LTSE 2021

CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

CMBE
CERTIFIED MANAGEMENT & BUSINESS EDUCATOR

CABS
CHARTERED ASSOCIATION OF BUSINESS SCHOOLS

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to our first set of Conference Proceedings following Learning, Teaching & Student Experience 2021 (LTSE 2021) that took place on 29-30 June 2021.

LTSE 2021 brought us together again virtually following another round of lockdowns – and not yet enough of the vaccine rollout to allow large gatherings. This didn't stop the Chartered Association of Business Schools from getting one of the largest ever applications to the conference, making the selection process for the reviewers incredibly difficult. We would like to thank everyone who submitted a paper for the conference, and we hope that with the feedback provided you can come back next year.

At the time of writing up these proceedings, Covid-19 restrictions were being lifted, travel was being resumed, albeit cautiously, and with great applause from many institutions, students and staff were returning to campus, breathing life and hope back into our physical learning spaces.

The conference for 2021 had nine themes with what could be described as a normal focus for higher education. However, what was different this time was hearing about how many people had employed their creative juices to re-think and re-engineer education in order to keep students engaged, and how virtual events could continue to build employability skills.

The conference participants heard from a range of keynote speakers on topics from students redefining the classroom, racial inequality and improving inclusion, mental health and wellbeing of staff and students, and finally the changing face of business and management education.

To help you navigate this document, you will find a section for each of the key conference themes, and each section will have a summary preceding it. The themes were:

- Innovations in online learning and teaching
- Effective assessment and constructive feedback
- Developing enterprising, ethical and work-ready graduates
- Student health and wellbeing
- Encouraging and engaging the student voice
- Leading learning and teaching teams
- Upskilling and reskilling the UK workforce
- Supporting disadvantaged and underrepresented students

Within each section will be the papers that were presented in the various forms at the conference. Just to note, not all papers were submitted in an abstract form after the conference. In total, we have 37, plus all the pre-recorded material, so this is a great post-conference resource.

We hope that you enjoy this collation of reflections from the conference, and that those who attended can reflect on the key points from the event.

Best wishes from the editorial team

Andrea Ward CMBE, PFHEA
Deputy Dean, College of Business, Law and Social Sciences, University of Derby; member, Chartered ABS LTSE Committee

Elaine Clarke
College Director of Education and Students, Lincoln International Business School; member, Chartered ABS LTSE Committee

CONTENTS

THEME:
INNOVATIONS IN ONLINE LEARNING AND TEACHING

We saw much innovation during the pandemic, forcing a change to educating online. Whilst this became normal practice across two academic years, the question now arises as to what we will keep going forward. In this section, we see how much of all these experiences put forward by colleagues benefit both staff and students. We hope you are inspired by them.

Many higher education institutions are embracing this opportunity to change, and we saw examples through various work presented at the conference. Duus and Cooray's work on the 3 Cs (Creator, Curator and Connector) for the modern academic provided practical skills to develop impactful digital learning to engage students. Avery, Lees and Roberts took a more holistic approach, looking at the stakeholders to establish a practical framework to support quality learning material.

Both highlighted the student experience, and this was also the focus of the work by Appiah and Murasiranwa who looked at adopting the technology acceptance model (TAM) to build the learning spaces. A number of submissions looked at the support required for virtual spaces, both that of the team-teaching approach and the use of peer-mentoring to develop cultural intelligence through the pandemic. What is clear both through the conference and through discussions on the Chartered ABS Leaders in Learning & Teaching programme is the creativity of developing problem-solving or use of simulations through the virtual experience.

There is definitely a good blend of experiences being shared on the innovations many have adopted during this pandemic, and some have continued to incorporate these as we return to campus.

INNOVATION IN CURRICULUM DESIGN: A JOURNEY TO SUCCESS

Dr Hany Wells CMBE, Associate Dean, Student Experience and Quality Assurance, Coventry University London

Introduction

Education leaders and directors across all higher education institutions including business schools, are regularly encouraged to assess their pedagogy and delivery approach for its 'fitness for purpose' and 'value' for effective teaching. With the recent extenuating challenges of the pandemic, academic teams had to think creatively – outside the box – to ensure a high-quality learning experience was provided to all students in difficult and complex circumstances.

The newly designed delivery model enabled closer engagement at module and course level.

This paper outlines a case study from Coventry University London (CUL), where the traditional model of teaching (large lectures followed by seminars) was replaced by one that promoted and reinforced the core principles of active, social, applied and inclusive learning and engagement. The newly designed delivery model enabled closer engagement at module and course level.

The implementation of this model led to enhanced core metrics in student satisfaction during the pandemic. This paper will outline two key changes introduced that redefined classroom engagement, improved active learning and enhanced the support structure for assessment and feedback.

Discussion

The shift from 'academic-led teaching' to 'student-centred learning' has altered the role of educators from 'instructors' to 'facilitators'. With the availability and readiness of knowledge and content, complemented by technology, the value and relevance of large didactic lectures is regularly questioned (Carpenter 2006, Abraham and Simpson 2015). These recent changes have implications for the way in which academic leaders design and develop curriculum activities. The urgency to review traditional models of teaching intensified during the pandemic, warranting the need for a flexible and responsive pedagogy for UK and international students spread across multiple time zones.

This case study outlines the changes made to the curriculum delivery model for 36 undergraduate and postgraduate courses at CUL. The model offers flexibility that contributed significantly to improving student satisfaction and facilitating the transition of courses to online or blended delivery at pace. The model provided an opportunity to establish clarity around the student learning journey, and transparency around assessment 'for learning' as well as assessment 'of learning' to students.

Lecture-based learning as the main way of imparting knowledge exhibited limitations and proved to be ineffective to support active learning and it failed to help students appropriately with assessment and feedback challenges. With one-hour lectures delivered to large groups followed by three seminar hours, the delivery model was resource-intensive, leaving staff and students exhausted and unsatisfied. The model encouraged overteaching, covering more content than needed, resulting in excessive assessment in modules.

The new model introduced a structure where different levels of support at module, course and campus were included in students' weekly schedule as timetabled activities. The learning was redefined as a two-hour learning journey delivered to a smaller group of

students (maximum 30), replacing the traditional one-hour lecture and two-hour seminar. This new model offered a blended approach. The first hour is delivered asynchronously. The second hour is delivered either synchronously or face-to-face on campus. The model provided flexibility and choice, encouraging interactive two-way participation through engaging students in their learning. Sessions included smaller bite-size content for both modes of delivery. This was a significant step towards more student-centred active learning, replacing the traditional and linear style of teaching towards a more interactive and engaging delivery. It also ensured that the teaching and learning experience became transparent and applicable (Ryan and Tilbury, 2013). This new approach complemented the newly adopted learning platform – Aula – supporting a challenge-based learning environment and enhanced the quality of teaching from 77.0% to 83.4% (National Student Survey, 2021) and from 79% to 90% (Module Evaluation Questionnaires, 2021).

Traditionally, assessments at CUL had primarily a summative function (assessment of learning), mostly disconnected from the learning process. With the generation of grades being the priority, the importance of providing formative feedback was largely omitted (Bound and Soler, 2016) leading to student dissatisfaction and poor feedback. To move towards an approach that directly assisted learning, a dedicated timetabled hour for assessment and feedback was introduced for every module. Although the research recommends this approach, not many institutions have adopted it.

This weekly scheduled hour provided an opportunity for academics to improve students' early engagement from week 1 through regular formative assessment activities and just-in-time feedback (Carless, 2015). This dedicated space provided the link between learning and assessment as well as providing a strong vehicle for learning (Marshall, JISC 2020). This model saw module evaluation improve from 83% to 91% and the NSS from 68% to 74% (2021 results).

Implementation of this teaching delivery model improved several aspects of student learning and engagement. The quality of classroom learning was enhanced as a result of an interactive and applied learning approach, providing an opportunity for students to engage as active learners.

Comments from students highlighted significant improvements in their experience. Through flipped blended learning, academics had opportunities to make the learning sessions more impactful and relevant. Teaching teams used different techniques and tools, e.g. short videos, quizzes and online discussion forums to engage students in learning.

The embedded timetabled assessment and feedback hour within the curriculum enabled students to receive regular feedback and support to improve their performance. The model encouraged the teaching teams to ensure that a clear link was made between the learning outcomes and the intended assessment. This paved the way for students to understand what was expected of them and how they needed to address those expectations. The value of regular feedback in improving overall performance was acknowledged by students through surveys and course hour sessions.

Key contributing factors to the success of this model were the close collaboration between the teaching teams and the consistency in implementation. A comprehensive support structure was put in place for academic and professional teams. A significant investment in professional development was made in all academics to support the introduction of the new delivery model. This was supported with the introduction of a weekly communication forum to share practices. Introducing this change was not easy. Mentoring and focused attention on academic development, improved transparency and communication across teams on campus.

This paper outlines an approach in rethinking the student learning journey that led to innovations in the teaching and learning delivery model.

Summary

Education leaders and directors across all higher education institutions, including business schools, are regularly encouraged to assess their pedagogy and delivery approach for its 'fitness for purpose' and 'value' for effective teaching. During the current pandemic this has been an imperative from institutional, student and governmental perspectives.

This paper outlines an approach in rethinking the student learning journey that led to innovations in the teaching and learning delivery model. The case study illustrates how old traditional models of student learning were found to be no longer as effective as they used to be.

This paper contributes to the rethinking of accepted practice of delivery models in business schools and demonstrates how an institution has designed and implemented a student-led delivery model which redefined classroom engagement, improved active learning and enhanced the support structure for assessment and feedback.

References

Abraham, M.H. & Simpson, M.D. Do not lose your students in large lectures: A five-step paper-based model to foster students' participation. MDPI, 27th July 2015

Beetham, H. & Sharpe, R. (2019). "Rethinking Pedagogy for a Digital Age: Principles and Practice of Design". 3rd Edition. Routledge

Biggs, J. & Tang, C. (2011). "Teaching for Quality Learning at University: What the student does". Society for Research into Higher Education and Open University Press. McGraw Hill.

Bound, D & Soler, R (2016) Sustainable assessment revisited. Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education , 41(3): 400 413.

Carless, D (2015). Excellence in University Assessment: Learning from Award-winning Practice. Abingdon UK : Routledge.

Carpenter, J.M. Effective teaching methods for large classes. J. Fam. Con. Sci. Educ. 2006; 24: 13–23. [Google Scholar] [Ref list]

JISC (2020). The Future of Assessment: five principles, five targets for 2025 – Spring 2020

JISC (2020). The Student Digital Experience Insight Survey – UK Higher Education (HE) survey finding

Marshall, S. (2020). "A Handbook for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education: Enhancing Academic Practice". Fifth Edition. Routledge.

Ryan, A. & Tilbury, D. (2013). Flexible Pedagogies: New Pedagogical Ideas. HEA.

THE 3CS OF ASYNC: EDUCATORS AS CREATORS, CURATORS AND CONNECTORS

Dr Rikke Duus, Lecturer and Research Fellow, UCL School of Management
Dr Mike Cooray, Professor of Strategy, Ashridge Executive Education at Hult International Business School

Our role as educators in higher education must continue to evolve. Not just to design and deliver relevant educational content, but also to ensure heightened engagement and excitement amongst learners. As educators we must also continue to help students build and develop new skills, some of which are now essential to operate successfully in a diverse and hyperconnected digital environment.

As part of the approach to digital education, we have introduced the '3Cs of Async' framework in which we propose that the modern academic in higher education can take on three roles: namely to be a 'Creator', 'Curator' and 'Connector'. Educators can use these roles as 'lenses' to design and develop impactful digital learning experiences that engage students, facilitate digital collaboration and encourage the attainment of relevant skills – especially when students join from around the world. Our '3Cs of Async' framework has also been published by Harvard Business Publishing Education.

The 3Cs approach can assist fellow educators to plan, design and develop asynchronous course material, including audio, video and interactive features, and align with online live sessions to ensure engagement and relevance. Whilst the 3Cs is helpful to underpin the development of impactful and engaging asynchronous material, it is important to highlight that digital education should combine several educational elements across asynchronous and synchronous modes.

Adopting the '3Cs of Async' and taking on the roles of Creators, Curators and Connectors provides a unique approach to the development of async, video-based content and material that drives high levels of student engagement, excitement and learning.

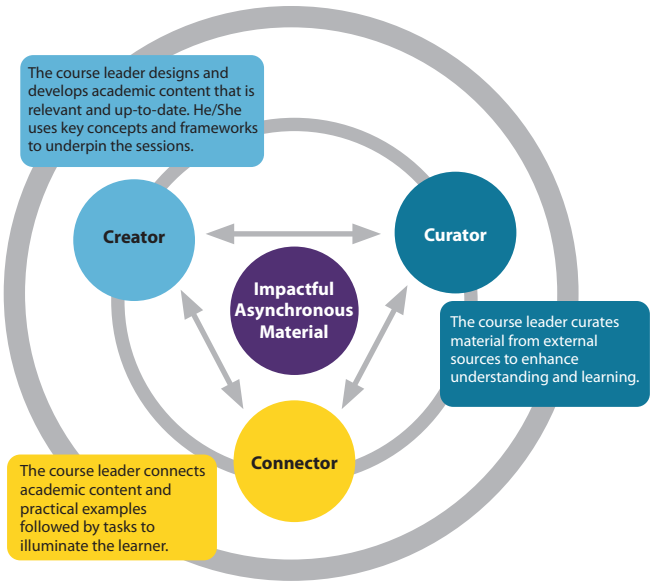


Figure 1: The '3Cs of Async'

Creator

As a Creator, the course leader selects the most appropriate theoretical concepts and frameworks for the session being designed. This will form the core content of the asynchronous material and support students to grasp the fundamentals of the subject area. Although the course leader may be comfortable with the academic content that is to be shared with students, it is important to keep in mind that students are now a passive audience and real-time interaction and discussion when consuming this asynchronous content is often limited. As such, the asynchronous videos and other content need to be not only insightful, but also able to captivate students and engage them continually.

Examples of Creator activities include:

- Atmospheric recording in relevant places/contexts
- Embedded frameworks and concepts within videos
- Step-by-step application of business example to a framework

Curator

As a Curator, the course leader seeks to enhance students' understanding and help them make sense of the key academic concepts that have been presented.

The second role that course leaders need to take on when designing and developing asynchronous material is to be a Curator. As a Curator, the course leader seeks to enhance students' understanding and help them make sense of the key academic concepts that have been presented. The main task of the course leader is to identify and source relevant and reliable content from secondary sources that can be integrated into the new asynchronous videos. This can include insight from market reports, short video case studies and expert interviews, which bring to life real-world applications of the academic concepts that have been presented by the course leader in the role of Creator.

Examples of Curator activities include:

- Static case studies
- Expert interviews conducted by the course leader
- Video case studies with built-in activities and reflection questions
- Company insight via website scrolls

Connector

As a Connector, the goal for the course leader is to connect the students with timely examples and critical debates, so that the students will be encouraged and enticed to explore further, discuss and debate with their peers, and undertake additional research to achieve a deeper level of understanding. Taking on the role as a Connector is essential as it encourages students to become engaged in current debates, develop their own stance and take a greater degree of ownership of their knowledge acquisition. This can be done by using credible news articles, expert or CEO interviews, opinion pieces, or any other relevant material that is central to engaging the learner in a critical debate and which reflect issues of importance at the time of study. The course leader can also engage more directly with students by setting reflection questions, activities and task briefings, which, again, help to connect students and their thinking with current issues and debates.

Examples of Connector activities include:

- Embedding recent news articles into asynchronous videos
- Embedding recent news video clips into asynchronous videos
- Task briefings, reflection questions, and activities

Impact on Students:

- Using the '3Cs of Async' to develop the digital education material creates an engaging and impactful student learning experience (supported by student feedback, reflections and performance in assessments)
- The development of the digital learning material has ensured that students across the world have continued to engage in their learning despite the impact of the pandemic and have had rich opportunities to collaborate and share knowledge with fellow students
- Students have acquired a multitude of new digital skills and competences that are relevant to the new world of work with remote working, virtual collaboration and digital presentations

Impact on Educators:

- Adopting the '3Cs of Async' approach in the design and development of asynchronous digital learning experiences can assist in the development of new digital skills and competences for educators
- The development of asynchronous learning material creates an opportunity for educators to review and re-visit their teaching material and approach it from 'fresh' perspectives
- Thinking of oneself as a Creator, Curator and Connector facilitates a new 'playground' for self-learning and new ways of creating co-learning experiences with students by not being restricted to traditional ways of lecturing and teaching.

The '3Cs of Async' is a practical framework for the planning, designing and development of asynchronous material. It encourages educators to review and re-visit their course content by taking on the three roles of 'Creator', 'Curator' and 'Connector' and can lead to the development of exciting and self-propelled digital learning experiences for students.

Students have acquired a multitude of new digital skills and competences that are relevant to the new world of work

BUSINESS NOT AS USUAL: ADAPTING A BUSINESS SCHOOL TO HYBRID LEARNING IN RESPONSE TO THE PANDEMIC

Dr Barry Avery CMBE, Director of Learning and Teaching, Kingston University
Dr Becky Lees CMBE, Head of Department for Accounting, Finance and Informatics, Kingston University
Ian Roberts, Head of Kingston Business School, Kingston University

Aim

This case study explores the response we developed in moving all of a business school's teaching to a hybrid model as a consequence of the pandemic; both in the initial urgent move to 100% online teaching in the first lockdown, through to the preparedness required in anticipating the move to a hybrid model with part face-to-face, part online teaching. In this approach most students experienced half on-campus participation, half online synchronous sessions, underpinned by asynchronous activities, but our plan anticipated sudden interruptions to attendance and the possibility that some students would not be able to attend at all. Participants will be introduced to the frameworks that were applied, the implementation approach and best practice suggestions that have been derived from the experience.

Methodology

When moving into a learning environment where there will be significant changes to the types of instruction that will be possible, a carefully designed approach is imperative to avoid a loss of engagement, participation and learning community. In this session we outline the theoretical models we utilised to underpin and scaffold the movement from the traditional classroom-based learning to a hybrid model with both online and on campus teaching.

Within the school, a course-centric focus ensured we were mindful of the student experience from a holistic perspective as well as considering each individual module.

Our approach prioritised a Networked Learning perspective, one that promoted connections and the development of social capital between the stakeholders and their learning community (Goodyear, 2001). Garrison's Community of Inquiry model (2011) and Laurrilard's Conversational Framework (Young and Perović, 2016) were adopted to provide structured learning community models and a learning design approach.

Within the school, a course-centric focus ensured we were mindful of the student experience from a holistic perspective as well as considering each individual module. Through tailored continuing professional development sessions, each course team was introduced to the principles of Networked Learning and the Community of Inquiry model. Each team used Laurrilard's ABC toolkit to plan out their learning approach for the academic year, ensuring a comprehensive and balanced curriculum utilising a range of appropriate activities, such as collaboration, investigation and practice underpinned by the development and integration of social, teaching and cognitive presences through the educational experience.

The construction of such learning design plans also supported the school's quality assurance process, providing tangible plans, outputs that demonstrated the prioritisation of the holistic learning experience, and opportunities for peer appraisal and collaboration. This supported the business school's commitment to ensuring that the new approach was not simply a transference of in-class lectures to be delivered online, but rather a comprehensive set of integrated and aligned activities designed to support students' learning experience.

This innovation is being evaluated through a triangulation of both qualitative and quantitative methods, that include standard student feedback mechanisms such as module evaluation questionnaires, staff feedback and statistics derived from participation activity in learning management systems and engagement with module content.

Contribution

This case study offers the following contributions centred around three key stakeholders: staff, students and the institution by providing:

- Practical frameworks grounded in learning theory to support staff in preparing for a hybrid learning environment
- Innovative and engaging curricular design for both in-class and online learning
- Quality control in the new paradigm.

In particular, the key outputs from the approaches taken provide:

- Theoretical and practical frameworks that promote appropriate learning design in an environment that employs activities and assessment methods within online and on-campus educational settings
- Structure and support for staff in scaffolding classes with an unfamiliar setting
- A demonstrable parity of online and traditional learning activities to ensure that students are still receiving a quality and comprehensive education
- A model of learning and teaching that harnesses the advantages of online learning rather than a simple transference of material from one medium to another
- Facilitating the creation of learning communities to instigate and sustain student engagement with the subject materials, the tutor and each other, of particular importance with those in their first year

Key takeaways

We are working at the intersection of traditional and novel learning environments in a way that prioritises the stakeholder experience; proving students with the skills to learn and thrive within blended learning environments and supporting academics in their design of their educational experience.

This case study provides demonstrates how educational frameworks, theories and strategies can be rapidly applied to change the activities that have long existed in the academy; how blended and hybrid learning designs do more than complement traditional face-to-face activities but also integrate and extend them to provide impact.

References

Garrison, D. R. (2011). E-Learning in the 21st Century (2nd ed.). London: Routledge.

Goodyear, P., Jones, C., Asensio, M., Hodgson, V., & Steeples, C. (2001). Effective networked learning in higher education: notes and guidelines. Retrieved May, 17, 2006 from http://www.csalt.lancs.ac.uk/jisc/guidelines_final.doc.

Laurillard, D. (2012). Teaching as a Design Science. Oxford: Routledge.

Young, C., & Perović, N. (2016). Rapid and Creative Course Design: As Easy as ABC? Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences, 228, 390–395.

DIGITALHACK METHODOLOGY: SUPER-CHARGED LEARNING THROUGH DIGITAL COLLABORATION

Dr Mike Cooray, Professor of Strategy, Ashridge Executive Education at Hult International Business School
Dr Rikke Duus, Lecturer and Research Fellow, UCL School of Management

With the acceleration of learning in digital spheres, faculty need to find new and impactful ways to engage students within digital learning environments, enhance virtual collaboration, and create opportunities to gain experience of solving complex business and societal challenges.

The DigitalHack methodology can be used by fellow educators to design, plan and execute highly engaging and impactful learning experiences that enable students to explore interdisciplinary challenges, use digital technologies to develop prototypes and, in the span of three to six hours, pitch new solutions. We have delivered our DigitalHacks mainly for executive learners in management development programmes, MBAs and graduate degree programmes within topic areas such as digital business transformation, urban transformation, and the future of digital retail. The DigitalHack methodology has also been published by Harvard Business Publishing Education.

At its core, the DigitalHack strives to:

- Create high-intensity learning environments to facilitate problem solving
- Enhance students' digital fluency through the use of new technologies
- Incorporate peer learning and competitiveness across teams

The DigitalHack is well suited to the continued transition to digital education as it can be delivered across geographical regions and time zones. It enables faculty to design more comprehensive learning experiences with multiple outputs, while also creating a time-pressured and business-real environment for students to learn, trial and experiment within.

Digital platforms

We deliver our DigitalHacks on Zoom and use breakout rooms to give each team its own collaborative space. We use features available in Zoom, such as chat, polls and whiteboard to interact with student teams, while we also enable teams to use virtual collaborative platforms, such as Mural and Miro, to further intensify their teamwork. Importantly, we also design a digital hub website for each DigitalHack. This is a dedicated digital hub that all teams have access to and contains essential resources (videos, reports, whitepapers, and journal articles, for example) to give teams fresh insight and relevant secondary data.

