

ABSTRACT

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Learning Philanthropy: The Impacts of online Masters-level study upon philanthropy practitioners

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Abstract:

As the nonprofit sector around the world has developed, a corresponding interest in university-level study of philanthropy and non-profit studies has also grown, particularly in the United States (Mirabella, 2007). However, an analysis of UK educational provision in philanthropic studies by Carrington (2009) and subsequently in a Europe-wide study by Keidan et al. (2014) found a need for further provision of philanthropy education, as the sector continues to professionalise in this country. Taking its lead from the continuing debates about the role of theory in this growing field of study (Donmoyer, 2009; Daly, 2012), this project aims to determine the impact of theoretical Masters-level education via distance learning upon those working in the philanthropy, charity and fundraising sectors. In particular, whether students changed their professional practice as a result of studying purely academic theoretical approaches to philanthropy, and whether online delivery served to facilitate this. Participants who had recently undertaken a predominantly theoretical philanthropic studies module were invited to complete a qualitative questionnaire to measure the extent to which the module content was implemented within their day-to-day work in the non-profit sector, and data relating to their online participation (forum postings, grades, regularity of access, etc.) was analysed. The findings of the study are analysed using theories of practical reasoning (Donmoyer, 2009), applied knowledge, and participatory online culture (Jenkins et al. 2009) and used to provoke further discussion into the dichotomy between theory and praxis.

Most important references:

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Keidan, C., Jung, T., & Pharoah, C. (2014). *Philanthropy education in the UK and continental Europe: Current provision, perceptions and opportunities*. London, UK: Centre for Charitable Giving and Philanthropy.

studies: A 10-year review and projection of future trends. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 36(4), 11S-27S.

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