

## History Department Seminar 29 February 2012

**Billy O'Steen**

(Canterbury, Educational Studies & Human Development)

**What's going on out there in the lecture theatre?**

**What are the students really doing?**

**Lessons Learned from Trying to Measure Student Engagement at UC**

Since 2000, higher education research and subsequent policy development has focused on *student engagement* because of a belief that it is an accurate indicator of persistence, satisfaction, learning, and graduation (Kuh et al., 2007). Despite nuances in different definitions of student engagement, it is generally agreed that it involves “deep learning” (Biggs, 2009) or full immersion in the academic content. At an institutional level, it has been measured by the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) in the US and the Australasian Survey of Student Engagement (AUSSE) in Australia and New Zealand, including UC. Through the surveys, there has been data collected from over two million students at over 1500 institutions since 2000 and the analysis suggests that there are ten practices that positively affect student engagement. While this has provided information about how institutions’ resources and curricular experiences can impact student engagement, it has not been as helpful in identifying specific teaching practices within the classroom.

At two universities in New Zealand, observational instruments and interview protocols were developed and administered with students in four science courses over two years to attempt to measure student engagement during lectures and determine how it was linked to the instructors’ practices. Findings from this data indicate that instructors’ actions of using multi-media, interactive activities, and practical assessment tasks impacted student engagement and provided instructors with opportunities to adjust their teaching by seeing the data. During this interactive session, participants will be invited to consider this emphasis on student engagement, define it in the UC context, examine the data collected at both the institutional level and the classroom level, and determine how this could positively affect their own practices.

**BILLY O'STEEN** is a Senior Lecturer in the College of Education and has been at UC since 2005. During his initial appointment at the University Centre for Teaching and Learning and his current one at the School of Educational Studies and Human Development, he has coordinated the Postgraduate Certificate in Tertiary Teaching, informally collaborated with UC colleagues across campus, supervised fourteen PhD candidates in higher education research, and published and presented in numerous outlets.

Wednesday 29 February 2012 at 1.00 p.m.

Room 311, History Building