Acceleration Tasks

During a DigitalHack, teams work to complete three to five Acceleration Tasks, depending on the length of the DigitalHack. These are completed under time pressure, requiring teams to collaborate effectively to meet deadlines. The Acceleration Tasks are designed to drive teams' progress forward. These can be customised to the particular DigitalHack theme and learner group. As an example, a DigitalHack could have the following five Acceleration Tasks:

1. Industry impact analysis
2. Mapping the business ecosystem
3. Ideating new strategic solutions
4. Assessing market/customer opportunity
5. Creating a pitch for key stakeholders

Students gain an array of digital skills and competences that are ever more relevant for the 'virtual workplace'

During the Acceleration Tasks students are given the opportunity to enhance their digital skills by using multiple technologies, such as GoogleDocs, Mindmeister, Lucidchart, Visme, Canva, Prezi, proto.io and Apple Clips, to develop each of the outputs. The digital tools are used within the teams to share knowledge, develop mind maps and other digital outputs (for example, prototypes of landing pages and mobile apps), which contribute towards the final pitch presentation.

As teams complete their outputs for the Acceleration Tasks, they share these outputs with the faculty, who ensure they are uploaded to the Digital Hub in real time for all students to see. Each team has a dedicated space on the website. This approach creates a transparent learning experience, enhances active peer learning and intensifies the competitive nature of the DigitalHack with live updates of teams' work on the Digital Hub website.

Impact on Students and Faculty

There are clear benefits to learners from being involved in a DigitalHack as well as to faculty:

Impact on students:

- Students gain experience of working in virtual teams on an intensive collaborative and complex project similar to projects that they may be required to participate in organisations
- Students gain an array of digital skills and competences that are ever more relevant for the 'virtual workplace'
- Students learn through on-going feedback and support from the faculty team throughout the DigitalHack and as they complete the 'Acceleration Tasks'.

Impact on faculty:

- There is an opportunity for faculty to design DigitalHacks run between universities or between the university and organisations. Due to the virtual nature of the DigitalHack, it can be delivered across geographical boundaries and time zones.
- Faculty have the opportunity to design a DigitalHack scenario which is of particular interest to them and their research/wider engagement which makes it exciting to work with the student teams and support them with the 'Acceleration Tasks' and final pitch
- Provides an opportunity to have students apply multiple concepts/frameworks and analytical tools that have been taught in previous sessions in the context of the specific DigitalHack scenario

Based on our experiences of designing and delivering multiple DigitalHacks to audiences across degree programmes and geographical locations and based on themes such as digital business transformation, urban transformation and the future of digital retail, we have found that this methodology is effective in creating an exciting and impactful learning experience for students.

The DigitalHack facilitates the development of multiple skills that are particularly relevant in today's complex, fast-moving and digital business environment, including working in virtual teams, analysing data for decision-making, developing digital outputs (e.g. prototypes and mock-ups), making sense of interdisciplinary and complex challenges, undertaking industry impact analyses and developing business ecosystems. These are invaluable skills and competences for undergraduate, postgraduate as well as executive learners.

ENHANCING STUDENT ENGAGEMENT THROUGH TECHNOLOGY

Dr Dominic Appiah, PhD, SFHEA, Business Lecturer, Arden University
Dr Emmanuel Murasiranwa, PhD, MIH, SFHEA, Senior Lecturer, PTL Level 5, KTP & Research, Arden University

Engagement is imperative for students because it provides focus, enhances critical thinking, learning rates, retention and ultimately, student achievement. However, the big question is: how can academics engage students to improve achievement? Research has demonstrated that active, cooperative, and collaborative learning approaches have distinct advantages in higher education (McClean and Crowe, 2017; Johnson, 2001, Smith et al., 2005; Winkworth and Gannon-Leary, 1999), yet they are often hampered with large class sizes and inappropriate application (McLean and Crowe, 2017). McLean and Crowe propose solutions that combine personal technologies with cloud-based technologies to facilitate more interactive and collaborative learning experiences.

Coates (2007) advises that student engagement is a broad phenomenon encompassing students operating in dynamic environments. Robust evidence, in theory, provides links between engagement, satisfaction, achievement and retention (Hardman, 2021). A study by Instructure (2020) in the EMEA, US and APAC regions reveals six key trends to achieve student engagement and success (see figure 1 below).

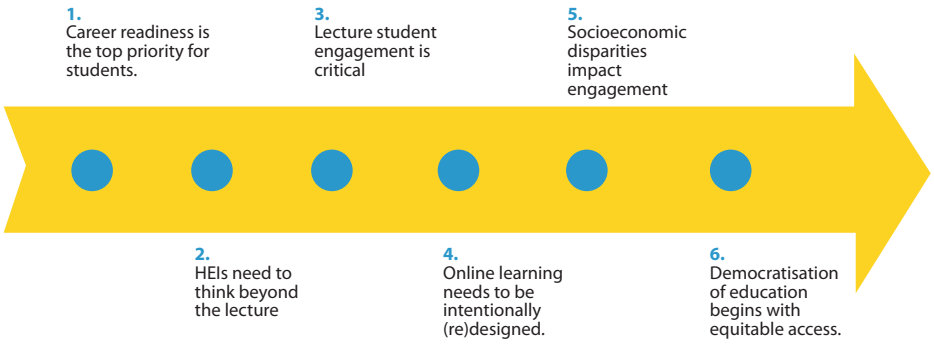


Figure 1: Key global trends that students, administrators and academics feel are important to student success and engagement
[Source: Adapted from Instructure, 2020 p. 9]

A similar study by Inside Higher Ed and Hanover Research reveals that 81% of college and university leaders considered maintaining student engagement their biggest challenge, heightened by the recent switch to online learning (Rev.com, 2021). The central premise is that the more students are engaged in their learning, the more likely they are to attend, participate actively, thrive beyond expectations, be motivated to stay and persevere, achieve improved grades and report higher satisfaction levels.

Hardman (2021) emphasises adopting high impact, technology-mediated practices (i.e. active learning, collaboration, feedback and teacher presence) that unlock student engagement and outcomes.

Garrick et al. (2013) advise that the mere introduction of technology to the pedagogical process is inadequate to enhance student learning. Instead, careful instructor consideration in redesigning lessons to blend content, pedagogical and technological knowledge effectively can deliver positive and transformational learning experiences (Baepler and Walker, 2014; Brooks, 2021; Garrick et al., 2013). Thus, instructors should integrate their subject content knowledge with an in-depth comprehension of appropriate pedagogical understanding of practices and processes and awareness of various enabling technologies (Garrick et al., 2013). In the same vein, Selingo and Silagadze (2021) advise that although technology offers enormous opportunities to enhance the learning experience, it needs to be applied by experienced educators who bring so much more to the table than the content itself.

Aims and significance

By connecting with students using relevant technologies, tutors can design and create a conducive climate for deeper, more relevant and transformative learning

Drawing from the above content, academics must apply technology in the right ways to have the desired positive impacts on student engagement, achievement, retention, and progression. This paper contends that to use technology correctly, a shift is necessary for the education strategy to focus on reskilling and upskilling of both educators and students in digital literacy and technology application. In particular, students are often a forgotten constituency, yet their buy-in is central to success. As Selingo and Silgadze (2021) point out, nothing can replace an experienced educator in the proper application of technology to teaching and learning. Thus, the delivery of genuinely active learning experiences is dependent on three distinctively human qualities delivered by an educator: empathy, insights and experience, as explained below (Lawrence and Sinkey, 2021).

Empathy refers to the ability of the educator to relate to and share the feelings of students. By connecting with students using relevant technologies, tutors can design and create a conducive climate for deeper, more relevant and transformative learning (Waranyuwat, 2020). In terms of insights, tutors using appropriate digital technologies can collect formative and summative feedback. Such feedback is imperative for tutors to understand students' key success factors and inform the (re)design and maximisation of learning experiences (Lawrence and Sinkey, 2021). Experience relates to prior knowledge and skills the tutor has acquired through the practical application of digital technologies. Experience tutors can better apply their own experiences to help students see the big picture and develop their skills, grit and resilience to discover solutions for themselves in a turbulent digitised world (Selingo and Silgadze, 2021).

Overview of Nearpod and Ment.io

The current paper describes and demonstrates the relevance of using two web-based technologies: Nearpod, which enhances interactivity, and Ment.io for improved collaboration in blended learning. This preliminary study illustrates how academics across all disciplines can integrate content, pedagogical and technological considerations to enhance student learning experiences. Nearpod is very useful for its interactivity, whether in the classroom or virtually. The web-based application is easy to set up and use; it allows for an interactive presentation, including quizzes, polls, videos, collaborative board, assignments and more to be shared with the entire cohort. Students can access presentations through a code. Nearpod may be tutor-led or student-led and works on any device with an internet connection (nearpod.com, 2021).

Similarly, Ment.io is another web-based application accessible from all devices that fosters credible collaborative thinking, providing a transparent and inclusive discussion board both in and out of the classroom. Ment.io allows academics to create discussions to be shared with students, after which answers, comments, and votes are collected via the application. Ment.io offers inclusivity, ensuring that each student's voice is heard in

a discussion and guarantees collaborative thinking. The software promotes efficiency, allowing artificial intelligence (AI) to suggest credible personalised assessments, in-depth student grading profiles and instant feedback. Also, Ment.io ensures transparency as a summary of discussions and analyses is generated to provide an in-depth understanding of the class (Ment.io, 2021).

Theoretical framework: Technology Acceptance Model

Numerous factors are linked to the influence of the acceptance and adoption of technology (Davies et al., 1989) in the learning process at the higher education level. The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) is considered a relevant framework for identifying and assessing the acceptance level of learners. The TAM model enables the prediction of learners' acceptance of web-based applications and depiction of the motives for their active use and engagement with the applications during the learning process.

The TAM model combines two other well-known models: the Theory of Reasoned Action and the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Davis, 1989). The integrated model is extended to accommodate other factors (Davies et al., 1989), considered significant in the context of this study, as indicated in Figure 2.

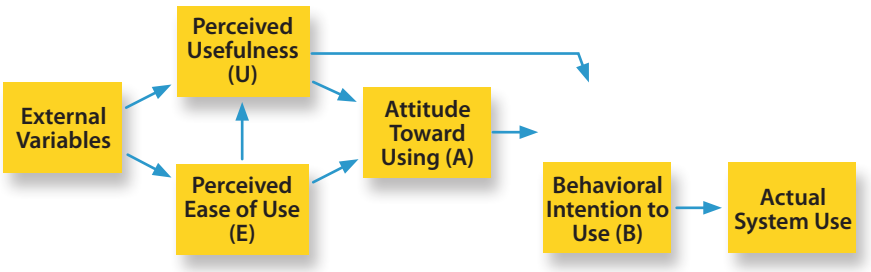


Figure 2: Technology Acceptance Model

External variables influence the perceived ease of use and relevance of the model, which shapes learners' attitudes towards technology adoption. The attitudes then influence the behaviour intention that impacts the actual system acceptance and use. Among the several determinants, two main ones significantly impact technology acceptance. These include the perceived usefulness and ease of use (Davis, 1989). Therefore, for a particular application to be widely accepted, it must generate significant perceived usefulness for learners' particularly in the context of blended learners, to find it relevant compared to others with relative difficulty of use. The TAM model was initially developed and used within organisational contexts; however, it has been adapted and applied in different situations (Gefen et al., 2003). Specifically, the TAM model has been widely used in academia to understand and measure learners' level of acceptance of web-based applications.

Conclusions and academic implications

First, this paper suggests that properly applied digital technology provides the requisite mechanism and tools to engage students holistically both in and out of class. Indeed, Ment.io and Nearpod digital technologies can be useful for the live tracking of student participation in class, engagement with content and peers, attendance and performance. The sheer level of insights into the student experience, engagement, achievement, and progress provides experienced tutors with powerful opportunities to refine and improve the learning experience. Ultimately, technology helps academics engage students more effectively at the human level by personalising the feedback. Besides, technology enhances

academics' ability to experiment, blend learning activities and content from various angles to challenge students beyond 'what is in the assessment' (Lambert, 2018 cited in Selingo and Silagadze, 2021).

Secondly, this paper advises that effective teaching and learning cannot be based on one-size-fits-all approaches. Students do not learn in a bubble, unaffected by their lived experiences. Drawing on this and within this paper's context, technology enables the customisation of course design and content to deliver transformative learning experiences in a holistic way. Web-based applications, therefore, complement innovations in blended learning to better engage learners in a way that cultivates the distinctively human qualities required for success in the modern digitised learning environment. Figure 3 demonstrates how technology may play a central role in enhancing student engagement and outcomes. It establishes the 'technology connection' to engagement through interactivity within and between key stakeholders. Interactivity requires an appropriate and enabling platform; this is where technology plays a role. When considering technology, decision-makers should look both internally and externally to determine:

- What technological tools within their learning management system (LMS) (e.g. Moodle, Blackboard) will best support the desired interactions and engagement?
- Whether any technologies outside the LMS (e.g. Nearpod, Ment.io) would better support desired interactions, engagement, and drive outcomes.
- Which outside technologies do they plan to incorporate into their course?

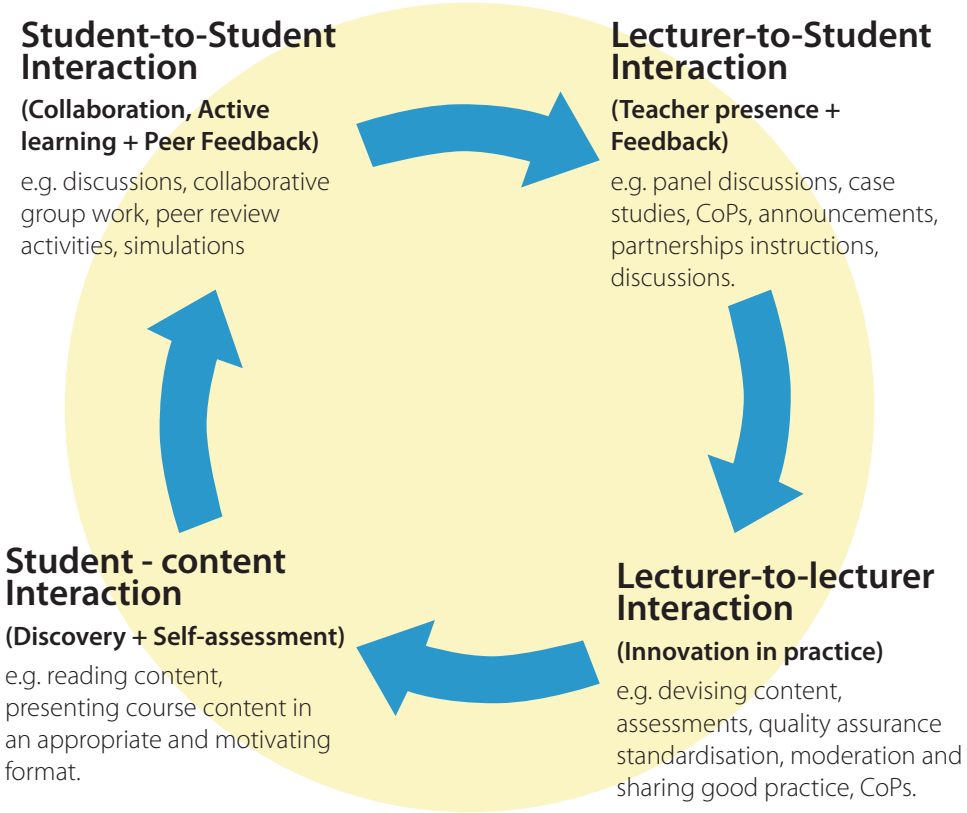


Figure 3: How technology enhances engagement, interactivity and student outcomes

In this context, Ment.io and Nearpod technologies provide potential, practical and economical ways to unlock student engagement and outcomes, as explained in Figure 4.

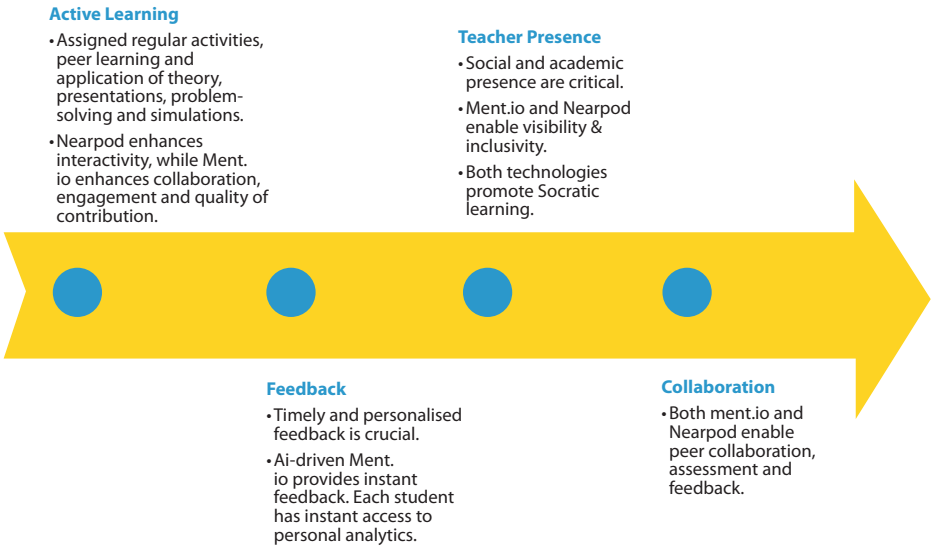


Figure 4: How Ment.io & Nearpod will impact learning by enhancing High Engagement Practices (HEPs)

Figure 4 demonstrates the importance of adopting a Socratic learning strategy, where the learning experience is a shared dialogue between academics and students through discussions to evaluate students' values, principles and beliefs. Technology enhances academics' ability to experiment, blend learning activities and challenge students beyond 'what is in the assessment' (Lambert, 2018 cited in Selingo and Silagadze, 2021). Thus, the delivery of genuinely active learning experiences is dependent on three distinctively human qualities delivered by an educator; empathy, insights and experience, as explained earlier (Lawrence and Sinkey, 2021).

Finally, developing students' capacities and competencies to self-learn, digitally engage and collaborate with various stakeholders is imperative from an industry perspective. This paper contends that higher education institutions (HEIs) have a crucial role in preparing students for employment in the increasingly digitised world. This requires a paradigm shift accompanied by an overhauling of the traditional pedagogical processes and practices to align with a new digital technology-mediated focus to develop the following transferable skills that learners require for survival in the digitised employment world:

- Self-learning capacities
- Digital fluency
- Cognitive skills including problem-solving, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation
- Socio-emotional (communicative and collaborative) and intercultural dexterity.

Digital skills will become indispensable while life-long learning, adaptability and agility will become the new normal. Therefore, the development of employability skills mediated by digital technology serves to future-proof jobs. Artificial intelligence-powered machines cannot yet replace such skills. Hence, transferable skills are likely to grow in importance for the future. Thus, academic intervention efforts to bridge the skills gap should be based on experiential, collaborative, active social learning pedagogical approaches mediated by appropriate technology to enhance digital fluency and employability skills.

Overall, preliminary evidence in this study demonstrates that technology, used appropriately, can innovate pedagogy and unlock active learning through engagement, collaboration and interactivity that in turn drive desired student outcomes. Thus, technology should be viewed as complementary rather than a threat to dynamic classroom teaching and learning, which ensures that students come to class prepared.

References

Baepler, P. and Walker, J.D., 2014. Active learning classrooms and educational alliances: Changing relationships to improve learning. New Directions for Teaching and Learning, 137, pp. 27-40.

Brooks, D.C., 2012. Space and consequences: The impact of different formal learning spaces on instructor and student behaviour. Journal of Learning Spaces, 1 (2).

Coates, H., 2007. A model of online and general campus-based student engagement. Assessment

and Evaluation in Higher Education, 32 (2), pp. 121-141

Daly, G. and Turner, A., 2021. Leaving lectures behind makes sense for our university – here's why.

[online] Times Higher Education (THE). Available at:

<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/opinion/leaving-lectures-behind-makes-sense-our- university-heres-why> [Accessed 26 June 2021].

Davis, F. D., 1989. Perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and user acceptance of information technology. MIS Quarterly, 319-340.

Davis, F. D., Bagozzi, R. P., and Warshaw, P. R., 1989. "User acceptance of computer technology: a comparison of two theoretical models", Management Science, 35(8), pp. 982-1003.

Garrick, R., Villasmil, L., Dell, E. & Hart, R., 2013. Creating Technology-Rich Learning Environments for the Classroom. In Charles Wankel, Patrick Blessinger (Eds.) *Increasing Student Engagement and Retention Using Classroom Technologies: Classroom Response Systems and Mediated Discourse Technologies* (Cutting-edge Technologies in Higher Education, Volume 6 Part E) Emerald Group Publishing Limited, 263 - 306.

Gefen, D., Karahanna, E., and Straub, D. W., 2003. "Trust and TAM in online shopping: an integrated model," MIS Quarterly, Vol. 27, No. 1, pp. 51-90.

Hardman, P., 2021. Using technology to innovate pedagogy & improve student outcomes.

[Blog] AULA, Available at: <https://blog.aula.education/linking-theory-with-practice-how-research- informs-aulas-approach-to-impactful-learning-443a70c19842> [Accessed 27 June 2021].

Instructure.com, 2020. *State of Student Success and Engagement in Higher Education*. [online] Instructure.com. Available at: <https://www.instructure.com/canvas/state-of-student-success> [Accessed 18 March 2021].

Johnson, C. M., 2001. A survey of current research on online communities of practice. The Internet and Higher Education, 4(1), 45-60.

Lawrence, Z. and Sinkey, A., 2021. *Start the Semester Inclusively: 7 Ways to Set All Students Up for Success on Day One*. [online] Hbsp.harvard.edu. Available at: <https://hbsp.harvard.edu/inspiring- minds/7-inclusive-ways-to-set-all-students-up-for-success-on-day-one> [Accessed 18 March 2021].

Ment.io, 2021. The new standard for student engagement & assessment. [online] Ment.io. Available at: <https://www.ment.io/> [Accessed 2 September 2021].

Ment.io, 2020. Planning your Hybrid course to increase student engagement. [online video] Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dnxwf3l1GsA> [Accessed 27 June 2021].

Nearpod, 2021. Nearpod: You'll wonder how you taught without it. [online] Nearpod.com. Available at: <https://www.nearpod.com> [Accessed 2 September 2021].

Rev.com, 2021. T*ransitioning to Effective Online Learning: The Playbook - Rev.* [online] Rev.com. Available at: <https://www.rev.com/blog/transitioning-to-effective-online-learning-the-playbook> [Accessed 18 March 2021].

Selingo, J. and Silagadze, M., 2021. *The Pandemic Hit Colleges Hard But Surfaced the Potential of Blended Learning.* [online] Hbsp.harvard.edu. Available at: <https://hbsp.harvard.edu/inspiring- minds/the-pandemic-hit-colleges-hard-but-surfaced-the-potential-of-blended-learning> [Accessed 18 March 2021].

