, to convey the message of the film clearly. Though the reason for making a fifteen-second film arose because of the potters on Instagram who are interested in my film making projects. Film on Instagram is limited to fifteen seconds, so I decided to make a film to fit that time scale. I removed the ident because it was too long to be reduced in length and for the sequence to remain readable. I think that 'Mugshot Monday' does a good job of showing the essential information. If the viewer understands the basics there is still something to learn about my way of working.



Figure 5.22: Screen shot of 'Throwing Bowls'

As I was no longer narrating the films, I felt that I had somehow cut out all the learning opportunities for people with little experience. But narration did not seem to fit with the sort of films I was editing. To add this learning element again, I decided to add text to explain quickly what was happening in each scene of the film. I also wanted to add a visual joke to capture the viewers' attention. Trying to throw the bowl over my shoulder and out the door, it hit the ceiling instead, falling down and hitting me on the shoulder. On the whole, I felt this worked much better. I tried to create a finishing sequence that mirrored the start, hence adding a short section of leaving the shed at the end of the film. It helped avoid an abrupt end to the film, as I did not have any further footage at the time of editing.



Figure 5.23: Screen shot of 'Mind Shed'

Just like with the 'Pot Gear' opening, I wanted to add cultural references to the films. In the BBC's *Sherlock*, Sherlock Holmes has a mind palace (Zielinski, 2014). The intent was to create a narrative in which the shed was a go-to place to develop an idea by building up a series of images and dismissing the images that were not relevant to the pottery I was developing. The idea did not translate well into film, hence only this rough edit was ever created. I decided I liked the idea of the shorter edits that would work as adverts for a longer format live stream class.

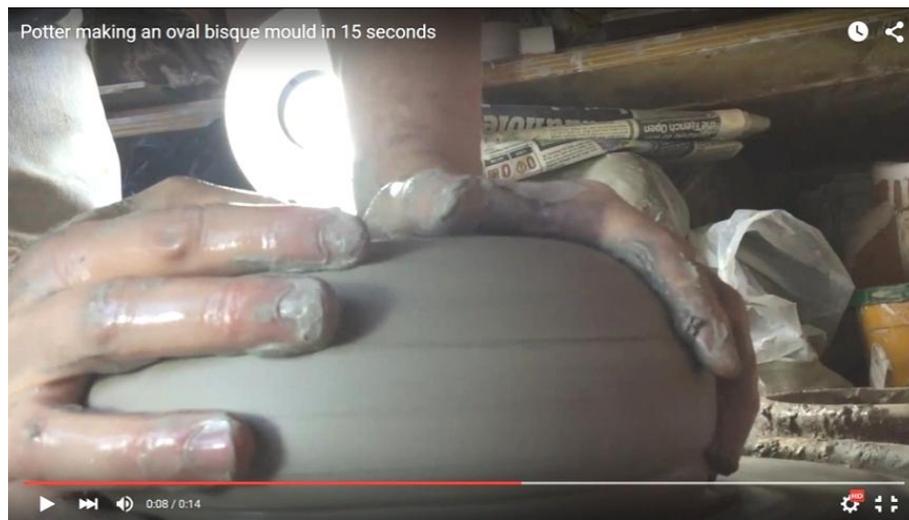


Figure 5.24: Screen shot of 'Potter making an oval bisque mould in 15 seconds'

The intention for this film was to demonstrate the creation of a bisque mould, firing it and then actually using it to create a piece of pottery. As there was a week's wait between the making of the mould and its firing, I decided to edit the footage together to see how the sequence ran on screen. It seemed to be a bit convoluted and complex to have the clay thrown down three times in a sequence. I therefore decided to work on a slightly less complex project so as to focus on making an advertising-style film.



Figure 5.25: Screen shot of 'Throwing a platter in 26 seconds'

'Throwing a platter in 26 seconds' took some of the aspects that I had worked on in 'Potter making an oval bisque mould in 15 seconds' but made into a simpler project. It also allowed me to use coils again, which is quite expressive as it does not involve the wheel. Moreover, it creates something that learners could try to do that is more complex than just throwing a cup. I also filmed a new ident, which was shorter than the previous version. I wanted to incorporate a logo for the series on the ident too. I created one in Photoshop and imported it to Premiere. The making sequence is perhaps a little short in the film and could do with a little more information. I also aimed to show the platter in use as it allows the use of colours that are not used in the other films, which are all earthy and dark, like the shed.