Smith, P., Barty, K. and Stacey, E., 2005. Limitations of an established community of practice in developing online innovation, Breaking down boundaries: international experience in open, distance and flexible education. Proceedings of the 17th ODLAA conference, pp. 1-6, ODLAA, Adelaide.

Winkworth, I. and Gannon-Leary, P., 1999. Library performance measures: government perspectives. Paper presented at the 3rd Northumbria International Conference on Performance Measurement in Libraries and Information Services, pp. 61-65, Longhirst, Northumberland, August 26-30.

VIRTUAL CELLS FOR COLLABORATIVE AND EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING IN DISTANCE EDUCATION

Dr Garry Blair, Principal Lecturer, Manchester Metropolitan University
Dr Rosane Pagano, Principal Lecturer, Manchester Metropolitan University

Introduction

Project management is an applied discipline and the use of simulations provides the opportunity to allow experiential learning to occur, focused on selected academic themes. An artificial project 'reality' can be created that affords learning opportunities within defined boundaries.

Specified learning objectives can be utilised, enabling the student to experience the activity of running a project, under simulated conditions that approximate a defined 'real world' environment.

Virtual teams were allocated from students in three countries, with each team having a member from each country

Several formats for the simulation were used for the postgraduate students. The actual project management simulation software is licensed by a private company. The different forms of organisation, used were:

- The teams were located in a classroom with each team having a separate workspace, comprising a set of adjacent tables
- Virtual teams were allocated from students in three countries, with each team having a member from each country
- The teams collaborate via a web communications platform, using 'breakout rooms' to house each team, constituting the 'virtual cells'. These are separate virtual spaces, utilised to permit team collaboration and experiential learning by engagement with the project management simulation
- The students in the virtual teams were spatially separate, in several instances they were in different countries thus comprising global teams. The delivery of teaching was the 'distance education' mode with sessions provided online and no reliance on campus attendance, thus suited to the constraints of the pandemic.

Links to theory

One of the principal objectives of the virtual project management simulation was to demonstrate links to academic themes, hence validate theory via experiential learning. The key theories were taught on the postgraduate courses and the simulations provided the opportunity to develop a practical understanding of these concepts by engaging with the project management simulations.

The intention was to operationalise the theories, thus demonstrating the link between cause and effect through the simulation. The student teams' actions and reactions all had quantifiable consequences for the project outcomes. These sessions also provided valuable experience for the participants in a 'safe', controlled environment. The usual risks of running an actual project could therefore be avoided. This also afforded the opportunity to develop their portfolio of skills and hence enhance their employability in many cases.

The simulations required the application of both 'hard' and 'soft' skills: the former comprising technical skills, such as planning, that can be developed by formal courses; and the latter, 'people' skills such as negotiation, that are usually acquired experientially. The simulation allows both types of skills to be developed, via the project process. A plan is required in the project scenario and the ability to manage and make decisions within teams is needed to successfully negotiate the exercise. The opportunity for experiential

The simulation activities could help to overcome the problem of learning not being applied and help to develop skills for utilisation within organisations.

learning is afforded (Kolb, 1984): decisions are required and taken by the participants; feedback received and reviewed; alternatives are offered and discussed; then a course of action selected and executed. The cumulative outcomes of these decisions are converted into 'scores' on key project indicators, which permit the relative success of teams' performances to be assessed.

The intention is to encourage learning at different 'levels', including process and teamwork (McClory et al, 2017), creating the opportunity for systematic knowledge acquisition and retention (Duffield and Whitty, 2016; Drechsler and Breth, 2019) at various 'layers' of a project, such as strategy, governance and operations in a virtual environment (Winch and Cha, 2020).

The requirement for a suitable blend of team roles can be stated. The 'Business Chemistry' research by Deloitte business consultants can be utilised to illustrate this team aspect (Johnson Vickberg et al, 2017). The team needs members to take specific roles to work effectively (and members can assume several styles). The requirement is to reconcile conflicts and obtain a contribution from all members. This assists in understanding the operation of the team for the simulation and analysing the outcomes.

A model of virtual project teams is used to illustrate the formation of the team in terms of the required communications (Henderson et al, 2016). These can be assigned to the team formation stages (Tuckman and Jensen, 1977). The team formation is prepared by 'prelaunch' communications, including the project and task definition. The establishment of team roles and responsibilities then occurs as norms are defined and trust developed. Team performance is established as communications norms are aligned within the team. Team outcomes should be delivered, with accompanying team and individual performance satisfaction. The result should be the successful execution of the required project tasks for the simulation.

The simulation activities could help to overcome the problem of learning not being applied and help to develop skills for utilisation within organisations. This should provide a virtual learning platform to personalise the learning experience; encourage socialisation through forming networks to engage in teamwork; contextualise this learning, in order to stimulate professional development; and authenticate the process by recording the participants' engagement and outcomes, ultimately leading to the award of a qualification validated by the university (Moldoveanu and Narayandas, 2019).

Simulation setup

The virtual simulations have the following main phases to prepare and execute the exercise:

3.1 Preparation

A pre-meeting is arranged and the documentation distributed beforehand in order to ensure all participants are briefed. The objectives and format of the event are discussed. The simulation usually occurs over the course of a single day.

3.2 Event

An initial briefing is delivered to the whole group in one virtual classroom. The Planning Phase then commences, with each team collaborating in a separate virtual room (breakout room or virtual cell).

The teams have to plan a project to develop an E-commerce website using the available staffing resources in the simulation software. Teams have to make resourcing decisions, using the stated information in the virtual office of the simulation. The execution phase

is then enacted in these separate virtual rooms. The project commences and decisions are required from the teams while planning continues, with the opportunity to make adjustments as the project progresses. Students can access project tools, such as the risk analysis and project plan, to review progress. The team's 'real-time' scores of key criteria, comprising cost, planning, quality and motivation, are displayed. There is a break for lunch, followed by review of progress in a virtual classroom for all teams. The planning and execution phases are then repeated, with each team in its own virtual room.

3.3 Review

There is a final performance review at the end of simulation, with all the teams assembled in one virtual classroom. The results are given and prizes presented to the winners. A final summary of the potential learning from the project is provided, illustrating links to theory;

3.4 Configuration

The sessions were delivered via a web communications platform with a single virtual room for full class briefings and individual virtual rooms for the team activities. Each team had a leader who ran the simulation and shared the screen. Ideally all team members' cameras and microphones should be switched on in these sessions.

The organisers can check on progress dynamically, throughout the simulation, via a special link showing a summary of the scores and components. Organisers can respond to questions via the message facility, directly in the briefing sessions and in the team rooms. The simulations can be recorded in order to facilitate a review of the principal 'learning points'.

Summary of learning

Communication skills are especially emphasised, with other 'soft' skills such as negotiation and leadership being required for a successful team.

The virtual project management simulations develop ability and knowledge in the discipline of project management and stimulate learning in other areas. The ability to multi-task, manage technical issues and work in a virtual and global team are all developed by these exercises. Communication skills are especially emphasised, with other 'soft' skills such as negotiation and leadership being required for a successful team. The acquisition of knowledge was verified by a survey instrument in research conducted into the simulations (Pagano and Blair, 2014). A perceived increase in learning was demonstrated by the respondents.

Further research could be enacted into the benefits of these exercises considering a range of different scenarios and configurations, for example, regarding global virtual teams in respect of their operation and outcomes.

References

Drechsler, A. and Breth, S. (2019), "How to go global: a transformative process model for the transition towards globally distributed software development projects", International Journal of Project Management, 37: 941-955

Duffield, S. and Whitty, S.J. (2016), "How to apply the Systemic Lessons Learned Knowledge model to wire an organisation for the capability of storytelling", International Journal of Project Management, 34: 429–443

Henderson, L.S., Stackman, R.W. and Lindekilde, R. (2016), "The centrality of communications norm alignment, role clarity and trust in global project teams", International Journal of Project Management, 34: 1717-1730

Johnson Vickberg, S.M. and Christfort, K. (2017), "Pioneers, Drivers, Integrators, & Guardians", Harvard Business Review, 95 (2) March-April: 50-56

Kolb, D.A. (1984), Experiential Learning. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall in Easterby-Smith, M., Thorpe, R. and Lowe, A. (1991), Management Research: An Introduction. London: Sage

McClory, S., Read, M. and Labib, A. (2017), "Conceptualising the lessons-learned process in project management: Towards a triple-loop learning framework", International Journal of Project Management, 35: 1322–1335

Moldoveanu, M. and Narayandas, D. (2019), "The Future of Leadership Development", Harvard Business Review, 97 (2) March-April: 40–48

Pagano, R. and Blair, G. (2014). "Virtual project management: Evaluation of an e-learning environment." In Proceedings of the European Conference on e-Learning, ECEL Vol. 2014-January (pp. 378-384). Aalborg University, Denmark.

Tuckman, B. and Jensen, M. (1977), "Stages of Small-Group Development Revisited", Group & Organization Studies, 2 (4) December: 419–427

Winch, G.M. and Cha, J. (2020), "Owner challenges on major projects: The case of UK government", International Journal of Project Management, 38: 177-187

ONLINE PEER-MENTORING FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE

Dr Karine Mangion-Thornley, Senior Lecturer in Organisation Studies, University of the West of England

This case study examines how peer mentoring may support the development of cultural intelligence (CQ) for undergraduate students in BA International Business. It introduces online peer mentoring as an innovative approach to teaching and learning CQ in a highly diverse private higher education institution based in London (Regent's University London), composed of 85% of international students of more than 140 nationalities.

Mentoring is defined as an 'off-line help from one person to another in making significant transitions in knowledge, work or thinking'

CQ has continuously been identified as a critical capability for the development of future global leaders and the recruitment of young graduates (Soffel, 2016; Livermore and Van Dyne, 2015; Minocha, Hristov and Leahy-Harland, 2018). It has gained additional popularity through adaptations in university courses (Barnes, Smith and Hernández-Pozas, 2017; Fischer, 2011), organisational development (Rockstuhl et al., 2011), and internationalised training (Raver and Van Dyne, 2017; Lovvorn and Chen, 2011). However, business leaders often claim that graduates are insufficiently prepared to the global world of work (CBI and Pearson, 2019). This questions how CQ is fostered in higher education, especially in international business schools.

Mentoring in higher education

Mentoring is defined as an 'off-line help from one person to another in making significant transitions in knowledge, work or thinking' (Clutterbuck and Lane, 2004: 12). Mentoring is a reciprocal relationship, which may last over time and usually involves a difference in knowledge, power and experience between the mentor and mentee. By contrast, peer mentoring typically involves two persons at the same level in the organisation (Clutterbuck, 2014). Mentoring is widely used in higher education to develop academics and students, and is identified as a powerful tool to accelerate the learning experience (Ulanovsky and Pérez, 2017).

Developmental mentoring in higher education is based on four theoretical underpinnings (Clair, 1994). First, stage theory (Erikson, 1963) stipulates that different stages of development need key relationships. Second, motivation theory (Maslow, 1970), where mentoring helps develop relationships at work that motivate people to perform better. Third, social learning theory (Bandura, 1977) posits a less experienced person who collaborates with a more skilled colleague/peer becomes more competent through modelling and identification processes. Fourth, mentoring may support the development of reflective practice (Truijen and van Woerkom, 2008) by developing a better understanding of the relationships between practices and its outcomes.

Presentation of the module

The module 'Leading with cultural intelligence' targets undergraduate students who have recently completed their Study Period Abroad (SPA), which is a compulsory part of their degree in International Business. The Covid-19 restrictions had a limited impact on the peer-mentoring scheme, as it was originally designed to be supported via online platforms (Blackboard and MS Teams).

The online peer-mentoring scheme is at the core of the teaching and learning strategy of this module, designed to provide a personal development and learning environment for multicultural students. Its teaching and learning theoretical underpinnings include experiential learning (Kolb, 1984), social learning (Bandura, 1977), and assessing for learning (Nygaard and Belluigi, 2011).

Description of the online peer-mentoring scheme and assessment strategy

The module requires students to engage in a mentoring relationship with an SPA outbound or inbound student. This activity forms the basis of an assessed peer-mentoring diary (Assessment 1). The diary includes a log of the mentoring sessions (at least three), a critical analysis of their experience as mentor, and the mentee's feedback on the mentoring received.

As part of the module learning outcomes, students are expected to develop their mentoring skills and demonstrate how they used their global leadership skills and CQ in a mentoring relationship. Also, they are expected to apply relevant CQ theories as well as a selection of cross-cultural management tools to inform their reflection, and formulate an action plan focused on the key CQ areas that they need to develop.

Following the submission of the first assignment, students are required to complete a reflective essay (Assessment 2). Drawing on the insights identified in their peer-mentoring diary, the reflective essay should demonstrate an in-depth understanding of CQ models and theory. It should include a reflexive practice element focused on how the experience of peer mentoring across cultures has supported the student's development of CQ, global leadership skills and an identification of a personal development plan for leading with CQ in the future.

Implementation

The online peer-mentoring scheme results from a collaboration with the university's International Partnerships Office, who provided information to support the matching process between mentors and mentees. The matching criteria were based on the SPA destination (country, city, university). For example, a mentor who was returning from SPA in Japan would be paired with an outbound student in Japan or planning to study in Japan.

In addition to the CQ models and global leadership development theories, the module included a range of coaching and mentoring tools, self-assessment and online training, including the Cultural Orientation Framework Assessment (Rosinski, 2010), the GlobeSmart profile, the Hofstede Country comparison, and a series of online asynchronous training via LinkedIn Learning.

Particular attention was given to the management of ethics and confidentiality in the mentoring relationship.

Some mentoring discussion topics were suggested and included (a) the organisation of studies in the host university; (b) approaching a different academic culture and system; (c) adapting to study abroad during a pandemic; (d) cross-cultural communication in both face to face and virtual environment; (e) settling in, meeting others, and taking steps to connect with potentially unfamiliar surroundings. This was not a prescribed list and mentees/mentors were invited to add any topic that would be relevant to address the mentees' needs.

Particular attention was given to the management of ethics and confidentiality in the mentoring relationship. Importantly, the success (or not) of the mentoring relationship was not assessed. Instead, the cognitive, behavioural skills and reflective analysis of the mentoring experience and its impact on CQ development were emphasised in the marking scheme of the mentoring diary.

Students were given ongoing supervision and support in the form of one-to-one tutorials, personalised feedback on the cross-cultural profile test results, mentoring logs, discussion boards and mentoring circles. Figure 1 summarises the multiple interventions, tools and assessments used throughout the module.

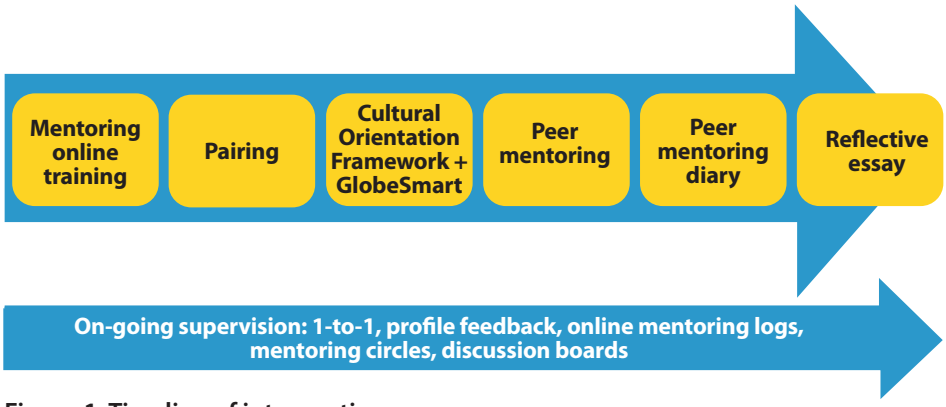


Figure 1: Timeline of interventions

Reflection and recommendations

The analysis of the students' assessments demonstrated some key learning. The students' reflective essays and mentoring diaries emphasised a perceived increased self-confidence and self-efficacy, related to their capacity to act as mentors for others. Particular development was noted in the areas of mentoring skills including rapport building, trust, and interpersonal communication. Also, they felt more confident regarding their capacity to challenge cross-cultural assumptions and prejudices, prevent miscommunication and work with others remotely during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Besides the learning gains in terms of global leadership skills and CQ, the use of peer-mentoring has facilitated their socialisation and social integration, by giving them a sense of belonging and the satisfaction of being a mentor/mentee. Furthermore, the peer-mentoring scheme generated a desire to use mentoring skills in future work relationships. Indeed, participation in the scheme appears to motivate the students to develop as mentors and take further part in the future. Finally, the mentoring scheme offered a framework to develop authentic assessment, action learning and reflective practice at undergraduate level.

However, the operationalisation of a peer-mentoring scheme does not come without hurdles. The management of the mentoring pairing process can be very complex and time-consuming. For example, some mentees did not reply to the email invitations, leaving the mentor without a mentee. Some mentees withdrew from their SPAs. Consequently, mentors had to be re-allocated to new mentees, leaving them with less time to engage in the mentoring process within the timeframe of the module.

Additionally, motivating students to engage in a new learning experience can be challenging, especially when it involves an unknown or unfamiliar activity such as mentoring. Indeed, most students reported having no or limited experience of mentoring neither as mentor nor mentee.

Furthermore, learning by doing may not fit with all students' learning style. To overcome this, multiple one-to-one online tutorials helped to individualise the learning and encourage introvert students to overcome an initial shyness and self-consciousness in the mentoring process.

Some practical recommendations for embedding online peer-mentoring in a module have been identified. Firstly, access to data related to SPA students such as the number and composition of the SPA pool (inbound-outbound students) is critical to establish the feasibility of the scheme. Secondly, prior mentoring training for both mentors and mentees

is essential for the success of the scheme. Thirdly, students may need additional on-going support and guidance if they hold limited or no experience of mentoring. In addition to the LinkedIn Learning courses, the mentoring circles revealed particularly helpful. They encouraged the students to share their experience as mentor, and to give and receive advice on mentoring others in a cross-cultural digital environment. Finally, students should constantly be reminded and reassured that their work is not assessed based on the success or failure of the mentoring relationship, but on their critical analysis and capacity to reflect on what happened in this relationship, from an interpersonal and cross-cultural perspective.

References

Bandura, A. (1977) *Social learning theory*. Englewood Cliffs ; London: Prentice-Hall. Prentice-Hall series in social learning theory.

Barnes, K. J., Smith, G. E. and Hernández-Pozas, O. (2017) 'What's your CQ? A framework to assess and develop individual student cultural intelligence', *Organization Management Journal*, 14(1), pp. 34-44.

CBI and Pearson (2019) 'Education and learning for the modern world: CBI/Pearson Education and Skills Survey report 2019': Confederation of British Industry, Pearson Education. Available at: https://www.cbi.org.uk/media/3841/12546_tess_2019.pdf.

Clair, K. L. S. (1994) 'Faculty-to-faculty mentoring in the community college: An instructional component of faculty development', Community College Review, 22(3), pp. 23-35.

Clutterbuck, D. (2014) *Everyone needs a mentor*. Kogan Page Publishers.

Clutterbuck, D. and Lane, G. (2004) *The situational mentor: An international review of competences and capabilities in mentoring*. Routledge.

Erikson, E. H. (1963) *Childhood and society*. 2nd ed edn. New York: Norton.

Fischer, R. (2011) 'Cross-cultural training effects on cultural essentialism beliefs and cultural intelligence', *international journal of intercultural relation*s, 35(6), pp. 767-775.

Kolb, D. A. (1984) *Experiential learning: experience as the source of learning and development*. Englewood Cliffs ; London: Prentice-Hall.

Livermore, D. and Van Dyne, L. (2015) *Cultural intelligence: The essential intelligence for the 21st century*. Society for Human Resource Management Foundation. Effective Practice Guidelines.

Lovvorn, A. S. and Chen, J.-S. (2011) 'Developing a global mindset: The relationship between an international assignment and cultural intelligence', *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, 2(9).

Maslow, A. H. (1970) *Motivation and personality*. 2nd edn. New York ; London: Harper & Row.

Minocha, S., Hristov, D. and Leahy-Harland, S. (2018) 'Developing a future-ready global workforce: A case study from a leading UK university', *The International Journal of Management Education*, 16(2), pp. 245-255.

Nygaard, C. and Belluigi, D. Z. (2011) 'A proposed methodology for contextualised evaluation in higher education', *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 36(6), pp. 657-671.

Raver, J. L. and Van Dyne, L. (2017) 'Developing Cultural Intelligence', in Brown, K.G. (ed.) *The Cambridge handbook of workplace training and employee development:* Cambridge University Press, pp. 407-440.

Rockstuhl, T., et al. (2011) 'Beyond general intelligence (IQ) and emotional intelligence (EQ): The role of cultural intelligence (CQ) on cross-border leadership effectiveness in a globalized world', *Journal of Social Issues*, 67(4), pp. 825-840.

Rosinski, P. (2010) *Coaching across cultures: New tools for leveraging national, corporate and professional differences.* Hachette UK.

Soffel, J. (2016) 'Ten 21st-century skills every student needs': World Economic Forum. Available at: https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2016/03/21st-century-skills-future-jobs-students/.

Truijen, K. J. and van Woerkom, M. (2008) 'The pitfalls of collegial coaching: An analysis of collegial coaching in medical education and its influence on stimulating reflection and performance of novice clinical teachers', *Journal of Workplace Learning*.

Ulanovsky, M. and Pérez, P. (2017) 'Peer mentoring: A powerful tool to accelerate the learning experience', *The Sage handbook of mentoring*, pp. 582-585.

USING A FACILITATED BUSINESS SIMULATION FOR LEARNING ONLINE: THE CASE OF ACCOUNTING BISSIM

Darren Sparkes CMBE, Associate Professor, Leicester Castle Business School, De Montfort University
Matt Davies, Senior Lecturer, Aston Business School
Professor Lisa Weaver CMBE, Professor in Accounting, Warwick Business School

The simulation is based on group work, so it was essential to use a platform which supports a virtual classroom with breakout rooms

We focused on how the presenters have adapted and developed a facilitated business simulation, Accounting Bissim, to suit accounting and finance education for specialist and non-specialist students. There was particular emphasis on the suitability of the simulation for online education.

We identified the differences between automated and facilitated simulations. Automated simulations involve little or no interaction between the tutor and students. The students input their own data and the simulation is treated as a separate exercise on the module, usually considered as an activity just to support traditional lecture-based teaching. By contrast, in a facilitated simulation the tutor takes an active role in enabling the simulation and supporting students during their groupwork. The simulation is an integral element of the module and forms the basis and foundation for student learning and assessment.

Literature on pedagogy supports the use of the facilitated approach (e.g. Vlachopoulos and Makri, 2017; Elias, 2014; Kovalik & Kuo, 2012; Lameras et al., 2016), acknowledging the numerous benefits to both students and tutors. The benefits include higher levels of student engagement and collaboration, more opportunity for providing feedback and better performance in assessments.

The Covid-19 pandemic had a significant impact on teaching modules which embed the facilitated simulation. The presenters had to adapt the business simulation, which had worked very successfully in the face-to-face environment, to online delivery. Fortunately, the simulation had been used in teaching an online MBA class since 2016, so there was some experience with distance learning students, but the changes needed to bring all modules using the simulation online created many challenges, especially given the speed at which the necessary changes had to take place.

The move to using Accounting Bissim online forced some innovations. For example, tools were needed to enable student-to-student and tutor-to-students collaboration (the solution was OneNote Notebooks) and additional resources to provide support and encourage engagement (including recorded videos and a 'newspaper' feature).

Technology was, of course, a significant issue to address. The simulation is based on group work, so it was essential to use a platform which supports a virtual classroom with breakout rooms – we used Blackboard Ultra which has the capacity for 20 breakout rooms; the maximum used in the simulation is 12. The presenters quickly realised that for many students the technology can be problematical due to lack of familiarity, so it is essential to train the students in how to use the various elements of the virtual classroom, e.g. how to use the chat and polling functions, how to move in and out of breakout rooms, etc. Providing clear instructions and allowing students to 'play' with the functions reduced anxiety and allowed for a higher degree of participation. We realised the importance of not being too ambitious in the first few 'years' of the simulation, to allow students time to become familiar with the online learning environment.

The presenters reflect on the challenges of online facilitation of group work, which included communication issues, e.g. not having visual communication cues from students to gauge their understanding, not knowing what was happening in breakout rooms, getting students back to the main classroom on time, encouraging students to use their microphones and cameras. Having two tutors involved with the facilitation helped with some of these issues. There were also some concerns with maintaining student interest and engagement in sessions lasting over one hour, for which the solutions were to offer regular 'mini-breaks', include a mix of individual and group exercises and introducing variety, e.g. using Vevox as a polling tool to gauge students' understanding.

The presenters' overall reflections on the virtual classroom being used for a facilitated simulation were as follows:

- The virtual classroom worked quite well and even offered some advantages over face-to-face teaching, e.g. a greater willingness of students to ask questions using the chat function However, there were many challenges especially relating to students' lack of familiarity with the technology and communication issues due to students not being willing to use their microphones
- Some innovations, e.g. the use of OneNote, worked very well, the recorded videos and newspaper features provided clarity to the students, and these features of the simulation will be retained in face-to-face teaching
- Engagement was encouraged by using student response tools e.g. Vevox
- Online facilitated simulations can be resource-intensive, as having two tutors was essential for larger groups and longer sessions in order to allow one tutor to be preparing what was coming next week whilst one was speaking and so that one tutor can deal with tech challenges without it holding up the whole session, In addition, having two tutors involved helped to develop a friendly atmosphere and maintain the classroom 'energy'.

The presenters found that student feedback was extremely positive and concluded that despite the challenges of establishing an online facilitated simulation, a positive learning experience was provided.

References

Elias, A. (2014). Simulating the European Union: Reflections on module design. *International Studies Perspectives*, 15(4), 407–422.

Kovalik, C. and Kuo, C-L. (2012) Innovation Diffusion: Learner benefits and instructor insights with the Diffusion Simulation Game. *Simulation & Gaming*, 43(6), 803–824.

Lameras, P., Arnab, S., Dunwell, I., Stewart, C., Clarke, S., & Petridis, P. (2016). Essential features of serious games design in higher education: Linking learning attributes to game mechanics. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 48(4).

Vlachopoulos, D. and Makri, A., (2017) The effect of games and simulations on higher education: a systematic literature review, I*nternational Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education* 14:22.

ARE VIRTUAL BREAKOUT ROOMS A BLESSING OR CURSE IN TEACHING AND LEARNING?

Professor Yelena Kalyuzhnova CMBE, National Teaching Fellow, CMBE, Head of Leadership, Organisations and Behaviour Department, Vice-Dean (International), Henley Business School
Dr Tatiana Rowson, Programme Director, BA Business and Management, Henley Business School
Olena Khlystova, Teaching Assistant, Henley Business School

A virtual breakout room is a virtual space that is separate from the main online tutorial room. A tutor can create as many breakout rooms as are needed. Within each breakout room, only those present can hear the discussion and read any text chat messages, creating a more private opportunity for students to talk together and facilitating independent work. Virtual breakout rooms became widely used during the Covid-19 pandemic and it was perceived by many educators as an innovative tool in the teaching and learning (TL) process. To establish whether they achieve these aims, we conducted a pilot investigation on the effectiveness of the breakout rooms on teaching and learning, exploring facilitators and barriers for both parties (learners and educators).

For this study, we have applied a framework on Technologies in Learning, which implies that the learning process depends on both teachers and learners.

The first component of this framework is instructionism or constructionism. Instructionism refers to educational practices that are teacher-focused, skill-based, product-oriented, non-interactive, and highly prescribed. Constructivism refers to educational practices that are student-focused, meaning-based, process-oriented, interactive, and responsive to student interest. When a teacher establishes the teaching approach, the next component is building networks, which refers to learners. For students learning at a distance, online tutorials have the potential to bring together students with similar study interests and build networks of relationships to create communities of practice, which corresponds to the third component of the framework (Lave and Wenger, 1990). These two stages are interconnected, and in the reality of the online environment, students look for peers who have similar interests, use the same research methods or attend the same modules. This network could be enhanced by different group activities.

The researchers who examine breakout rooms in online teaching and learning claimed that this innovative tool could be stressful not only for learners but for teachers as well (Macdonald and Campbell, 2012; Peacock et al., 2012). The teachers could feel overwhelmed by breakout room activity because preparing for online tutorials takes tutors up to 20% more time than preparing for face-to-face classes. In addition, module convenors/teaching assistants (TAs) also need to take into account the additional time needed to train and practise the skills necessary for them to use the technology successfully (Laurillard, 2009).

Other scholars argue that for distance learners, online learning can reduce impersonality and a sense of isolation. The building of trust, rapport, and a sense of personal belongingness in learners can enhance collaboration and success (Fasso, 2013; Yamagata-Lynch, 2014; McBrien, Jones, and Cheng, 2009).

Peacock et al (2012) investigated that an online environment is far more demanding than working face-to-face. Foronda and Lippincott (2014) investigated graduate nurse students' experiences of using the Blackboard Collaborate tool and found this to be positive, with

students appreciating the enjoyment, flexibility and convenience of online sessions. Interactivity was an important factor, and Foronda and Lippincott (2013) and Tonsmann (2014) suggested that increasingly sophisticated Blackboard Collaborate tools such as breakout rooms play an important role in achieving this, producing an experience that can be described as comparable to or even exceeding face-to-face tutorials.

In order to understand Henley Business School's experience in breakout rooms, we conducted a pilot study by creating a survey for learners and teachers. We received 40 responses from students and 30 responses from teachers. The survey included open and closed questions in English about the experience in breakout rooms, the personal characteristics of survey participants, and their opinion about breakout rooms. Weblink to the survey and the invitation letter to participate were sent by e-mail to 400 students and staff at Henley Business School. Our target audience consisted of undergraduate, master's and PhD students for at least one year full-time or part-time. We have also targeted professors, lecturers, associate professors, and teaching assistants.

Some 77% of staff are convinced that breakout rooms have increased the students' interest in seminars.

The results for staff have demonstrated that 90% of staff believed that it was a good tool for the interaction and enhancing the seminars' delivery. Some 77% of staff are convinced that breakout rooms have increased the students' interest in seminars. Also, 84% of staff pointed out that this format allowed them to participate in the discussion. However, 60% did not look forward to preparing the seminars using breakout rooms. Finally, 58% believed that breakout rooms increased students' knowledge about the module materials.

In terms of students, we identified that 62% of students found it a good tool to participate in discussions and to learn collaboration and communication skills. In addition, 55% of students claimed that breakout rooms increased their interest in seminars. Furthermore, 50% of students enjoyed this type of activity. On the contrary, 44% of students found this tool very stressful. Interestingly, 40% of students identified their developmental gaps. However, 34% of students found it hard to interact with peers during online breakout activities. Finally, 24% of students left seminars with breakout room activities.

The analysis of the results enabled us to identify several pros of breakout rooms, such as a useful tool for facilitating collaborative learning and interaction, a good opportunity to study remotely, time-saving. However, this tool requires IT skills, students can experience a language barrier and feel unconfident when dealing with other peers or staff. In order to overcome these issues, we have developed several guiding principles for breakout room activity, such as:

1. the development of clear instructions of how to participate in breakout rooms
2. Targeted tasks for specific problems
3. A clear brief before starting the breakout room activities
4. A clear debrief after each activity
5. Individual engagement of the students to ensure diversity and inclusion.

We have found these principles very helpful in terms of ensuring the safety of the online learning environment, complying with the diversity and inclusion concept, and reducing the anxiety and stress of the breakout room's participants.

References

Fasso, W. (2013). First Year Distance Transition Pedagogy: Synchronous online classrooms. *The International Journal of the First Year in Higher Education*, 4(1), 33-45.

Foronda, C. & Lippincott, C. (2014). Graduate nursing students' experience with synchronous, interactive videoconferencing within online courses. *Quarterly Review of Distance Education*, 15(2), 1-8.

Laurillard, D. (2009). The pedagogical challenges to collaborative technologies. I*nternational Journal of Computer Supported Collaborative Learning*, 4(1) 5-20.

Lave, J. & Wenger, E. (1990). *Situated learning: legitimate peripheral participation.* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

McBrien, J., Jones, P., & Cheng, R. (2009). Virtual spaces: Employing a synchronous online classroom to facilitate student engagement in online learning. *International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning*, 10(3), 1-6

McDonald, J. & Campbell, A. (2012). Demonstrating online teaching in the disciplines. A systematic approach to activity design for online synchronous tuition. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 43(6), 883-89.

Peacock, S., Murray, S., Dean, J., Brown, D., Girdler, S., & Mastrominico, B. (2012). Exploring tutor and student experiences in online synchronous learning environments in the performing arts. *Creative Education*, 3(7), 1269-1280

Tonsmann, G. (2014). A study of the effectiveness of Blackboard Collaborate for conducting synchronous courses at multiple locations. *InSight: A Journal of Scholarly Teaching*, 9, 54-63.

Yamagata-Lynch, L. (2014) Blending online asynchronous and synchronous learning. *International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning*, 15(2), 189-212.

THEME:
EFFECTIVE ASSESSMENT AND CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK

DON'T LET FEEDBACK BECOME DANGLING DATA... IMPROVE STUDENT ENGAGEMENT WITH FEEDBACK!

Dr Wilfrid Flanda, Lecturer in Management, The University of Westminster

The session discussed the importance of feedback and examined ways in which tutors can improve student engagement with feedback. A case study was presented to facilitate discussions and reflection.

We all expect students to read and engage with the feedback they receive from their tutors, but do the students really bother as long as they get the marks they expect? Perhaps, the following example will remind you of a time when you have wondered what to do to improve student engagement with feedback? The student who emailed me back in June 2021 is a year one student enrolled on a marketing degree course. The student submitted his assignment in January 2021 (Semester 1) but did not realise he had failed his module until June!

From:
Sent: 24 June 2021 23:38
To: Wilfrid Flanda <W.Flanda@westminster.ac.uk>
Subject: Professional Development for Marketers

Hello Sir,
Am writing to inform you that I just saw my Current grades for the academic year and it says my work for the professional Development for marketers module is incomplete. Have 29 has an overall mark.
I remember finishing all your work, (...)
If it's possible can you tell me what work of yours, I didn`t not complete. My attendance was good in the online classes and remember submitting my work.
Don`t know what I missed but please let me know, I finished my 1st and 2nd semester knowing i completed everything.

Student engagement with feedback is even more important considering the impact Covid-19 has on the students who have experienced loneliness and isolation (Ali & Smith, 2015). For example, Muthuprasad, et al. (2021), claim that the level of interaction between the tutors and the learners as well as the feedback (Gilbert, 2015) directly impact the students' perceptions of online learning. Key findings from the literature suggest that affective responses to feedback are mediated by students' relationships with their teachers (Carless and Boud, 2018). In other words, student engagement with feedback is enhanced if teachers signify they care about the student in the feedback (Sutton, 2012).

Feedback and current issues

Feedback is one of the most powerful ways to enhance student achievement and encourage student learning (Gibbs and Simpson, 2005). However, there are reports of sector-wide dissatisfaction with feedback (Bloxham, 2014). Students do not check their written assignment feedback when they receive their marks (Gibbs and Simpson, 2005). Essentially, there is a 'feedback gap' (Evans, 2013; Sadler, 2010), representing a dissociation between the efforts of lecturers and utilisation by students. I suggest that a social constructivist approach to feedback (Figure 1) could improve student engagement with feedback.

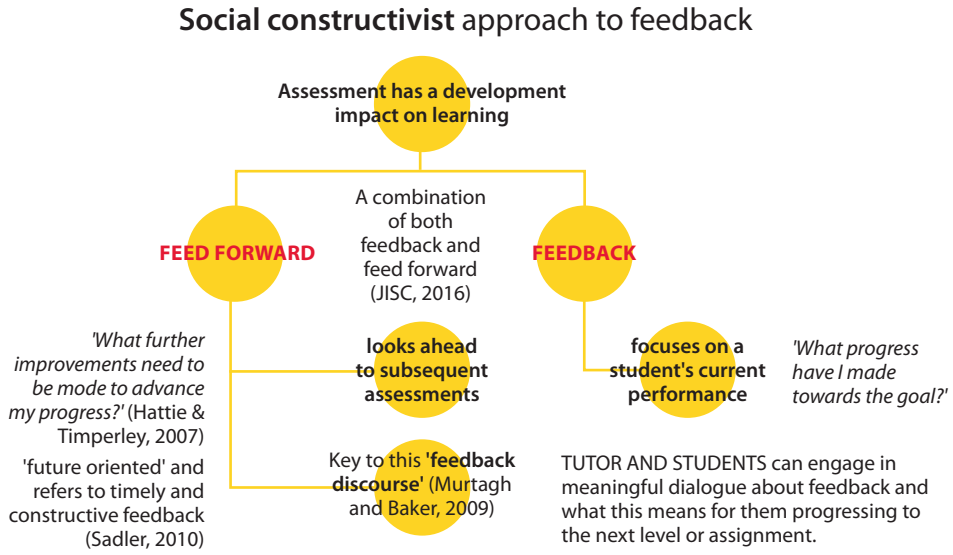


Figure 1: Social constructivist approach to feedback (Vygotsky, 1962)

A social constructivist approach to feedback hinges on the useful notion of 'feedback discourse' (Murtagh and Baker, 2009), where tutors and students can engage in a meaningful dialogue about feedback, and what this means for them progressing to the next level or assignment. Essentially, this will require us to move from feedback to feedforward which is future orientated (Sadler, 2010). Figure 2 summarises how as a team we implemented a social constructivist approach to feedback based on feedforward (Year One Business Management module). The process starts with performance feedback, which is based on the marking criteria. Then the students are required to read their feedback and identify three key action points from their feedback to improve. The process is completed when the students submit a feedforward action plan. In our case, the students submitted a formative task in a summative piece into the next assignment within the same module.

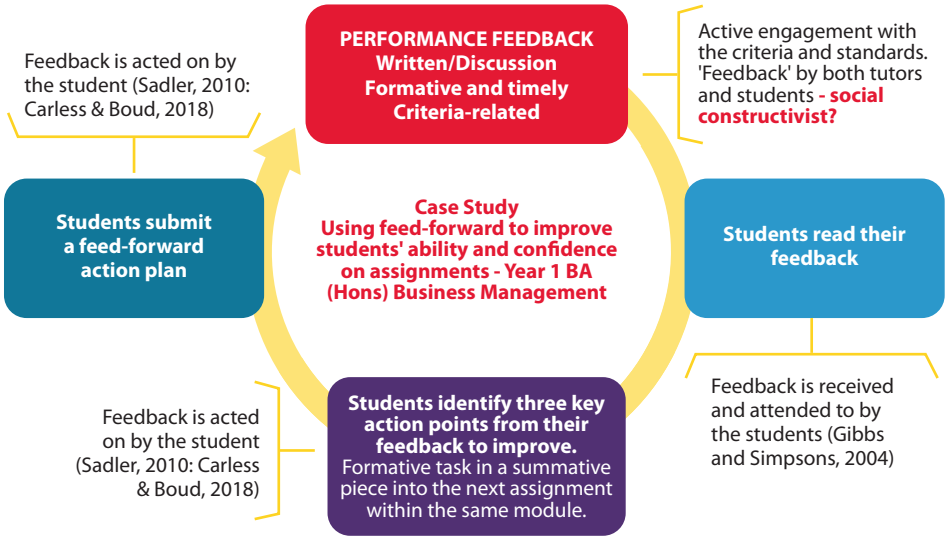


Figure 2: Using feedforward to improve students' ability and confidence – Year One BA (Hons) Business Management

In conclusion, this period of change requires educators to provide evidence on what works and does not work to inform future practices. The case study demonstrates the importance of the tutor's role in building and maintaining relationships and climate (online; face to face). The case study also demonstrates the importance of student engagement in teaching and learning but also students as active participants in their learning process (i.e. feedback acted on by the students).

Refocusing on the students enables them to appreciate how feedback can facilitate their own learning but also their own contribution (Winston and Pitt, 2017). At programme level, module leaders could be encouraged to clarify how students should respond to the feedback. Also, the module handbook templates can be updated to ensure module leaders clarify how students should respond to the feedback.

References

Bloxham, S. (2014) Assessing assessment: New developments in assessment design, feedback practices and marking in higher education. In F. Heather, S. Ketteridge and S. Marshall (Eds.), A Handbook for Teaching and Learning. New York, NY: Routledge: 107-123

Carless, D. and Boud, D. (2018). The development of student feedback literacy: enabling uptake of feedback. Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education, Volume 43, 2018 - Issue 8 Pages 1315-1325

Evans, C. (2013) Making Sense of Assessment Feedback in Higher Education. Review of Educational Research 83: 70-120

Gibbs, G., and Simpson, C. (2005) Conditions under which assessment supports students' learning. Learning and Teaching in Higher Education 1: 3-31

Gilbert, B. (2015). Online learning revealing the benefits and challenges. Education Masters. Paper 303.

Hattie, J. and Timperley, H. (2007). The Power of Feedback. Review of Educational Research Volume: 77 issue: 1, page(s): 81-112

JISC (2016). Feedback and feed forward. Available at https://www.jisc.ac.uk/guides/transforming-assessment- and-feedback/feedback

Murtagh, L., and Baker, N. (2009) Feedback to Feed Forward: student response to tutor's written comments on assignments. Practitioner Research in Higher Education 3: 20-28

Sadler, D. R. (2010) Beyond Feedback: Developing student capability in complex appraisal. Assessmentand Evaluation in Higher Education 35: 535-550

Thomas, L., Hill, M., O' Mahony, J., & Yorke, M. (2017). Supporting student success: strategies for institutional change. What Works? Student Retention & Success programme. Paul Hamlyn Foundation.

Vygotsky, L. (1962) Thought and language, Cambridge, MA, MIT Press

VIRTUAL TEAM WORKING – USING INNOVATIVE ASSESSMENT METHODS TO BUILD THIS KEY SKILL IN OUR GRADUATES

Dr Chris Owen CMBE, Senior Teaching Fellow, Operations and Information Management Department, Aston Business School, Aston University
Jennifer Knight, Department Administrator, Operations and Information Management Department, Aston Business School, Aston University

The ability to work in virtual teams is a vital employability skill for business school students. However, groupwork can be unpopular with students and their experience of it can be negative. The received wisdom is that groupwork is even more difficult to deliver virtually. In this session, we shared successes and lessons learned delivering a final-year, team-based activity using a problem-based learning approach. In the module, we used innovative assessment methods, such as peer assessment using Teammates, to deliver an experience that was as good as – and perhaps better than – the on-campus experience. The session challenged the idea that groupwork is more difficult to deliver virtually and propose that with today's tech savvy students, virtual groupwork can play to their strengths.

We started the session with a simple question: 'Do you use groupwork in your modules?'. Some 80% of the attendees answered in the affirmative, showing that groupwork is a common activity amongst the CABS LTSE attendees. We followed up with a second question which was, 'Would you expect virtual groupwork to be more challenging than face-to-face?' The response to this question was:

Yes – 65%
No – 13%
Maybe – 22%

This shows that many colleagues share our perception that virtual groupwork may be more challenging than face to face. In a final question, we asked delegates: 'Using one word, what do you think are the challenges with groupwork in a virtual context?' The answers to this question were added to a word cloud as below:

This case study presented the experience of delivering a final-year elective module to business school students. In this module, students are given £50 seed funding and challenged to raise as much money as possible in a 24-hour period for a charity of their choice. Using problem-structuring methods within a problem-based learning approach, students in groups of five design and execute their fundraising event. The module has run successfully over several years on-campus, but this year there was concern amongst

Student teams were able to support small local charities that were important to them.

students and apprehension in the module leadership about delivering the module remotely and how successful that would be. To the surprise of the module staff, the module ran very well, perhaps even better than the on-campus delivery.

In this presentation we shared with the audience the experience and lessons learned from delivering a virtual group working module. During the pandemic, charity fundraising has been severely impacted, and in particular, smaller charities have seen their incomes fall dramatically. Student teams were able to support small local charities that were important to them. In this time, many fundraising activities and events have gone virtual and online. Students are comfortable with these technologies, and in particular, can be confident with the use of social media. Thus, counterintuitively, the move to online and virtual moved the challenge towards the capabilities of the students. In addition, it could be argued that virtual team working levels the playing field in that it places less emphasis on the personal confidence and presence of the student in a face-to-face environment.

We explained the innovative approach to assessment and how students were assessed on three aspects of the event, i.e. the amount of money raised, the creativity of the team in the design and execution of their event, and their team working through peer assessment using Teammates. Some student feedback and opinions were included in the presentation.

An important aspect of this module is the way that the module is assessed. We designed an innovative assessment framework which aims to incentivise students to engage in the module, to reward the demonstration of the key skills and competencies of virtual team working. We suggest that flexibility in the design of such innovative approaches is necessary for success in this area.

We propose that far from making groupwork more difficult, the effective use of technology combined with an appropriate assessment framework can mean that virtual groupwork is a very effective approach. Moreover, given that employers are making more use of virtual teamworking, starting before the pandemic but accelerated by it, it is critical that business school students become comfortable and confident in this environment. We propose that teaching staff in business schools should be themselves confident and positive in their adoption of virtual technology and to challenge themselves and their students to do virtual groupwork in order to develop these skills.

The impact that this module has had on students and staff can be summarised as follows:

Students

- Students realised that groupwork can be a positive experience
- Students increased confidence in virtual teamworking
- Students increased confidence in the use of technology to collaborate virtually with peers in problem solving.

Staff

- Increased confidence that virtual groupwork can be successfully delivered
- Increased understanding of how to engage students in virtual groupwork
- Increased understanding of how to assess students in virtual groupwork.

In this case study, we explained how a practical problem-based learning module, which is normally delivered on campus and face to face was delivered virtually and online. The received wisdom is that activities of this kind are more difficult to deliver virtually. The originality here is to show how in fact the use of the right approach can mean that the result is as good as, if not better than, the face-to-face version.