Figure 5.26: Screen shot of 'Throwing a Tea Bowl in 24 seconds using a bisque mould'

This film was a short advertisement-style film. I decided to let my Instagram audience choose what they wanted me to throw, and they responded that they wanted to see tea bowls. With sequences of half a second to one second, the film is perhaps too short. It works well as an advert for the tea bowl but not for a course about learning to make pottery.

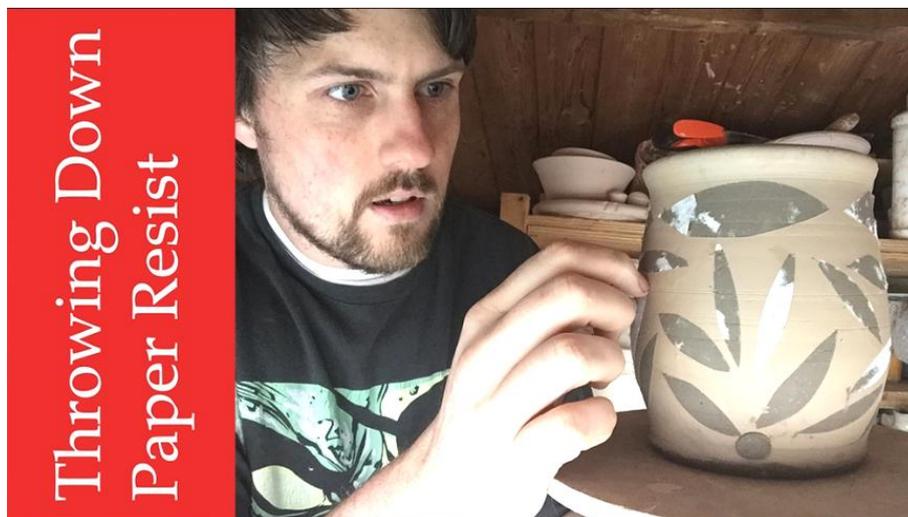


Figure 5.27: Thumbnail for 'Throwing Down a Simple Slip Decorated Paper Resist'

When the BBC's 'The Great Pottery Throw Down' (2015) launched, I saw many questions appearing on social media, as some things were not explained very well. Consequently, I started making video responses to the episodes. I made two short

films per episode on television. My response videos took a set format. A quick piece to camera, followed by the ident, an explanation of what was not shown well during the television episode and a demonstration. Finally, each film closes with the same out-sequence plus clickable links to other films in the series. The series worked well as a response to the television episodes, but, as a teaching programme, they do not make much sense by themselves, though the format could be used.

5.3.2 Conclusions and Reflections

Critical reflection on this extensive range of exploratory films has led to the following conclusions. Working with a film-maker would certainly reduce the time necessary to develop a film for a course. The film-maker's focus would be on capturing what you are trying to teach, whereas, as crafts people filming themselves have to consider lighting, sound and camera angles: (is the camera still filming half way through this mug?) There has been a lot to learn about film-making during the development of the research. Through narrative and editing, there are many possible directions to take in filming the ceramic process.

The most important lessons I have learnt are about capturing the image, lighting, sound, editing and narrative.

5.3.2.1 Capturing the Image

Capturing the image can be tricky at times especially in a small workshop. My solution to not being able to move around and see the camera at first was to take a picture and then check to see if the camera was lined up properly. I realised quickly that this method does not work, as the camera does not use the full frame for filming that it uses for taking photographs. Instead, the method I tended to use would be to get a second camera and take a picture of the first camera's viewfinder, then realign based on that photograph.

To get the camera in the right position in order to film the throwing on the wheel can be very difficult. Especially because the best position to see the maker's hands

changes throughout the making process. I have found throwing bigger pieces makes it slightly easier as the whole process becomes more visually exaggerated.

A tripod is an essential piece of equipment for filming. In a bigger studio, I would recommend marking out the best tripod positions on the floor, as well as to take time to discover these locations. Using the gooseneck tripod for the iPod requires you to leave it where it will not get knocked as this causes it to wobble, ruining the image. However, I found it good for overhead shots as it was out of the way.