PROMOTING STUDENTS' DEEP LEARNING AND EMPLOYABILITY THROUGH INDIVIDUALISED ASSIGNMENTS

Dr Ling Xiao, Senior Lecturer in Finance TF, Royal Holloway University of London.
Teddy Foster, Senior Lecturer in Accounting and Finance TF, Royal Holloway University of London.

Presentation

The individualised assignment is not new. Such assignments have been found to be popular amongst statistics, engineering, and computing science subject areas (Rosser, 2008; Hunt, 2010; Lancaster and Clarke, 2010). We deployed the individualised assignment in the final year of an undergraduate honours degree in accounting and finance. It was applied in an international financial markets module where the real-world application of the Bloomberg Terminal (and associated Excel analysis) was juxtaposed with international financial markets theory. Traditionally individualised assignments have been deployed to mitigate collusion, but we deployed it to enhance criticality, promote deep learning and improve employability prospects. We also found that little has been done to understand the impact of individualised assignments on the students' learning experience and wanted to further this understanding.

Individualised assignments have been shown to motivate students to engage in active and deep learning since they have more autonomy when developing their solution to the assessment. In general, Asikainen and Gijbels (2017), found that perceptions of the teaching-learning environment have been positively related to deep-learning approaches to pedagogy (Entwistle and Ramsden 1983; Entwistle et al. 2003; Richardson 2005, 2006, Parpala et al. 2010).

This style of assessment was designed to meet a second objective of ours to enhance employability prospects by giving each student the opportunity to develop employability skills such as critical thinking, creativity, problem-solving, written communication competencies and technical familiarity with the Bloomberg Terminal, rather than reproducing technical accounting rules and finance theory alone.

Deploying thematic analysis, we engaged with seven recently graduated alumni in a focus group that was large enough to represent a cross-section of academic achievement – as well as the inclusion of those that held differing views and experiences relating to the learning process. We wanted to understand their collective understanding of their experiences. In addition to seeking a deeper understanding of how the then students experienced the learning process, we also sought to understand the triggers giving rise to their emotive experiences. We wanted to understand how they perceived, and experienced, a learning environment that involved both the practical, more complex real-world use of market and data and analysis systems combined with academic theorising and synthesis.

Figure 1: Constructivist Learning Model

The individualisation removed the opportunity for students to follow each other from the outset. Instead, they reported that they had to collaborate at the level of the principles involved rather than blindly copying each other. The focus group alumni reported that peer learning took place at a more effective formative level. By synthesising the learning environment and facilitating student ownership of the process and task, our study found that we gained greater learner motivation and participation that engendered deep learning. We also found that focusing on student motivation, considered to be one of the most important aspects of human behaviour that is required in the productive learning process, was central to promoting engagement (Barkoukis et al, 2008). Indeed, Nnadi and Mosser (2014) found that active learning is more effective than passive learning, especially in subject area such as accounting, which requires students to continuously apply techniques to excel at applied tasks. This learning construct delivered a more rounded approach to knowledge acquisition and skill development, they postulated.

One of the key learning outcomes that could provide real tangible benefit to the alumni was to give them an advantage with job seeking and employment.

This being their third and final year of study, many of the focus group reported engaging in strategic learning behaviour where they sought to benchmark their own prowess against past exam papers, peers and exercises. The individualised assignment eliminated these benchmarks, they exclaimed, adding to the challenges they faced. The exercises in the workshops were based upon the principles and processes in general, but the focus group members noted that they needed to translate that into their own unique situation. That proved very challenging for most of them, certainly in the initial stages.

Faced with this unfamiliar situation, they were initially driven to emotional outbursts that were manifest in the classroom. An intervention that we implemented overcame the emotional upset, which was soon transformed, the alumni reported, into practical action to surmount the complexity of the task. Developing a sense of confidence was identified as central to their achievement of the task which some reported helped them to achieve better grades in the task than what they initially expected of themselves.

The individualised assignment was particularly instrumental in encouraging engagement and deep learning. Everyone had to work with their own datasets and circumstances which, they reported, left them with little time to engage with the specifics of any other student. Those more dependent students found themselves having to put in a lot more effort of their own than they ordinarily would have done in regular style assignments.

The individualised assignment succeeded by placing a degree of academic distance between the students. Each student, the focus group explained, had to internalise the principles and knowledge to the extent that they could depend upon their own capability, and to apply it in the development of a unique practical solution in a real-world setting. The individualised assignment achieved the ultimate objective of equipping the students with more advanced knowledge and skills but, more importantly, with the confidence and belief in themselves that they could succeed in a complex setting.

One of the key learning outcomes that could provide real tangible benefit to the alumni was to give them an advantage with job seeking and employment. The individualised assignment was ultimately effective in this objective. The more adept graduates derived tangible employability benefits. Some reported having more confidence and considered that the learning from the assignment gave them real advantage, particularly for those undertaking follow-on postgraduate studies. The Bloomberg experience and Excel skills were aspects, several of the alumni emphasised, enhanced their CVs and gave them an advantage in the job market.

HELPING LEARNERS ACTIVATE PRODUCTIVE INNER FEEDBACK: USING RESOURCE AND DIALOGIC COMPARISONS

Professor David Nichol, Teaching Excellence Initiative, Adam Smith Business School, University of Glasgow
Dr Nick Quinn, Lecturer in Entrepreneurship, Adam Smith Business School, University of Glasgow
Dr Lovleen Kushwah, Lecturer in Economics, Adam Smith Business School, University of Glasgow
Dr Helen Mullen CMBE, Lecturer in Entrepreneurship, Adam Smith Business School, University of Glasgow

International research on feedback in higher education is dominated by the idea that feedback is a two-way communicative exchange, dialogue that requires action by the students as well as the teacher. In line with this framing, the prime focus of recent research is on how to increase students' engagement and agency in that dialogue. Researchers describe this as developing students' recipience for feedback (Winstone et al, 2017), as helping them take more agency in co-constructing feedback meanings (Price, Handley and Miller, 2011), and more recently as developing student feedback literacy (Carless and Boud, 2018).

However, this way of thinking about feedback separates formal feedback processes from natural feedback processes. Students (like all of us) are generating internal feedback all the time, by comparing their thinking, actions, and productions against different kinds of external information (Nicol, 2020: 2021). While that information might, at times, derive from comments received or dialogue with others, it also always comes from information in instruction documents, textbooks, videos, online resources, or derived from observations of others, etc. Making feedback comparisons is a natural, ongoing and pervasive process, a process by which students regulate their own performance and learning. In this view, improving student feedback literacy is about improving their capacity to generate productive internal feedback from multiple sources, not just from comments or dialogue. Figure 1 depicts the overlapping sources and types of information that students use to generate internal feedback.

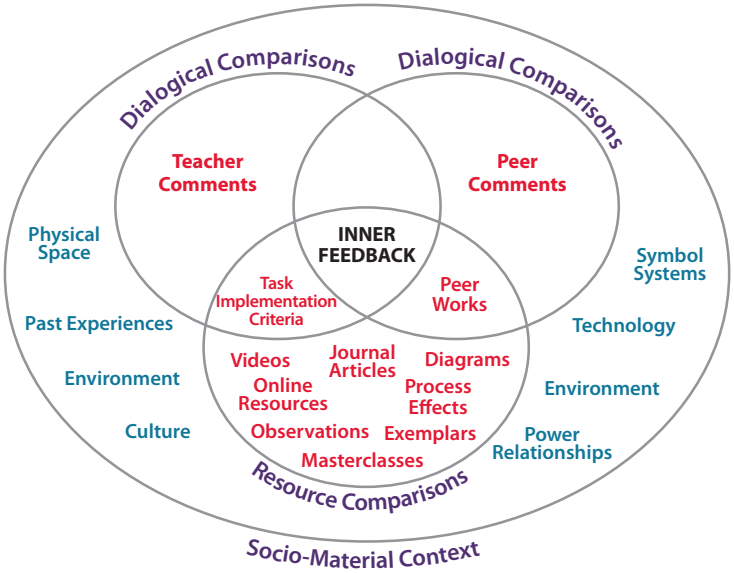


Figure 1: How students generate inner feedback through making dialogic and resource comparisons

At the Adam Smith Business School, we have been researching what inner feedback students generate from comparisons other than comments and dialogue, and from multiple comparisons involving resources and including comments and dialogue. The results are quite remarkable. In many cases, students generate better feedback, ideas for improvement, than they generate from received comments. They always, however, generate feedback that a teacher might find difficult to provide (e.g. self-regulatory) and feedback that complements what they do provide (Nicol and McCallum, 2021; Nicol, D., and G. Selvaretnam, 2021)

This research also shows how one might address two, to date, seemingly intractable tensions in feedback provision in higher education:

i. that too much feedback from lecturers can undermine the development of student independence (especially with weaker students); and

ii. that the more feedback teachers provide the higher their workload.

These tensions can be addressed by balancing resource comparisons with dialogical comparisons (Figure 1) and by sequencing resource comparisons before dialogical comparisons, especially if the latter involve the teacher rather than peers. Each comparison type has its own merits and limitations.

How to unlock the potential of inner feedback?

Although internal feedback happens naturally, it is usually implicit and occurs below conscious awareness. Hence, its educational power remains largely untapped. In practice, the key to harnessing its power is to have students make deliberate comparisons and make the outputs of those comparisons explicit/tangible in writing, discussion or in action. Note, that this is quite different from telling students to 'go and look at an article' or 'go and check out that online resource'. This builds students' own natural internal feedback capacity and in turn their ability to regulate their own learning.

The sequence for students is: DO some work; make some COMPARISONS; make outputs of those comparisons EXPLICIT. The role of the lecturer is to facilitate feedback comparison opportunities by structuring tasks, selecting comparators and by formulating instructions to guide students in the focus and outputs of their comparisons (see Figure 2).

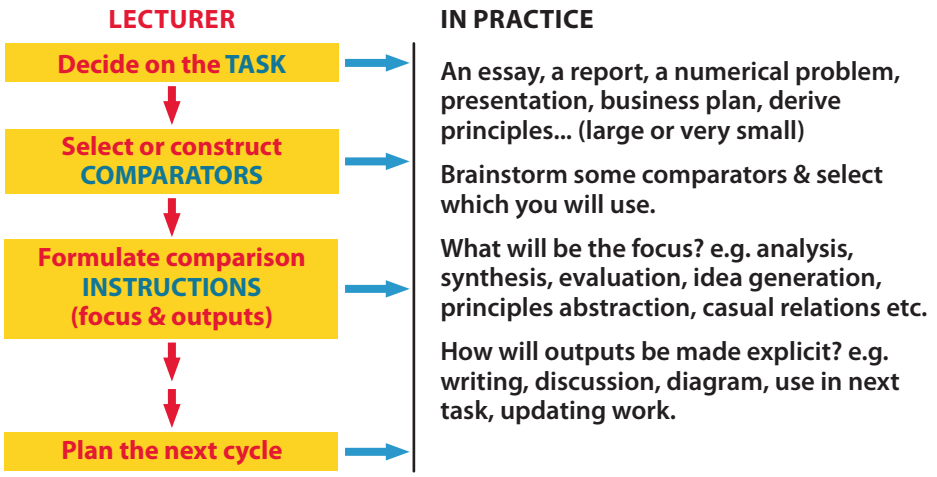


Figure 2: The iterative design steps for implementing comparison-based feedback

Practical Examples

The following are some implementation examples from the Adam Smith Business School.

Final year thesis writing: Economics literature review

Final-year economics students wrote a draft literature review and then compared two high-quality published reviews with each other. Then they compared the output of that comparison against their own draft literature review. Importantly, all three literature reviews were in different topic areas.

From the first comparison, students abstracted and wrote down the principles and standards underpinning a high-quality review. From the second, they identified how their own reviews compared against those principles and standards, and generated feedback on their own literature review which they used to update it. They also wrote down what feedback they wanted from their supervisor after these two comparisons. The results showed that all students generated inner feedback that either matched or closely matched that of their supervisor and that they were better able to identify the feedback they required from the supervisor. The supervisor was surprised by the extent of the students' self-generated feedback, and from the drafts they submitted and the feedback they had already generated was better able to target her own feedback. This study shows how making resource comparisons before supervisor feedback increases students' independence in their writing and reduces their need for supervisor feedback.

The implementation could be further enhanced by adding opportunities for peers to share the feedback they generated from the first comparison (of the two quality literature reviews) before making the second comparison (where they wrote feedback on their own literature review). This would result in the outputs of the first comparison (students' identification of the principles of a good review) being a resource for a dialogical comparison (i.e. comparing the principles they derived) which, in turn, is a resource for students' individual explicit inner feedback comparison.

Final-year BEng and MEng students taking an entrepreneurship course

Final-year engineering students taking a core course in entrepreneurship were required to identify a suitable product or service and then use lean start-up methodology to build a minimum viable product (MVP), i.e. a version of that product that could be tested for its viability with a specific customer group. They then tested that the viability of the product with potential clients. The course was delivered online and involved both synchronous and asynchronous activities. Over the timeline of its delivery, students made multiple comparisons, dialogical as well as against resources (sequential and simultaneous). This overall intention was to help them enhance the quality and viability of their product and at times to 'think out of the box'. The resource comparators included theoretical and practical articles on the creation of MVPs from which they were asked to make theory-practice comparisons, videos and masterclass input from experts on relevant topics from which they evaluated and improved their own MPV, rubric comparisons to gauge how others might judge their work and lecture input comparisons to move their thinking forward. They also engaged in dialogical comparisons based on comments from peers, the teaching team and at times from experts and they also sought out verbal feedback from potential clients. Figure 2 provides an overview of the multiple comparisons involved.

Early results indicate that these students produced much higher quality MVPs compared with those in previous years. They demonstrated a wider understanding of the underlying principles and required less input and feedback from the teaching team.

While these examples come from final-year students there are many examples with undergraduates who benefit in equal measure (Nicol, 2021).

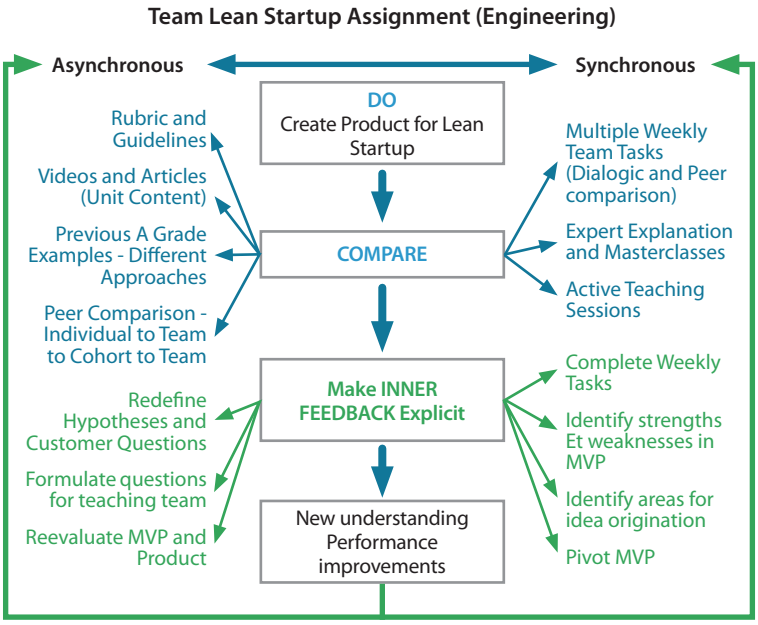


Figure 3. Example of the multiple feedback comparisons involved in the entrepreneurship implementation

Some tips for lecturers

- In planning, it is recommended that lecturers start with material comparisons such as documents, videos and observations, then amplify with peer and other dialogical comparisons.
- Stage and vary the comparison information across the course. The more comparisons students make, the more elaborate the feedback they generate and the more they learn. Different comparators and different combinations of comparators generate different kinds of feedback.
- Give comments sparingly after other comparisons and resist commenting on the comparisons you ask students make. Where possible stage another comparison.
- Over time have students select feedback comparison resources for each other.

Why implement this comparison methodology?

- It connects formal and informal feedback processes in mutually powerful ways.
- Making comparisons explicit builds students' own feedback capability, metacognitive knowledge, and ability to regulate their own learning.
- By bringing into play multiple information sources for comparison beyond comments students generate a greater range of feedback.
- Exposes students to multiple lenses on their own work and thus builds perspective shifting and expertise.
- Reduces lecturers' commenting on workload: lecturers provide comments only on what students can't self-generate from other comparative resources
- It also provides valuable information about what comments students really need.

References

Carless, D., and D. Boud. 2018. "The Development of Student Feedback Literacy: Enabling Uptake of Feedback." *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education* 43 (8): 1315–1325. doi:10.1080/02602938.2018.1463354.

Nicol, D. 2020 "The power of internal feedback: Exploiting natural comparison processes" *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*, 46:5, 756-778 https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/02602938.2020.1823314

Nicol, D. 2021. "Guiding learning by activating students' inner feedback. *Times Higher Education*. https://www.timeshighereducation.com/campus/guiding-learning-activating-students-inner- feedback

Nicol, D., and S. McCallum. 2021. "Making Internal Feedback Explicit: Exploiting the multiple comparisons that occur during peer review". *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education.*

Online first https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/02602938.2021.1924620

Nicol, D., and G. Selvaretnam. (2021) "Making internal feedback explicit: harnessing the comparisons students make during two-stage exams." *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/02602938.2021.1934653

Price, M., K. Handley, and J. Millar. 2011. "Feedback: Focusing Attention on Engagement." *Studies in Higher Education* 36 (8): 879–896.10.1080/03075079.2010.483513

Winstone, N. E., R. A. Nash, M. Parker, and J. Rowntree. 2017. "Supporting Learners' Agentic Engagement with Feedback: A Systematic Review and a Taxonomy of Recipience Processes." *Educational Psychologist* 52 (1): 17–37. doi:10.1080/00461520.2016.1207538

Link to 15-minute explanation on youtube https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rh-MNcnle7E

ATTUNED COMMUNICATION – AN ACTIVITY FOR IMPROVING STUDENTS' ABILITY TO TAKE SOMEONE'S PERSPECTIVE

Jacqueline Vitacco, Lecturer, University of Applied Sciences and Arts Northwestern Switzerland, School of Business

Dr Terry Inglese CMBE, Lecturer, University of Applied Sciences and Arts Northwestern Switzerland, Institute for Information Systems

To be effective, communication needs to be attuned to the social realities, needs and attitudes of individuals. This requires the ability to take someone's perspective. However, in the business communication curriculum perspective-taking as a communication skill is largely not assessed. Specifically for writing assignments, the emphasis of activities is more on genre-specific style, composition or writing strategies. More often than not the 'audience' of these activities is academic or based on assumptions on what readers may have in common – for example, shared interests – so directed to communities of practice (Magnifico, 2010) or to the 'general public'.

Perceiving an audience as an abstract entity rather than a concrete addressee may be due to a conceptual divide, or even false dichotomy (Sullivan & Carr, 2017), between one-way communication, which is mostly impersonal, and two-way communication, which is more personal or interpersonal. The former is associated with written communication, which is more static and essentially mediated, while the former is essentially non-mediated and associated with spoken communication, or with higher-level communication skills such as negotiating or persuading (Hargie, 2011). Interaction is more dynamic. Furthermore, while interpersonal communication is characterised by perception of a high social presence, written communication is the opposite: an audience is perceived as socially distant (Short, Williams & Christie, 1976) or as a generic, abstract entity. However, since the emergence of powerful digital communication tools, this dichotomy between interpersonal and mass communication has become increasingly eroded (Sullivan & Carr, 2017).

Also, in the workplace, business school graduates will most definitely be writing to individuals or smaller groups, e.g. an email to a person they know or a report addressed to a specific group of decision-makers and less to the general public or academic circles. Thus, writing becomes interpersonal and contextualised.

Writing assignment

From a teaching viewpoint, individualising an audience to a person or small group involves the use of a context, e.g. a scenario that represents an individual addressee's unique social context, needs and attitudes. Providing fictionalised scenarios on an individual basis in class can be challenging. However, if students should practise taking over an addressee's unique perspective, such a context is necessary.

We assumed that a mock job application to a real and realistic job ad could simulate such a context and would help us assess whether students were able to take a recruiter's perspective. Thus, we conducted a writing intervention study, in which students submitted first drafts of a cover letter and CV in response to a real ad, received feedback from an instructor by means of a guided content analysis, which they then incorporated in finalised versions. Both versions were compared, and the effect of instructor feedback measured using quantitative text analysis methods and by comparing the reviews of two instructors and a recruiter.

Using real job ads, students learn to customise their application documents to the company's needs communicated in an ad. The purpose of application documents is to convince a "real" company and its recruiters that graduates as applicants are a good fit for the job. This is also a familiar scenario that is easy to understand and draws on previous experience that most students have.

First findings

However, students' first drafts were usually very self-focused; for example, they rarely emphasised how the company would benefit from hiring them. In cover letters, much is left to recruiters to gather from CVs rather than explicitly spelling out how they fit. For evaluation of students' performance, responding to at least three essential requirements specified in the ad was considered. Many ignored this and gave a summary of their career to date in cover letters.

After pointing out how they can respond to the position's particular requirements and outline how the company benefits (the intervention), students rewrote and resubmitted their application documents. This feedback helped them shift their perspective from writing about themselves ('egocentric anchoring'; Epley, Keysar, Van Boven, & Gilovich, 2004) to taking over a recruiter's perspective and adjusting their messaging accordingly. In the tradition of writing intervention studies—and drawing on research on text analysis and cognitive empathy—we will present a framework on how students' ability to take over a recruiter's perspective can be assessed and improved.

Apart from responding to at least three essential requirements of the position specified in the ad, text analysis and assessment criteria include motivation statements that focus on the company and a change in I/you ratio. To validate assessment of student submissions, the assessments of two instructors and an actual recruiter are compared.

There are no findings yet, but a first statistical analysis, using a paired sample t-test, show a significant difference pre- and a post-intervention regarding the times requirements are addressed and the overall number of words. We are currently assessing student finalised submissions along with a recruiter and plan to publish the results in a journal.

Takeaways

Although two-way communication will be much more common in the professional world, this emphasis is not that obvious in the business communication curriculum, or it is outsourced to courses on interpersonal communication that essentially address face-to-face communication and sometimes even exclude mediated or written communication. However, in a post-pandemic world, an increasing amount of social interaction is mediated. Thus, effective, audience-focused writing may have just gained in importance. The question is: which audience? We believe that business schools should focus on delivering meaningful contexts that help students take an addressee's unique perspective into account in their writing. Writing application documents to a real job ad can deliver such a context. In addition, because they are writing about themselves ('egocentric anchoring'), shifting perspective to recruiters and their selection criteria can require an effort that is worthwhile to make. The benefits are easy to understand and draw on familiar experience.

References

Epley, N., Keysar, B., Van Boven, L., & Gilovich, T. (2004). Perspective Taking as Egocentric Anchoring and Adjustment. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 87(3), 327–339.

Hargie, O. (2011). Skilled Interpersonal Communication. Research, Theory and Practice. London, Routledge.

Magnifico, A. M. (2010). Writing for Whom? Cognition, Motivation, and a Writer's Audience. *Educational Psychologist*, 45(3), 167-184.

Short, J., Williams, E., & Christie, B. (1976). *The Social Psychology of Telecommunications*. London: John Wiley & Sons.

Sullivan, P.B., & Carr, C.T. (2017). Masspersonal Communication: A Model Bridging the Mass-Interpersonal Divide. *New Media & Society*, 20 (3), 1161–1180.

USING OPINION MINING TO UNDERSTAND STUDENT EVALUATION OF TEACHING

Lynn Bradley, Lecturer in Accounting and Finance, Adam Smith Business School, University of Glasgow

Dr Yunhyong Kim, Lecturer in Information Studies, School of Humanities, University of Glasgow

Dr Geethanjali Selvaretnam, Senior Lecturer in Economics, Adam Smith Business School, University of Glasgow

Introduction

Teachers often find it hard to discern key messages from large volumes of textual feedback, which may not be clear.

Universities regularly use student evaluations of teaching (SET) to obtain feedback to inform improvements to courses. Literature points to cognitive challenges in using SET meaningfully. Teachers often find it hard to discern key messages from large volumes of textual feedback, which may not be clear. There is a tendency to focus on the categorical data, such as Likert scores, at the expense of the open textual feedback. Teachers can be biased in their interpretation of feedback, focussing on negative feedback rather than on a balanced analysis of the feedback. Receiving feedback can be a bruising experience which can impact negatively on not only their mental health but also their teaching practices. They can become defensive, avoid improvements, and attribute outcomes to factors out of their control. Cognitive biases can make it difficult to identify actions that will provide better student learning experiences in subsequent years.

Opinion mining (OM) involves extracting phrases, words, or parts of words from a body of text; making a judgment about whether they indicate expression of positive, negative or neutral sentiment; and summarising this information explicitly. Researchers have become aware of how OM (also related to educational data mining or sentiment analysis) can contribute to SET. OM can add value to written feedback by identifying patterns and themes. It can help make sense of large volumes of textual data and extract meanings that might otherwise be obscured. It helps ensure that the teacher does not overlook key points. Although usually there is a relationship between quantitative and qualitative feedback, this might not be discovered consistently when reviewed manually, and OM can help us to bring consistency to how we understand the relationship.

For our study, we implemented an OM app designed to carry out sentiment analysis of SET to combat some the biases above. (Development of the app was funded by a grant from the University of Glasgow's Learning Enhancement and Academic Development Service.) We investigated whether, with our design, it can moderate the effects of biases in human interpretation and assist in extracting more value from the written feedback and useful insights. The OM tool was tested on the 2017/18 SET forms in five courses in a business school in a Scottish university, comprising both undergraduate (UG) and postgraduate (PG) of various sizes. See Table 1. The data used for the analysis were from those who consented in accordance with the ethics approval.

Table 1: Number of Feedback Forms

Course	No. Students	No. who filled the forms	No. of usable forms with consent
Auditing (UG)	94	52	41
Audit, Risk & Control (PG)	189	106	81
Introductory Economics (UG)	177	65	49
Intermediate Microeconomics (UG)	318	82	81
Economics of Poverty, Discrimination and Development (UG)	24	12	12

At the University of Glasgow, students complete an online questionnaire anonymously towards the end of each course and the results of the SET are provided to the teachers in a summarised form. Some questions are answered by giving a score out of five using a Likert-type scale and two questions require a textual response. The contents of a typical questionnaire is given in Table 2.

Table 2: SET Survey Questionnaire

	1. Strongly agree	2. Agree	3. Neither agree nor disagree	4. Disagree	5. Strongly disagree
The lecturer explained things well					
The course was intellectually stimulating					
I am satisfied with the overall quality of this course					
I understood what was expected of me on this course					
The course met my expectations					
The criteria used in marking have been made clear in advance					
I would recommend this course to other students					
What was good about the course?					
How could this course be improved					

Teachers receive a summarised report showing the number and percentage of students who responded, and the median score for each of the five scored questions along with a chart showing the proportion voting for each score and all of the textual comments; some examples are shown in Figures 1 and 2 respectively. For large courses, the textual feedback can be very lengthy, running to hundreds of lines of text. Furthermore, we cannot identify how a single student answers all of the questions.

Figure 1: Non-textual feedback for Economics of Poverty, Discrimination and Development Course

Figure 2: Examples of textual SET from the original SET forms for Economics of Poverty, Discrimination and Development Course

What was good about the course?

- Discussion is plentiful and I'm sure every student will agree that the best way of learning is to discuss the issue. The course also examined real life scenarios as opposed to relying on hypothetical analysis.
- In-course exam looked at knowledge of course as opposed to ability to reproduce information.
- She really got everyone engaged. This helps to reiterate understanding enabling us to do well in tasks.
- The policy application aspect was very beneficial, requiring lots of critical thinking which I feel lacks in a lot of economics courses.
- The exam process I actually thought was very good, the idea at least anyway. It will need smoothing over a bit, but I feel it should carry on in the future.
- We had speakers to tell us the real life effects of our course.

How could this course he Improved?

- Although the application of theory was very good, the actual material was quite simplistic.
- I don't believe the methods of assessment used worked for this course, the in course group exam was too long and complicated for the actual material examined and I believe that its unnecessary to do the policy essay in groups.
- Maybe try to bring more guest speakers to make the content more interesting.
- No improvements, I love the new style of exams and tests, it's something different and I enjoy that
- Less duration of the exams.
- More examples from developing countries and support some formular using realistic current examples.

Discussion about OM Functionality and Output

Using the OM app is simple. The anonymised SET was received by the researchers in CSV files which can be directly uploaded to the OM app. The output is colourful, clear and informative and this made the app attractive to use. Although more aesthetically presented, at first glance, the output about the non-textual questions (Figures 3 and 4) does not appear to be more informative than the standard SET analysis in Figure 1.

However, what is very useful is that unlike the standard SET, the OM app can be filtered to provide more information – students' comments by question and by Likert score (Figure 5).

For example, using a drop-down menu it is possible to identify all the comments made by the students who gave a score of 3 for the statement, 'I am satisfied with the overall quality of the course'. It is possible to see what these students thought was good about the course and what they thought could be improved. It is also possible to see what these same students responded to the other questions.

Figure 3: OM non-textual output for Economics of Poverty, Discrimination and Development Course, total results

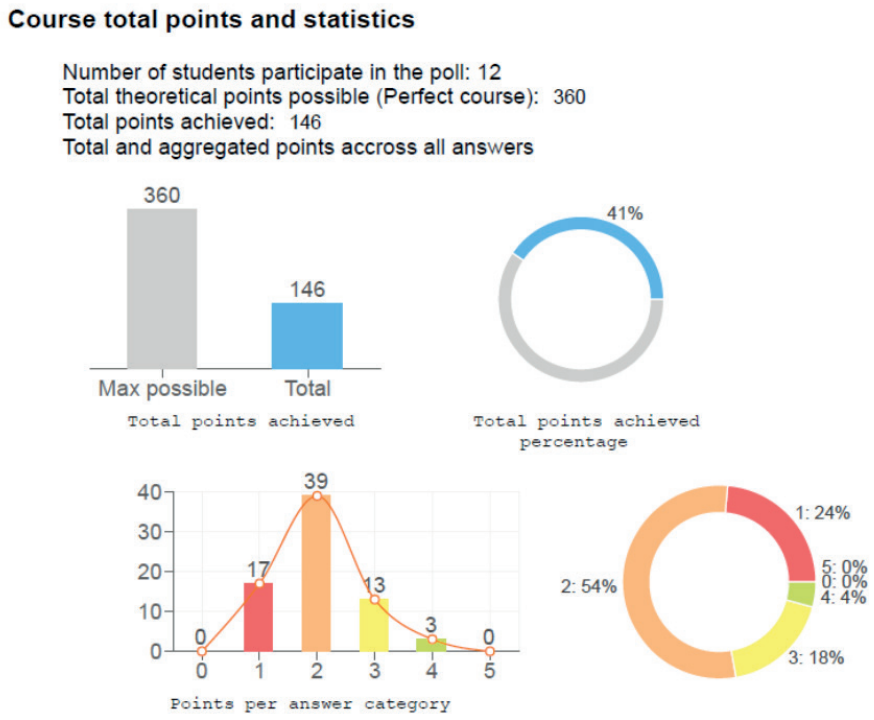


Figure 4: OM non-textual output for Economics of Poverty, Discrimination and Development Course, single question: I am satisfied with the overall quality of the course

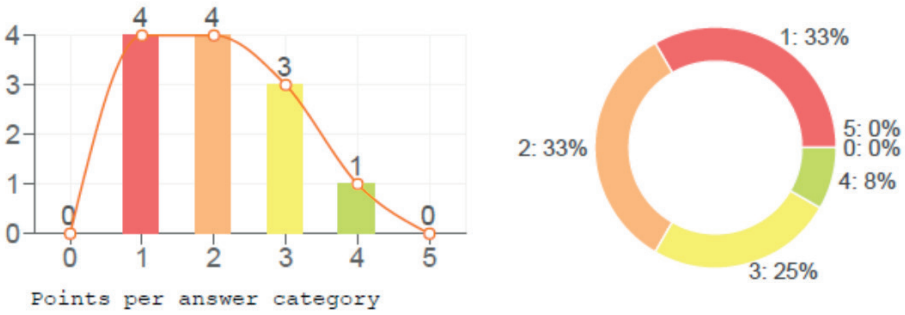
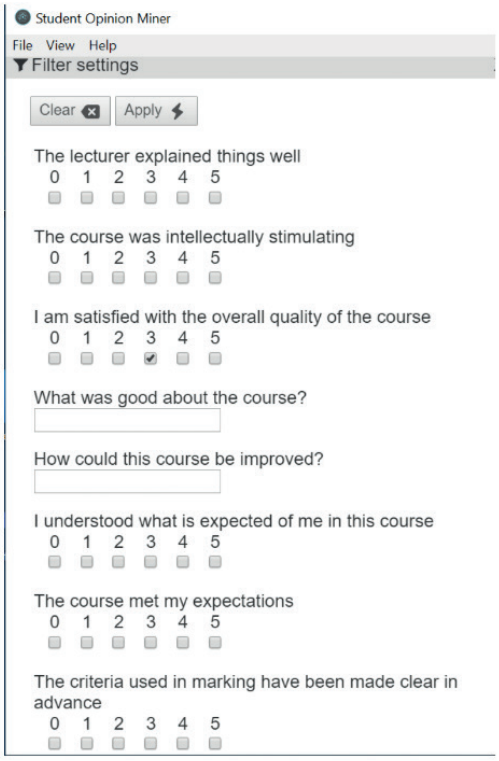
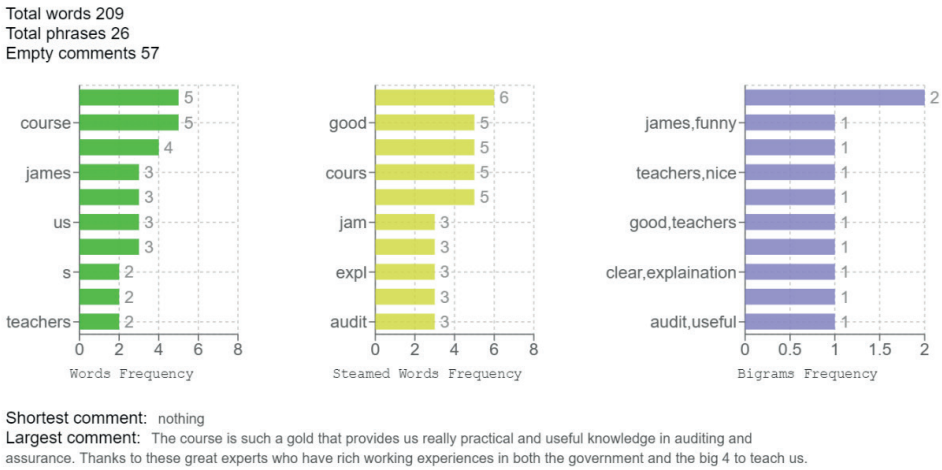


Figure 5: OM output, filter settings



Textual SET can be analysed to reveal further insights. Teachers can see the frequency of words and phrases allowing them to identify common themes, and in turn enable them to check whether there are any associations between the numerical scores and the textual scores. We found that the way the OM ranks and counts words makes it easier to identify issues that would otherwise be missed due to information overload or ambiguity. Furthermore, the analysis of the text identifies the longest and the shortest statement from students for ease of understanding. Figure 6 shows the OM output for 'What was good about the course?'

Figure 6: OM textual output for Audit, Risk & Control Course, single question: What was good about the course?



One person's interpretation might be different to that of another person who views the same outputs.

The OM output is more flexible and informative than the usual SET output because of the facility to check whether there are connections between the textual and non-textual data. For example, do students who scored questions as a '1' only give positive comments? The ability to explore the data by filtering results and analyse links between the responses to different questions meant that the researchers could extract meaningful information not possible in the traditional method. This encouraged the researchers to approach the SET with a more positive and enquiring attitude.

Another important benefit is that this OM app reduces cognitive biases and facilitates better analysis of data to extract more meaningful information. It prevents unnecessary knee-jerk reactions by teachers to written comments which are strongly worded or long. Moreover, because the app highlights positive comments, this had a positive effect on the attitude of the researchers to the data; they felt more inclined to explore the data and seek meaning. A holistic view can be taken so that better decisions to improve the course may be made.

It is important to point out that despite the many benefits, the value of pedagogic judgment is not diminished because of the OM app. One person's interpretation might be different to that of another person who views the same outputs. Ultimately, the teacher must decide whether a comment requires action. An advantage of the app is that issues which are mentioned by several students are highlighted and so if they do not lead to action, that will not be because they were not noticed by the teacher.

Conclusion

This project has demonstrated that a specifically designed OM app can add value to existing SET data, enabling teachers to overcome cognitive challenges to elicit information effectively. We are taking steps to develop the OM app further to be more user-friendly, make it web-based and test it widely.

References

Arthur, L. (2009). From performativity to professionalism: lecturers' responses to student feedback. Teaching in Higher Education, 14(4), 441–454. https://doi.org/10.1080/13562510903050228

Baumeister, R. F., Bratslavsky, E., Finkenauer, C., & Vohs, K. D. (2001). Bad is Stronger than Good. Review of General Psychology, 5(4), 323–370. https://doi.org/10.1037/1089-2680.5.4.323

Dhanalakshmi, V., Bino, D., & Saravanan, A. M. (2016). Opinion mining from student feedback data using supervised learning algorithms. 2016 3rd MEC International Conference on Big Data and Smart City (ICBDSC), 1–5. https://doi.org/10.1109/ICBDSC.2016.7460390

Gottipati, S., Shankararaman, V., & Gan, S. (2017). A conceptual framework for analyzing students' feedback. 2017 IEEE Frontiers in Education Conference (FIE), 1–8. https://doi.org/10.1109/FIE.2017.8190703

Gottipati, S., Shankararaman, V., & Lin, J. R. (2018). Text analytics approach to extract course improvement suggestions from students' feedback. Research and Practice in Technology Enhanced Learning, 13(1). https://doi.org/10.1186/s41039-018-0073-0

Hand, D. J. (1999). Statistics and data mining: Intersecting disciplines. SIGKDD Explorations 1(1): 16-19. http://kdd.org/exploration_files/hand.pdf

Harper & Kuh (2007). Myths and misconceptions about using qualitative methods in assessment. New Directions for Institutional Research, 136, 5–14. https://doi.org/10.1002/ir.227

Joshi, A., Kale, S., Chandel, S. & Pal, D. K. (2015). Likert Scale: Explored and Explained, British Journal of Applied Science & Technology 7(4): 396-403, 2015

Kannan, R., Bielikova, M., Andres, F. & Balasundaram, S.R. (2011). Understanding honest feedbacks and opinions in academic environments. In Proceedings of the Fourth Annual ACM

Bangalore Conference (COMPUTE '11). ACM, New York, NY, USA, Article 21, 4 pages.

http://dx.doi.org/10.1145/1980422.1980443

Lahtinen, A-M. (2008). University Teachers' Views on the Distressing Elements of Pedagogical Interaction, Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research, 52:5, 481-493

https://doi.org/10.1080/00313830802346363

Liu, B. (2010). Sentiment Analysis and Subjectivity in Handbook of Natural Language Processing, Second Edition, (editors: N. Indurkhya and F. J. Damerau)

Moore, S., and N. Kuol. (2005). Students evaluating teachers: Exploring the importance of faculty reaction to feedback on teaching. Teaching in Higher Education 10, no. 1: 5773. https://doi.org/10.1080/1356251052000305534

Newman, H., & Joyner, D. (2018). Sentiment Analysis of Student Evaluations of Teaching. In C. Penstein Rosé, R. Martínez-Maldonado, H. U. Hoppe, R. Luckin, M. Mavrikis, K. Porayska-Pomsta, B. McLaren, & B. du Boulay (Eds.), Artificial Intelligence in Education (Vol. 10948, pp. 246–250). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-93846-2_45.

Pang, B. & Lee, L. (2008). Opinion mining and sentiment analysis. Foundations and Trends in Information Retrieval Vol. 2, p1–135. DOI: 10.1561/1500000001

Richardson, J. T. E. (2005). Instruments for obtaining student feedback: a review of the literature. Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education. Vol. 30 Issue 4, p387-415. https://doi.org/10.1080/02602930500099193

Rowe, A. D., Fitness, J., & Wood, L. N. (2014). The role and functionality of emotions in feedback at university: a qualitative study. The Australian Educational Researcher, 41(3), 283–309. https://doi.org/10.1007/s13384-013-0135-7

Shokouhi, M., White, R. and Yilmaz. E. (2015) Anchoring and Adjustment in Relevance Estimation. InProceedings of the 38th International ACM SIGIR Conference on Research and Development in Information Retrieval (SIGIR '15). ACM, New York, NY, USA, 963-966.http://dx.doi.org/10.1145/2766462.2767841

Sullivan, G. M. & Artino Jr, A.R. (2013). Analyzing and Interpreting Data From Likert-Type Scales. Journal of Graduate Medical Education: December 2013, Vol. 5, No. 4, pp. 541-542.

THEME:
DEVELOPING ENTERPRISING, ETHICAL AND WORK-READY GRADUATES

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS PROGRAMME IN A GLOBAL PANDEMIC: DELIGHTS AND PITFALLS

Dr Sarah Borthwick Saddler, Lecturer in Accounting;
Dr Kat Rezai, Lecturer in Marketing;
Dr Ana Paula Fonseca, Lecturer in Strategy and Sustainability;
Dr Patrick Harte, School Academic Lead for Student Experience;
Dr Gerald Melvin, Lecturer in Strategy;
Dr Joan McLatchie, Senior Lecturer in Tourism;
Nick Fannin, Head of Enterprise;
Serena Richardson, School Support Administrator;
Katrina Swanton, Head of Quality and Enhancement.
All authors affiliated with Edinburgh Napier University.

This paper is based on a poster which illustrated the creation, launch and delivery of the new undergraduate online Employability Skills Programme (ESP) during a global pandemic for over 2,500 students. In developing work-ready business school graduates, we are increasingly presented with evidence that employers now want more than discipline-specific skills. In January 2020, the ESP working group, chaired by the School Lead for Student Experience, comprised a cross-collaboration with careers and enterprise advisers, subject teaching groups and administrators to design the programme, launching in September 2020. The aim of this programme is twofold. First, to develop the four Cs of employability skills: Curiosity, Communication, Critical thinking, and Collaboration.

Second, to provide students with a continuous employability skills audit (Career Pulse) to build their interpersonal and workplace attributes. The programme was compulsory but non-credit-bearing, however, now carries micro-credentials.

The Confederation of British Industry (CBI) defines employability skills as the attributes, skills, and knowledge that all actors in the labour market should possess to ensure that they can be effective in the workplace (Hayes, 2018). Managers and leaders need to be prepared to engage with the 'VUCA environment': volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity (Bennis & Nanus, 1987; Bennett & Lemoine, 2014). The ESP is designed to develop skills that are pivotal to the success of work-ready graduates and lay the groundwork for understanding the challenging environment within which they operate.

This programme was fully launched online via digital learning technologies deliver the live sessions with each student group and facilitate teamwork collaborations. We used MS Teams as the core platform to run the sessions as this is one of the most popular communication platforms used in the workplace. Virtual Learning Environments (Moodle) were also utilised to display essential and additional learning materials, with YouTube and Panopto used for pre-recorded lectures. The programme was split into four 'skills development weeks' spread from September to February.

These workshops were facilitated by lecturers, with a variety of interactive and pre-recorded sessions.

Students developed and applied their employability skills through a Sustainable Development Goal (SGD5, Gender Equality) challenge founded in their subject discipline, collaborating in groups to solve the respective problem. An online business simulation was also implemented for final-year students to help consolidate their prior subject knowledge alongside the Four Cs to support future employability. Students presented a variety of creative and enterprising solutions to various subject-based gender equality problems. The feedback was provided by a range of ESP tutors and stakeholders, where prizes were given for the best solutions. This SDG theme raised awareness on gender-based diversity and inclusion challenges in the students' respective disciplines. Applying SDGs to the ESP helps to develop ethically conscious work-ready graduates.

The pedagogic approach centred upon reflective learning. Reflection is a central concept used in social sciences to explore and understand the students and industry needs (Argyris and Schön, 1996). Students were assessed through an individual report using Gibbs's (1998) reflective model to reflect on their learning experience. Students saw the value in their self-reflection, particularly about their skills development and subsequently prepared an action plan regarding their future skillset (Cottrell, 2010; Fisher, 2011). Students acknowledged the importance of working as a team using digital platforms. More importantly, working together to identify and test solutions to real-world business challenges enabled students to develop essential collaboration, communication and professional skills.

The ESP model is a showcase to the wider university how to apply and embed enterprise and employability skills in the academic curriculum. ESP will also be rolled out to all postgraduate students as well as those overseas. Furthermore, there are opportunities to commercialise the programme externally, linking back to our industry stakeholders previously consulted. ESP educates and raises awareness of vital social issues concerning students' respective disciplines, enabling ethically conscious work-ready graduates. Using the UN's SDGs throughout ESP highlights the university's commitment to sustainability. The poster (Figure 1) was presented at the CABS – LTSE 2021 Conference to illustrate the development of the ESP.