5.3.2.2 Lighting

Lighting was important, especially as the seasons changed from summer to winter and days became much darker in the workshop. In the lower light environments, the films get too much digital 'noise' and the picture becomes less readable for a viewer. To counter this problem, I brought lights into the workshop and tried various lighting setups with varying degrees of success. For best results as there is already natural light entering the workshop it is best to use daylight corrected light sources.

5.3.2.3 Sound Quality

Sound quality can be a problem. I found this was an issue on my camera as it records the sound of the camera focusing. The iPod did not have the same associated problems as it has a fixed lens. This became one of the reasons I made the last few films with just the iPod. Capturing the sound on a separate device made syncing all sound to the film difficult, as I was only cutting short clips out of longer segments of film.

I do however think that the times when I used additional sound that I recorded, for example on 'The life of a mug' or 'Moving a ton of clay version 2', helped enrich the films and gave a sense of being in the space. These additionally recorded sound effects could be catalogued and added to the film during the edit. In the future I want to work more with creating a composite of the sound to create greater depth, this will mean investing in better audio recording equipment.

5.3.2.4 Editing

When it comes to editing film, professional software such as Adobe Premiere is essential. It helps increase the editing speed and streamlines the process. Premiere halved my editing time from three hours on average to an hour and a half for a two-minute film. This meant rather than trying to spend one day filming several films and the following day editing, only to find I needed another piece of footage to finish the film. Instead I could film for half the day, quickly do a rough edit and get additional footage the same day before tightening the edit down to the time limit I set for the piece.

5.3.2.5 Narrative

Looking at the film literature review, there seem to be set structures for a narrative in ceramics. At first, I tried to do single-shot films, like Unsworth (2015) or Leach (2015), but found them visually uninteresting, as well as struggling to get the talking in one take. For example, the recording for 'Throwing Down a Simple Slip Decorated Paper Resist' took me over four minutes of talking to camera. The films flow better when they are made up of several clips as with 'throwing a big pot', which took over an hour to make from start to finish. This would otherwise make for a very repetitive film, making each coil and wedging all the clay.

I enjoyed filming the whole process from preparing the clay through to firing and using the 'Isaac Button: Country Potter'-style narrative (Anderson and Fournier, 1964) in 'the life of a mug'. However, it can become repetitive to work in just this one way while making each object. There is still more research to be done in this area, especially in order to find out what learners actually prefer and what engages them the most.

5.3.2.6 Going Forward

The two most successful films that I would like to develop further are 'Throwing a Tea Bowl in 24 seconds using a bisque mould' and 'Throwing a Bowl'. They are two very different films with different purposes. The 'Throwing a Bowl'-style of film could do with more close-ups of the hands and tighter editing. Whereas 'Throwing

a Tea Bowl in 24 seconds using a bisque mould' needs more information to really explain what is happening. This would be an area of further study after investigating which format learners prefer.

5.4 Summary of Practice and the E-learning model

These are my results and the outcome from my research. My proposed model for an e-learning course would include a combination of elements from all the e-learning materials. It would consist of a live-streamed class as the main focus of the course, a Pinterest board to share what learners are working on and socialise, and with films both to advertise the course and for learning particular processes (in case anyone misses the live class) and reviewing these processes.

I found that live streaming has so many advantages over a pre-recorded film: feedback can be given very quickly and important questions can be answered in an instant. Learners can direct the instructor if changes to the camera angle need to be made.

My results show that learning film-making is a useful skill for many reasons. The main being that the focus required for framing the image on camera can be transferred to live streaming. Another reason is to get used to being filmed on camera, which, in my experience, can feel quite uncomfortable at first. Once the live stream has ended, the editing skills for film are important for creating a more succinct version for anyone who missed the live broadcast or wants to watch it again. On the whole, my use of film-making to create short films follows *Ceramics Arts Daily's* approach (as discussed in the literature review) in order to come up with small sections that get viewers excited about the course and interested in joining.

My intention is that the Pinterest board gives a place for people to form that all-important community, which was explored in 'Case study 1'. The community would also be supported during the live classes with learners being able to see each other through the platform such as gotoMeeting.com. The private Pinterest board allows

learners to share their work just with those few learners enrolled on the course, and aims to create a group experience.