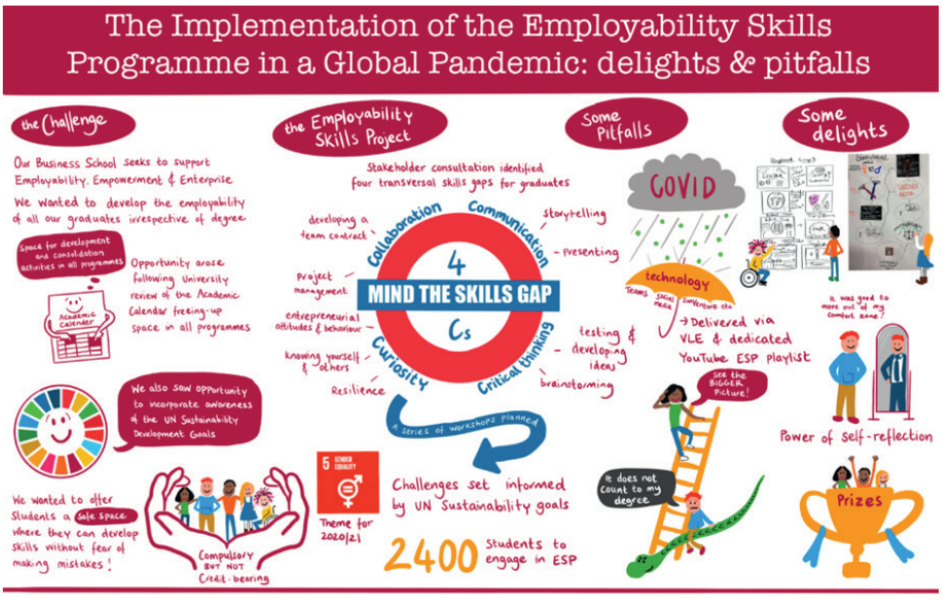


Figure 1. Source: Visuals by Swanton (2021)

Ontological and epistemological approaches, such as action learning (MacKenzie and Kozubska, 2012) and action research (Coghlan and Brannick, 2014; Lewin, Cranmer and

McNicol, 2018), were applied as part of developing the programme. Feedback was sought through quantitative (survey) and a focus group in the form of a Student-Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC), to gain student feedback.

Positive feedback revolved around the opportunity to work in pre-allocated groups, mirroring the real-life working environment. In addition, groupwork enabled students to co-create and meet new people, to collaborate and socialise during the pandemic, which was especially welcomed by new students. The ESP also allowed students to reflect on their employability skills, which helped to enhance their curriculum vitae.

- Challenging at the outset but so great to work with people in an otherwise quite isolated year
- On reflection, it was really beneficial to be pushed out of comfort zone – even though I wouldn't have said this at the start
- Feel more confident for interview exercises and for going into professional employment situation
- Learned about how I react to other people – those who contribute too much and those who don't contribute enough!
- Realised that in lots of situations I won't know or understand everything, but I will have to get the job done to the best of my ability
- Enjoyed taking safe risks

Some students struggled to engage effectively with the combination of technology and group work, as all tasks were conducted via digital platforms. In addition, students struggled to understand the benefits of experiential learning rather than gaining credits or awards. However, the primary criticism revolved around the conflation of what is meant by 'employment' and 'employability skills'.

For example, some students associated 'employability' with job attainments rather than developing essential workplace skills to become more employable graduates. The launch of the ESP during the pandemic was challenging but, most importantly, successful. Using our teaching philosophy of action learning and action research, we have responded to the feedback by implementing changes to the structure of ESP for September 2021.

References

Argyris, C. and Schön, D. A., (1996). *Organizational Learning II. Theory, Method, and Practice.* Reading: Addison-Wesley.

Bennett, N. and Lemoine, J., (2014). *What VUCA really means for you.* Harvard Business Review. Volume 92, Issue 1/2, pp.27

Bennis, W. and Nanus, B., (1987). *Leaders: strategies for taking charge.* New York: HarperCollins Publishers.

Cottrell, S., (2010). *Skills for Success: The personal development planning handbook.* Palgrave Macmillan

Fisher, A., (2011). *Critical Thinking, An Introduction.* Cambridge University Press

Gibbs, G., (1988). *Learning by Doing: A guide to teaching and learning methods.* Further Education Unit. Oxford Polytechnic: Oxford.

Hayes, J., (2018). *The theory and practice of change management.* Palgrave.

Lewin, C., Cranmer, S., and McNicol, S., (2018). *Developing digital pedagogy through learning design: An activity theory perspective.* British Journal of Educational Technology, 49(6), 1131–1144. https://doi.org/10.1111/bjet.12705

MacKenzie, B. & Kozubska, J., (2012). *Differences and impacts through action learning.* Action Learning: Research and Practice, 9(2), pp. 145 - 164.

AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENTS AND EMPLOYABILITY: WHAT USE IS AUTHENTICITY IF NOT UNDERSTOOD OR APPLIED?

Dr Sarah Montano, Senior Lecturer in Marketing, Birmingham Business School
Lucy Wild, Careers Consultant, Birmingham Business School

Introduction

This paper uses an MSc marketing module assessment to demonstrate how authentic assessments support student employability skills development. We illustrate how we have created an infrastructure to support students, to ensure that skills development is not siloed within modules, but rather we show how students can showcase their work in a competitive graduate market (Fuller 2021) where students have to, have something 'different' on their CV to help them stand out. We argue that, whilst creating authentic innovative assessments is important, this is only the start point, what is needed is for students to understand how to use their newly found skills to demonstrate their employment potential.

Conceptual Framework

This case study blends together two key areas of current interest within the sector – that of authentic digital assessments and employability skill development. Innovation within curricula is a positive step forward however, we also need to not just consider the innovations but how students can showcase newfound skills. Despite the focus of many business schools on employability and embedding much needed skills into the curricula (Jackson 2013), employers are still concerned that there is a skills gap and that 'someone' needs to take responsibility for this (Somerville 2019). Jackson (2013) argues that this skills gap may be in part due to stakeholders assuming that skills transfer occurs automatically within students.

Critically, this case study responds to these calls (Jackson et al., 2013; Succi and Canovi, 2020) and supports students' need to become aware of skill development. Crucially, even when students undertake an authentic assessment that mirrors industry practice, this still may not lead to students understanding the skills gained. Our case study demonstrates how students are now able to understand exactly what skills they have gained: articulate these to employers and digitally showcase their work.

Several years ago, the authors identified that face-to-face standard presentations did not support students in their need to gain creative digital skills for the future workplace nor mirror industry practice. They created a digital retail authentic assessment, as a device to ensure that such skills are developed (Sotiriadou et al., 2020). ISE (2021) also support authentic assessments by noting that experiential learning is an effective approach for students to gain needed skills. The key principle is that 'authenticity' helps students understand the complexity of work, contextualise their own skills and allows students to develop new work ready skills (Ashford-Rowe et al., 2014) particularly, as employers, WEF (2020) and QS (2019) identify that graduates do not have work-ready skills. The key skills gaps are critical thinking, analysis, creativity and active learning and these skills are likely to be in high demand as jobs change over the next five years and the disruption of Covid-19 is felt (WEF (2020) and QS (2019). Furthermore, there is a gap between what employers want and how student perceive their own skills (QS 2019; Succi and Canovi, 2020).

Indeed, what use is authenticity if students do not understand the skills gained and skills are not demonstrated to the very industry professionals that the assessment supports?

Student feedback is that the infrastructure has enabled them to secure marketing roles and stand out from other graduates.

Impact

This case student demonstrates impact on teaching and assessment in business schools in the following ways:

Students are able to:

- demonstrate to future employers their new skills gained
- instantly put applied skills into practice, this is particularly important for those students who do not take a multinational management trainee programme and need to hit the ground running
- articulate their newly developed skills. Student feedback is that the infrastructure has enabled them to secure marketing roles and stand out from other graduates.

Academics note that:

- this case study answers the call from Herbert et al. (2020) that as global competition for graduate work is increasing, understanding how to use assessments to support student skill development is vital as we emerge from the pandemic
- as employers have been cancelling work experience programmes (Holt-White and Montacute 2020) it has become even more imperative that students have the opportunity to carry out practical projects and apply their skills via authentic assessments.

The Careers Service note that:

- students are now talking about their careers illustrating the relationship we've both established between the module – industry – their own careers, providing inspiration for career goals
- the authentic assessment enable students to gain skills in an area they previously not have experienced which inspires them to develop 'vertical' areas of expertise
- the authentic assessment infrastructure allows students to showcase high demand skills (e.g. digital, curiosity and learning agility). Of note, it is supporting students to enable to understand that they have developed the mindset required to manage their career.

Conclusion

This case study has direct relevance for the practice and scholarship of teaching within business schools. In particular, we uniquely demonstrate originality and why it is important to not just offer authentic assessments but also to build in careers support so that students can articulate and demonstrate their newly developed creative, analytical and digital skills, as students do not just absorb these skills (Jackson, 2013). Even with creative assessments that are designed to mirror industry practice, additional support must be put in place to help the students understand the relationship between the assessment and industry practice.

Given the pandemic and the increasingly competitive graduate marketplace, it is essential that as business schools we do not become sidetracked by exciting digital innovative authentic assessments, but that we integrate support within modules and programmes for students, so that students can articulate and demonstrate their newfound skills to ensure career success.

References

Ashford-Rowe, K; Herrington, J and Brown, C. (2014) *Establishing the Critical Elements That Determine Authentic Assessment; Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education* 39 (2): 205–22.

CEBR (2018) *The Economic Impact of Digital inclusion in the UK: A report for Good Things Foundation* https://www.goodthingsfoundation.org/sites/default/files/research-publications/the_economic_impact_of_digital_inclusion_in_the_uk_final_submission_stc_0.pdf Accessed 17th March 2021.

Fuller, G (2021) *Covid economic fallout leads to rise in postgraduate applications,* The Guardian https://www.theguardian.com/education/2021/feb/16/covid-economic-fallout-leads-to-rise-in-postgraduate-applications Accessed 17th March 2021.

Herbert, I; Rothwell, A; Glover, J and Lambert, S. (2020) *Graduate employability, employment prospects and work-readiness in the changing field of professional work*; The International Journal of Management Education, Vol 18(2): 1-13.

Holt-White, E and Montacute, R. (2020) Covid-19 and Social Mobility Impact Brief #5: *Graduate Recruitment and Access to the Workplace;* https://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Access-to-the-Workplace-Impact-Brief.pdf Accessed 17th March 2021.

ISE (2021) ISE Student Development Survey; https://ise.org.uk/page/ISEPublications. Accessed 17th March 2021.

Jackson, D. (2013) B*usiness graduate employability – where are we going wrong?*; Higher Education Research & Development, Vol. 32(5): 776-790.

Jackson, D; Sibson, R and Riebe, L. (2013) *Delivering work-ready business graduates – keeping our promises and evaluating our performance*; Journal for Teaching and Learning for Graduate Employability, Vol 4(1): 2-22.

Langley, E. (2019) This is how the UK can stay ahead of the game with digital skills according to an expert, Evening Standard. 18th June 2019.

QS (2019) Global Skills Gap Report https://www.qs.com/portfolio-items/the-global-skills-gap-report-2019/. Accessed 17th March 2021.

Somerville, S. (2019) *Taking responsibility for the graduate skills gap* https://luminate.prospects.ac.uk/taking-responsibility-for-the-graduate-skills-gap Accessed 17th March 2021

Sotiriadou, P; Logan, D; Daly, A and Guest, R. (2020) *The role of authentic assessment to preserve academic integrity and promote skill development and employability*, Studies in Higher Education, Vol 45 (11): 2132-2148.

Succi, C & Canovi, M. (2020) *Soft skills to enhance graduate employability: comparing students and employers' perceptions,* Studies in Higher Education, Vol: 45(9): 1834-1847.

WEF (2020) The Future of Jobs Report. http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Future_of_Jobs_2020.pdf. Accessed 17 March 2021.

CO-DESIGNING THE BUSINESS SCHOOL CURRICULUM WITH EMPLOYERS

Angela Dalrymple, Director of Education and Student Experience, London South Bank University Business School
Angela Ellermeier, Head of Careers and Employability, London South Bank University Business School

London South Bank University (LSBU) has a distinctive mission to transform the lives of students from diverse backgrounds. Our students interact entrepreneurially with our vibrant south London civic community, addressing real-world challenges.

We are located in an area with high ethnic diversity, economic deprivation and low higher education participation rates, including:

- 2,400 business students (12,400 LSBU overall) – 64% of which are BAME, and mostly first in their family into higher education;
- Average BAME awarding gap to 2019 was 17.9% (compared with an average of 22% in UK business schools.

Civic enterprise and entrepreneurship have always been LSBU core values, recognised by winning Times Higher's Entrepreneurial University of the Year. We have developed extensive partnerships with employers and professional bodies to reduce inequalities and transform student life chances, and we offer applied education and assessment to inspire business ready graduates. Students who join us with low social capital become highly employable graduates.

However, new societal factors are putting ever-increasing pressure on LSBU to ensure students leave us as both entrepreneurial and highly employable.

We therefore undertook a complete re-imagining of our curriculum, to incorporate direct input from employers regarding the skills they wanted to see students emerging from our curriculum with, e.g.:

- Digital skills
- Engagement, leadership and proactivity
- Communication and networking
- Ethical values, social entrepreneurship and innovation
- Active and applied problem-based learning
- Ability to succeed in authentic and applied assessment/experiential learning
- Placements, internships, and micro/macro credentials.

We were inspired by key frameworks such as Yorke's call (2006) to embed career development activities into the curriculum, and Fugate's psychosocial model (2004), that student employability should become adaptable to disruptive changes across society.

Most compelling however was Fung's Connected Curriculum concept (2017), advocating a throughline connecting students, employers and academics with skills for professional work and future social capital.

We therefore redesigned employability into and around the curriculum. This resulted in hugely increased capacity of LSBU students to simulate real-life work-based adaptability, and increase metacognitive skills for the workplace.

We engaged with employers to co-design employability attributes needed in subject areas such as accounting, marketing and economics. In a series of review sessions that brought together employers, course teams and alumni, the original course designs were reviewed, potential gaps as well as market trends identified, and suggestions for the design of the new academic frameworks collated and refined in an iterative process.

Curriculum-based elements now include e.g.:

- Employer guest speaker sessions, case studies, simulations, consultancy projects, and advisory boards, assuring applied student entrepreneurial and enterprise orientation;
- New Level 5 Employability module;
- New Level 6 Volunteering module;
- Course accreditation by key professional bodies such as the Institute of Enterprise and Entrepreneurs (IOEE);
- Focus on employability action planning, workshops and 'bootcamps';
- Employer co-design of authentic and applied assessment, including business simulations.

This generated a connected curriculum from Levels S-7, scaffolding applied and entrepreneurial learning, and increasing student social capital.

These modules provide students with insights in current career development research, theories and models.

As a result of employer input, our new academic framework emphasises work-based, community-related and employer-linked activities, including live cases, simulations and consultancy projects. This, in turn, has led to more authentic and applied assessments, based on experiential learning. In addition, there has been a marked increase in opportunities for and take-up of placements, internships and micro/macro credentials.

Our new dedicated employability modules are part of the core provision at L5 across our entire suite of undergraduate courses, ensuring all students receive in-depth career development input in their penultimate year. These modules provide students with insights in current career development research, theories and models; a range of practical group career coaching interventions designed to encourage students' engagement with their own career development and career decision making; hands-on career research, job hunting, networking and job application skills, ensuring students are ready to succeed in competitive recruitment and selection processes; as well as frequent input from practitioners, professional bodies, alumni, employers and recruiters, who ensure course-specific employability skills are emphasised and provide students with first-hand world of work knowledge and tips for success in the workplace.

We provide an extensive school-based extracurricular employability and enterprise programme, including weekly career workshops, skills sessions, a Job Hunting Club for final year students, a student-run consultancy, as well as a wide variety of Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR)-badged activities, skills sessions and events, which students can access beyond their graduation. Offer holders at undergraduate level can book 20-minute appointments for 'career chats, and at Level 7 are encouraged to complete a pre-sessional careers bootcamp to ensure they are able to hit the ground running when it comes to their career planning.

Key early results include:

- Increased participation in enterprise-focused activities, including 60% increase in placements and internships
- 20% increase in employers contributing to applied learning
- 48% reduction in closed book exams in favour of applied coursework
- 15% increase in student NSS assessment satisfaction
- 18% increase in course applications.

Overall, LSBU Business School found it highly effective to work with employers to co-create and reimagine our employability curriculum. By combining a holistic connected curriculum framework with psychosocial models of social capital development and employability, curriculum redesign continues to be both scalable and transferable, e.g. to postgraduate courses.

We will continue to measure increases in employability student attributes against labour market and graduate outcomes, and to design further beneficial curriculum interventions.

We plan to increase employer curriculum co-creation through new initiatives with enterprises such as Southwark Chamber of Commerce, providing increased opportunities for apprenticeships and entrepreneurship start-ups across the civic community for our students.

References

Fugate, M., Kinicki, AJ, & Ashforth, BE (2004) *Employability: A Psycho-Social construct, Its Dimensions, and Applications.* Journal of Vocational Behaviour, August 2004.

Fung, D. (2017) *A Connected Curriculum for Higher Education.* London: UCL Press.

Yorke, M. & Knight, PT (2006) *Embedding employability into the curriculum*. Esect / The Higher Education Academy.

USING LINKEDIN IN THE CURRICULUM: HOW PRE-PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT AND CELEBRATING SUCCESS ENHANCES GRADUATES' WORK-READINESS

Julie Fowlie, Principal Lecturer, School of Business and Law, University of Brighton
Dr Clare Forder, Senior Lecturer, School of Business and Law, University of Brighton

Introduction

Through the lens of pre-professional identity development (Jackson, 2016) linked with the concept of graduate capital (Tomlinson, 2017), we will argue that the use of LinkedIn enhances students' employability as it encourages career preparation beyond the typical focus on skills (Fowlie and Forder, 2019). By discussing how this has been embedded in two final-year core business modules, we will also highlight how assessment of students' use of LinkedIn has produced required outcomes (e.g. creation of a professional profile, completion of micro-credentials and posting certificates) but also some unintended consequences (Merton, 1936). These are often small in nature – a reaction to a post or an encouraging comment – but can also be more significant, such as a recommendation from a tutor, endorsements by colleagues, recognition from industry professionals, requests to share results of research projects. Supported by self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1994), we argue that these outcomes, positioned via LinkedIn as celebrating success, increase students' work readiness as they encourage further engagement with those in their intended industry or career, with the opportunity to develop Tomlinson's (2017) graduate capital model with the explicit inclusion of digital capital.

The ever-pressing need for universities to produce work-ready graduates (Barton et al, 2019; Pegg et al, 2012) means that measures to achieve this must move with the times. Before the Covid-19 pandemic, increasing numbers of graduates and a subsequently saturated jobs market had already seen a need for graduates' 'positional advantage' (Roulin and Bangerter, 2013). Typical approaches to employability encourage focus on skills and achievements to showcase 'work-readiness' (Archer and Davison, 2008; Mason et al, 2009) viewed as restrictive by Rowe and Zegwaard (2017), and can be argued that this overlooks the complexity of 'graduateness' and could do more to include concepts of identity (Hinchliffe and Jolly, 2011, p564).

One way of doing this is to go beyond typical skills-based approaches to developing students' employability). Jackson (2016) echoes Hinchliffe and Jolly (2011) by calling for a redefining of employability to include pre-professional identity formation. This broader view encourages students to consider the qualities, culture, conduct and ideology of their intended career (Jackson, 2016, p.926) and is one that has underpinned our approach here. This links with Tomlinson's (2017) graduate capital model (Figure 1).

We argue that using LinkedIn sustains these considerations that more traditional focuses on employability preclude, thereby producing students who are more confident in their work-readiness (Fowlie and Forder 2019). Now, mid-Covid-19 pandemic, where physical opportunities to maintain career development have contracted (Holt-White and Montacute, 2020), using LinkedIn has provided the virtual environment in which students can continue exploring and enhancing their employability (self-efficacy).

In addition, it has the added twofold benefit of some interesting unintended results: the small wins and specifically the celebration and acknowledgement that influence progress (Amabile and Kramer, 2011) and the conversational intelligence (seen here through interactions on LinkedIn) that strengthens success (Glaser, 2016) and build psychological capital (Tomlinson, 2017).

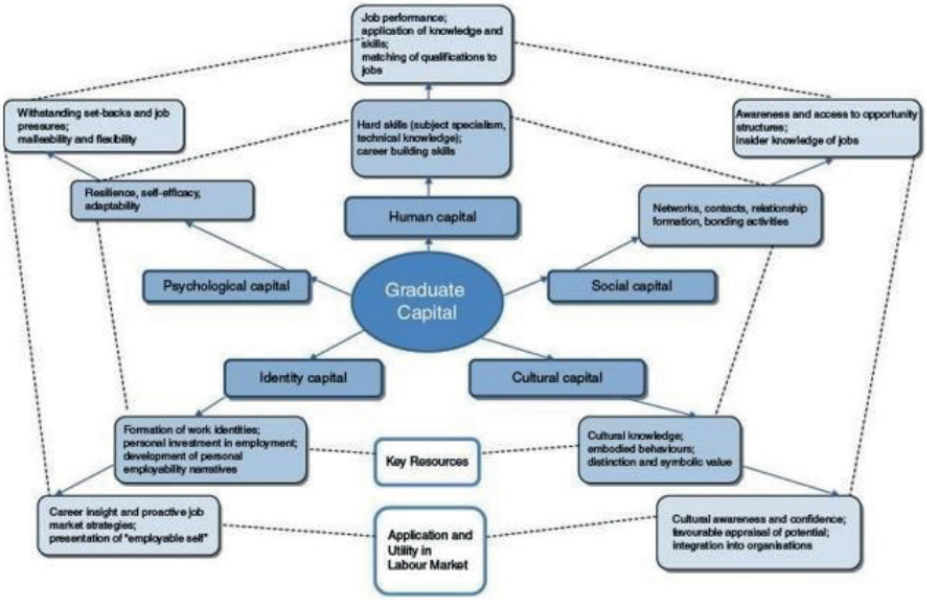


Figure 1: Tomlinson's (2017 pg. 370) Graduate Capital Model

Pre-Professional Identity Embedded in Final-Year Core Modules

Managing and Developing People is a core final-year module for all business and business with pathways students (286 students in 2020/21). It has at its centre an experiential activity; the students form self-selecting groups to design and run a development centre. Some 52 development centres were run over a three-week period in late November through early December in 20/21. These were facilitated online using MS Teams due to Covid-19. The students design and run a development centre but also then attend one as a participant with another group. One of the tasks is to write a non-judgmental feedback summary for a participant, which includes suggestions for professional development. The students are encouraged to use LinkedIn Learning courses to support this task. As a recognition of work undertaken as part of the module a general recommendation is added on LinkedIn to those students with a profile.

Developing Professional Practice in Business is also a core final-year module for a wider range of students but not those who have undertaken a placement (254 students in 2020/21). It has at its centre a live project. Students are formed into small groups and act as consultants working with a local business/charity to propose solutions to a current challenge the organisation is facing. As part of the assessment for the module the students complete six LinkedIn Learning courses of their choice (micro-credentials) and create a LinkedIn profile.

Methodology

With large numbers of students undertaking each of the modules in question per year, it was determined that a questionnaire would be the most appropriate means of collecting primary data to inform the study. Qualitative and quantitative questions were devised for this purpose, using module-specific secondary data (task completion), publicly available LinkedIn data, and concepts derived from our research on pre-professional identity, self-efficacy and celebrating success. Participants were provided with a definition of self-efficacy and a combination of open-ended and Likert-scale questions was used.