Live streaming has become an important aspect of the research, and I propose that it is the way forward for engaging with learners in real time. Live streaming warrants a much more focused investigation, at a later date. This would include using platforms like Skype to try one-to-one tutorials, working almost as master and apprentice, as well as investigating how learners react to the proposed model, and how to improve and refine it further.

6. Conclusion

Pottery is something that is traditionally taught face to face in a classroom environment or through an apprenticeship where there is two-way communication. Recent developments in technology, in combination with fast broadband means that live-streamed classes are now able to handle the two way communication of a traditional environment.

It was not expected or intended that live streaming would become a major focus of the e-learning program, which I set out to design. Live streaming seems to engage people with my work in a way I have not experienced in any other media. People would watch me throw for hours at a stretch and asked questions as I made pottery in my workshop. When people engaged further with the Nurph chats and volunteered to participate in the following episodes, it encouraged me to consider that live streaming has many more possibilities than I have been able to explore in this study.

I would also include further exploration into the use of multiple cameras when live streaming so that learners can switch between angles. This could help learners take control of their own learning process.

A live class changes the dynamic from the one-way communication of film, passively presenting information to its audience, by providing the opportunity for two-way interaction between teachers and learners. Live classes give real-time access to the teacher and because of this people become more engaged and willing to participate in the event. In the future I want to test the communication further by doing one to one classes to record how learners interact. And from these experiences explore what issues we can discover and solve before rolling out a class with multiple simultaneous learners.

This research has raised many new questions based on the insights gained into e-learning, and especially regarding the focus on teaching through live-streaming technologies.

I was equally surprised to find the community aspect to be so important. Thus, when considering what social media platforms to use, I wanted more than just a means to interact and socialise—as would be the case with linear discussions in a Facebook group. Rather, I wanted a resource where the group could communicate in a way that emphasised shared learning. Using Pinterest boards provides this social element but also creates a valuable resource that learners can develop together.

The idea of using Pinterest as a learning resource is something I want to test further, especially with regard to creating an environment for the learners to engage with each other. Pinterest boards are an interesting way of collecting data and the user interface is very simple. They also mean that the teacher does not need to learn to code as might be required to offer a similar space on their website or on a blog. They can doubtless be considered an invaluable resource, but there remain questions around how it can be used to its full potential.

There are also still questions around the best formula for critique between learners, though it was proposed to allow learners to discuss ideas such as form, purpose, surface pattern, what worked and what did not work. As we did not test these things during this research, the best method for learners to learn self critique on an e-learning course will have to be explored in another study.

Based on the interviews and literature, the journey of becoming a professional craftsperson appears to be fully immersive, combining all the senses except smell or taste— though it could be argued that to be a potter, learners need to experience eating and drinking from functional ware to improve upon their designs. Everything that a learner does from touching, talking, watching and seeing can influence their making, but they have to be deeply involved in making for these influences to become evident in their work.

The universal experience of learning pottery is that it can only be done through making. The films, live-streams and everything else are there to inspire, inform and influence learners to want to pick up the clay and create. To improve and get better

learners need to make a lot and make informed decisions about the way they are making and what they want to make.

Moving forward I favour the idea of creating objects that improving learners can review, learning to critique an object made by a more experienced maker. This ceramic object then discussed in a group session using a critique method to determine what makes a certain piece of pottery so successful.

My approach to film-making has been much the same as Bayer's recommended approach to learning how to make pottery (Cameron and Lewis, 1976): simply, to make a lot of films. I learnt a lot more working with the editing suite than I did during the filming process.

In fact editing right down to the essential information was really informative. Being able to pick up the key moments in throwing a pot and just show those revealed more about my own process to myself than showing it in full. Watching the films of other makers I find they are not as visually interesting if I have to watch the entire process. As the purpose of the proposed films is to capture a potential learners attention, showing things in full will not work.

Films are part of the narrative of learning and they let us see and watch pottery being made. It is essential that they tell part of the background story of the potter to help further engage the audience. They make the potter appear human; they are skilled because they have these experiences. Films can capture this narrative for e-learning in a way that perhaps writing or a live streamed class would struggle to do.

A point raised by Booton (2015), which has not been discussed at length, is that university is the place to learn aesthetics. This is something that I would really like to explore in a further study, examining whether we can in fact teach aesthetic considerations to e-learners. This would mean a further analysis of formal education in a university setting to determine how aesthetics is being taught.

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