With Covid-19 potentially impacting recent and imminent graduates' employment status and thereby related responses to our research, we decided that it would be beneficial to

issue the questionnaire to not only students currently studying the modules 2020/21 but also to those who had undertaken them in 2019/20. This would also ensure a wider pool of participants who could talk about the unintended consequences of using LinkedIn, given that this may not have been immediately obvious during their studies, or may have occurred after graduation. Consequently, following ethical approval, the questionnaire was sent out via Linked Messages to 437 students and recent graduates. Some 197 responses were received for a response rate of 45%.

Analysis

It is hoped that a wide-scale project such as this will provide further understanding from pedagogic and student perspectives on the value and impact of embedding the use of LinkedIn into the curriculum and using the resulting celebration of small wins this invites to help enhance students' work readiness.

While a work in progress, results from our study suggest the following concrete outcomes:

- The pedagogical benefits of using LinkedIn to support students' pre-professional identity development (figure 2);
- The subsequent value of using the celebration of 'small wins' to further students' pre-professional identity and integration into their intended career or profession (figure 3);
- The value of using LinkedIn Learning courses to provide students with micro credentials (figure 4).

Figure 2: Benefit of Creating a Professional Profile

Qualitative comments – figure 2

'I managed to get my placement through LinkedIn. Additionally, good to reach out directly to recruiters who post jobs on there – helps to stand out of the crowd and makes it a little more personable'

'It has allowed me develop my skills by keeping updated with latest trends that will enhance my career development'

'Enabled me to network with people within my industry and understand external opportunities going forward'

'I have received many job opportunities through LinkedIn . . .'

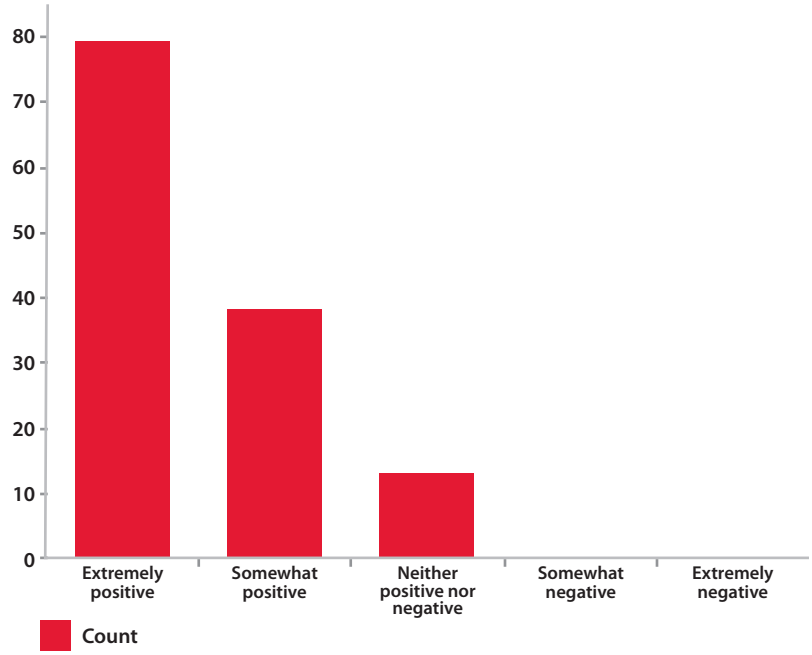


Figure 3: Response to Receiving a Recommendation on your Profile?

Qualitative comments – figure 3

'Recognition is always nice. Having that recommendation on my profile is something that I feel proud of. It's been a conversation topic in interviews and something I can show off'

'Makes me want to use LinkedIn more and share my development'

'I provided a recommendation back to the person not as a payback but because I worked with those people in a group and it was worth highlighting their strengths'

'It really boosted people's interest in my profile. And was also able to reference it during interviews.'

'Excited, and engaged with work and society.'

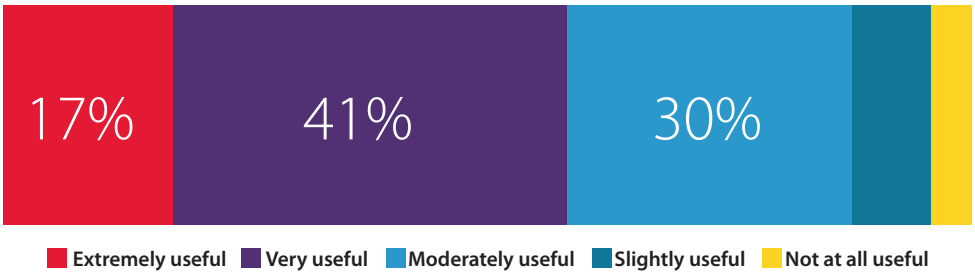


Figure 4: Benefit of Completing LinkedIn Learning Course

Qualitative comments – figure 4

'Over lockdown, the Excel course taught me a lot'

'Educated myself and it was great stuff to add to my CV'

'There a variety of skills to be learned from LinkedIn Learning, and they also provide you with a certificate which can be display on your profile.'

'LinkedIn learning has helped me to gain an in-depth insight into certain areas which aided in some areas of my University modules such as conducting development centres online and new primary research methods . . .'

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that pre-professional identity development through the use of LinkedIn not only helps embed employability into the business curriculum but also allows for the celebration of 'small wins' (Amabile and Kramer, 2011), allowing employability to become more inclusive as it helps students to transform attributes into personal capital and increases agentic behaviour (Fowlie and Forder, 2020). It can provide the means to build graduate capital in different forms as highlighted by Tomlinson (2017): human, social, cultural, identity and psychological, which sees the value of the process extend far beyond the summative requirements of the course. In sharing their successes and achievements via LinkedIn, students discover the initial unintended consequences of their action, which are, at the very least, the resulting acknowledgements and support from their networks, if not something more enriching. While it may be argued that this is, of course, the whole point of developing students' employability, from a module perspective, these are far greater impacts than fulfilling assessment requirements. Consequently, we suggest this is a simple but powerful practice that helps to produce the confident, work-ready graduates' employers are demanding. We further propose that Tomlinson's (2017) model of graduate capital can be extended by adding the concept of digital capital.

Further thematic analysis of the qualitative comments is planned, as well as additional research involving graduates from cohorts prior to 2020 to consider longitudinal outcomes.

References

Amabile, T. M. and Kramer, S. J. (2011) *'The Power of Small Wins.'* Harvard Business Review

Archer, W and Davison, J (2008) Graduate employability. London: *The Council for Industry and Higher Education.*

Bandura, A. (1994) 'Self-efficacy.' In V.S. Ramachaudran (ed.), *Encyclopedia of human behavior*, Vol. 4, pp.71-81

Barbarà-i-Molinero, A, Cascón-Pereira, R and Hernàdez-Lara, A.B (2017) Professional identity development in higher education: influencing factors. *International Journal of Educational Management,* 189-203. doi: 10.1108/IJEM-05-2015-0058.

Barton, E., Bates, E.A. and O'Donovan, R. (2019) ''That extra sparkle': students' experiences of volunteering and the impact on satisfaction and employability in higher education.' *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 43 (4), pp.453-466

Fowlie, J. and Forder, C. (2019), 'Pre-Professional Identity Formation Through Connections with Alumni and the Use of LinkedIn.' in A Diver (ed.), *Employability via Higher Education: Sustainability as Scholarship*. 1st edn, Cham: Springer, pp. 331-345.

Fowlie, J. and Forder, C. (2020) Can students be 'nudged' to develop their employability? Using behavioural change methods to encourage uptake of industrial placements, *Journal of Education & Work*, 33 (2), 154-168.

Glaser, J. E. (2016) *Conversational Intelligence: how great leaders build trust and get extraordinary results*. Oxford: Taylor & Francis

Holt-White, E. and Montacute, R. (2020) *Covid-19 and Social Mobility Impact Brief #5: Graduate Recruitment and Access to the Workplace.* London: The Sutton Trust

Hinchliffe, G and Jolly, A (2011) Graduate identity and employability. *British Educational Research Journal*, 563-584. doi: 10.1080/01411926.2010.482200

Jackson, D. (2016) 'Re-conceptualising graduate employability: the importance of pre-professional identity.' *Higher Education Research and Development*, 35 (5), pp. 925-939

Mason, G, Williams, G, and Cranmer, S (2009) Employability skills initiatives in higher education: what effects do they have on graduate labour market outcomes? *Education Economics*, 1-30

Merton, P. (1936) 'The Unanticipated Consequences of Purposive Social Action.' *American Sociological Review*, 1 (6), pp.894-904

Pegg, A., Waldock, J., Hendy-Isaac, S. and Lawton, R. (2012) *Pedagogy for employability*, York: Higher Education Academy

Roulin, N. and Bangerter, A. (2013) 'Students use of extra-curricular activities for positional advantage in competitive job markets.' *Journal of Education and Work*, 26 (1), pp. 21-47

Rowe, A.D. and Zewaard, K.E. (2017) Developing graduate employability skills and attributes: curriculum engagement through work-integrated learning, Asia-Pacific *Journal of Cooperative Education*, Special Issue, 18 (2) 87-99.

Tomlinson, M (2017) Forms of graduate capital and their relationship to graduate employability. *Education + Training*, 338-352. doi: 10.1108/ET-05-2016-0090.

Tymon A (2013) 'The student perspective on employability'. *Studies in Higher Education*, 38 (6) pp. 841-856.

THE EMPLOYABILITY COURSE THAT JUST FILLED THAT 'GAP' – A CASE STUDY

Patricia Perlman-Dee, CFA, Senior Lecturer in Finance, Employability Lead AMBS, Alliance Manchester Business School, University of Manchester

The role of the employability lead

As the newly appointed employability lead of Alliance Manchester Business School, I wanted to get a broad understanding of what employability really meant and understand some of the studies on the topic. Firstly, I needed to understand what was expected from me in my new role. The overall role of the employability lead is 'to assist the school in achieving its goals relating to graduate outcomes in support of the university's strategic agenda'.

It took me a while to work out how the careers service worked as it operates on numerous levels: university level, faculty level, school level and all the way down to courses on individual programs. The careers service had also been undergoing a restructuring, changing systems as well as changing to provide a more centralised offering. Combining all of this with the recent pandemic, it certainly raised the complexity, but equally represented a fantastic opportunity to add sustained and impactful value in my role as employability lead.

The background works

About 70% of employers think university students must do more to make themselves more effective employees.

I started looking at academic literature about employability models. I came across a range of employability models such as Knight and Yorke's USEM Model (Knight and Yorke, 2003), Dacre Pool and Sewell's CareerEDGE model (Dacre Pool and Sewell, 2007) and numerous other. I reviewed further material from advanced higher education, including Employability Framework (Doug Cole and Tibby, n.d.), as well as numerous industry reports such as those from the Confederation of British Industry and National Union of Students (CBI/NUS, 2011). I also undertook a review of the academic career development courses currently offered to first-year students at AMBS (https://www.alliancembs.manchester.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/).

I also studied internal data on student placement, internship as well as the results of the Graduate outcome survey. I had in-depth discussions with several other universities to understand their careers services and employability proposition for students and employers. I undertook discussions with several councils in Greater Manchester to understand their approach to employability and what their offering was focusing on. I also consulted recruitment consultants and headhunters to understand what skills were lacking in general and what skills were desirable.

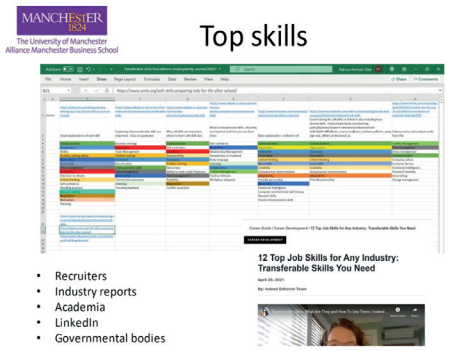
Identification of 'a gap'

University careers services generally do a great job in assisting students in CV writing, preparing for assessment centres and interview training. However, numerous studies show that students often lack the skills most desired by employers. About 70% of employers think university students must do more to make themselves more effective employees. Consider this in combination with the finding that 66% of students want support in developing their employability skills (CBI/NUS 2011) and it is clear that there is still 'a gap'.

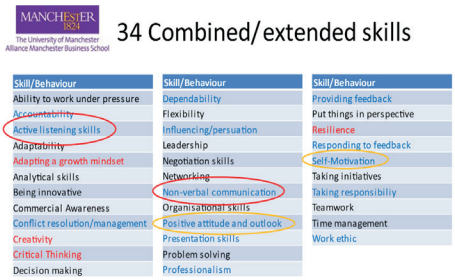
Having reviewed the generic careers and employability provisions offered at a range of universities, as well as the AMBS academic career development courses, the course outlines did include a number of transferable skills such as teamwork, presentation skills, problem solving and leadership.

The transferable skills 'world'

There are many definitions of transferable skills, soft skills or interpersonal skills, which are often used interchangeably. Generally, these skills are those that are not specific to a particular job or industry, but skills that assist you in being a productive and communicative team member or employee. Employers generally value soft skills as they enable people to function and thrive in organisations.



There are a number of groups and people that publish lists/research etc on what the 'top skills' are when entering the world of employment. Academia, through such as Hawkins and Winter or the Dearing report, both from 1997, has identified a range of skills to have a sustainable career. The Pedagogy for Employability Group (HEA) from 2004, identified skills that were sought by employers based on 25 years of research. It also references the initial work from the SkillsPlus project which through a survey, identified 39 skills. This was later published by Yorke and Knight in 2004 in "Embedding employability into the curriculum".

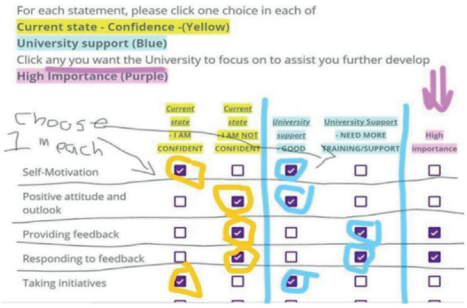


In 2008, the Council for Industry and Higher Education also published the "top 10 skills sought by employers". The World Economic Forum 2021 advises us on the essential skills to develop today and tomorrow, with predictions for 2022! The majority are soft skills.

I reviewed numerous 'external' lists, including those identified internally at University of Manchester. I learnt that the University Careers Service had identified a list of 18 transferable skills. The Postgraduate Careers Service at AMBS had identified 22 top skills and the specific academic career course at undergraduate level at AMBS had identified 14 top skills. I collated my own list based on frequency of skills coming up across many of the 27 lists I studied. I created a list of 34 skills.

The survey

Having identified 34 skills, I launched an initial transferable skills survey. It was launched through course leaders at AMBS between June 17 and 24, 2021. Even though the timing of the survey was not ideal (after end of term), there were 94 participants, where 60% were first-year undergraduate students, 28% MSc students and 12% others. With 34 skills to review, I had to find a way of keeping the survey simple and created a Matrix-style questionnaire.



The results

The results of the survey are found in the tables below.

Most important skills

There is no single skill that students find most important. Instead, we find five top skills with equal percentages in weight of importance as shown in the below table. Additional skills were also identified as very important such as teamwork and time management. Negotiation skills, critical thinking, networking, teamwork and time management are all identified on the skills list from the careers service, postgraduate audit or from undergraduate academic careers development courses. Communication skills are also mentioned, but not in specific detail.

Most important skills according to students			
Top 5			***Also very important***
Presentation skills	23%		Teamwork
Negotiation skills	23%		Responding to feedback
Providing feedback	23%		Conflict resolution
Critical thinking	23%		Time management
Networking	23%		Self motivation

Confidence

We can debate what the potential impact of Covid-19 may have been when it comes to the five skills students feel most confident about. Having to adapt and being flexible was a necessity. Students also had to take more responsibility and this possibly increased their work ethics.

However, what is particularly interesting is that the areas student identifies as where they feel 'least confident' are areas which careers service, postgraduate audit and undergraduate academic careers development courses all highlight as key skills and behaviours.

Confidence				
Most confident			***Least confident***	
Flexibility	39%		Being innovative	27%
Taking responsibility	38%		Influencing/persuasion	24%
Work ethic	37%		Commercial awareness	23%
Adaptability	36%		Creativity	22%
Active listening	36%		Negotiation skills	22%

University support

The table below reports the skills which students find the university gives them good support as well as areas where they would like the university to provide more support. Worth noting is the good support perceived in active listening skills, but how more support is desired in non-verbal communication, both in the area of communication. Many 'lists' have 'communication' as a top skill. However, from this brief survey, it shows that communication needs to be broken down further.

University Support				
Good support			**More support**	
Work ethics	31%		Influencing/persuasion	27%
Adaptability	30%		Creativity	25%
Flexibility	28%		Negotiation skills	25%
Active listening skills	26%		Non-verbal communication	25%
Teamwork	26%		Being innovative	24%

Bringing it together

It should not be a surprise that students feel confident in the areas where they feel the university is already providing good support. Four of five skills are corresponding in this area.

Most confident			**Good support**	
Flexibility	39%		Work ethics	31%
Taking responsibility	38%		Adaptability	30%
Work ethic	37%		Flexibility	28%
Adaptability	36%		Active listening skills	26%
Active listening	36%		Teamwork	26%

There is a similar pattern observed in looking at the skills were students feel least confident and where they would like to see more support from the university. What is noticeable is that students do not feel overly confident in commercial awareness, a skill highlighted as one of the top skills sought by employers and one of the key transferable skills set out by the university careers service. Another interesting note is the wish for more support on non-verbal communication. A further study could possibly be investigating what the impact of Covid and virtual teaching have had on non-verbal skills.

Least confident			**More support**	
Being innovative	27%		Influencing/persuasion	27%
Influencing/persuasion	24%		Creativity	25%
Commercial awareness	23%		Negotiation skills	25%
Creativity	22%		Non-verbal communication	25%
Negotiation skills	22%		Being innovative	24%

What's next?

Having identified student perception of their own level of confidence for certain skills, combined with the support, a new approach is required. The new proposed initiative is to create a concentrated employability course, focusing on identified transferable and soft skills. This will help students fill the existing gap in these areas and assist students in their request from universities of assisting with developing employability skills. A further study will be undertaken as the next academic year starts.

References

Hawkins, P. & Winter, J. (1997) Mastering Change: Learning the Lessons of the Enterprise in Higher Education Initiative. London: Higher Education and Employment Division, Department for Education and Employment. [Accessed online 21 May 2021]

National Commission of Inquiry into Higher Education (1997) Higher Education in the Learning Society. Norwich: HMSO [Accessed online 21 May 2021]

Yorke, M. and Knight, P.T. (2006) Embedding employability into the curriculum. Learning and Employability. Series 1 No. 3. Higher Education Academy [Accessed online 23 May 2021] https://s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/assets.creode.advancehe-document-manager/documents/hea/private/id460_embedding_employability_into_the_curriculum_338_1568036708.pdf

The Pedagogy for Employability Group (2004), "Pedagogy for employability", https://s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/assets.creode.advancehe-document-manager/documents/hea/private/pedagogy_for_employability_update_2012_1568036839.pdf [Accessed online 23 May 2021]

The Council for Industry and Higher Education (2008) http://cced-complete.com/documentation/graduate_employability_eng.pdf [Accessed online 23 May 2021]

World Economic Forum (2021) https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/10/top-10-work-skills-of-tomorrow-how-long-it-takes-to-learn-them/ [Accessed online 23 May 2021]

PROBLEM-BASED LEARNING IN POSTGRADUATE BUSINESS STUDIES: ALIGNING STUDENT AND INDUSTRY NEEDS

Dr Mark Crowder CMBE, Senior Lecturer, Department of Strategy, Enterprise and Sustainability, Manchester Metropolitan University Business School
Dr Carmen-Elena Dorobat CMBE, Senior Lecturer, Department of Strategy, Enterprise and Sustainability, Manchester Metropolitan University Business School

Introduction

Higher education programmes have focused over the past two decades on embedding employability and developing work-ready graduates (Bennett et al., 2017; Nagarajan and Edwards, 2014; Oliver et al., 2007). Particularly for postgraduate programmes, the difficulty of embedding employability has been highlighted in some studies (Arrowsmith and Cartwright, 2019; Valero et al., 2020), but research in this area remains underdeveloped. At the same time, the role of pedagogy in delivering both the knowledge and the skills necessary for the work environment is still developing (Wyness and Dalton, 2018).

Students must identify what knowledge they need to solve the problem and must take the lead in seeking out and obtaining this.

Problem-based learning (PBL) is a teaching and learning approach, or a pedagogy, that uses a problem as a trigger for students to develop solutions, whilst learning from the process and using evidence to support their decisions (Klegeris and Hurren, 2011). Typically, PBL begins with an unstructured real-world problem. This may even be open-ended with no concrete 'correct answer', and thus this problem needs to be defined and brought into focus before it can be explored. Students must identify what knowledge they need to solve the problem and must take the lead in seeking out and obtaining this. Hence, the key feature of PBL is that the purpose is the acquisition of new knowledge, rather than the application of existing knowledge, and the pedagogical emphasis is firmly upon the process that students go through when solving the problem – the process is more important than the results (Klegeris and Hurren, 2011).

PBL has a long pedigree in fields such as medicine (Bridges et al., 2012), engineering (Edström and Kolmos, 2014), and social care (Clouston et al., 2010), and it may be more effective than traditional teaching methods because it contributes more to the development of social and cognitive skills (Leal Filho et al, 2016). However, to some extent, the literature is contradictory. Some argue that PBL is effective at developing students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills (Buchanan et al., 2016) whereas others disagree (Koh et al., 2008). Similarly, whilst not disputing the benefits of PBL, some feel that its effectiveness is outweighed by the fact that can overload students (Kirschner et al., 2006). Nevertheless, there is considerable theoretical support for its use (Schmidt et al., 2007), and it can aid students' conceptual understanding and teamwork and can even improve attendance (Prince and Felder, 2006).

For business management programmes, embedding employability into postgraduate programmes is proving problematic, given the short nature of these programmes, and the varying level of employability skills of students. Traditional strategies of embedding employability are not always effective at the postgraduate level and universities are seeking a new approach. One such approach was explored at a large UK university, where the impact of an imported pedagogy (i.e. the Aalborg model of problem-based learning) was evaluated in a newly designed postgraduate business management and consultancy programme. Our results show that PBL has a positive impact on students' perception of their work-readiness, and is supported by business, but requires an extensive time investment and a large design and support commitment from the teaching team. This is an important practical takeaway for academics looking for ways to embed employability at a postgraduate level via pedagogy.

Background

The university under study is a large higher education institution in the United Kingdom. MSc Management and Consultancy is a one-year Level 7 programme that was delivered over three terms. Term one was delivered in two blocks, and all students studied the same four topics. Term two, again delivered in two blocks, contained three core units and gave students the option of shaping their studies by choosing an elective unit from a choice of five options. Term three was solely devoted to a final capstone PBL project. Assessment was via a mixture of approaches, and included group projects, individual reflective essays, presentations, written assignments and business simulations, with the precise ratio being determined by the choice of elective that the students opted to study. The structure of the programme is outlined in Figure 1.

Session	Unit title	Unit title
Term 1 Block 1 Sep-Oct (approx)	PBL unit 1: Strategic Management	PBL theory 1: Being a consultant – Use of technology
Term 1 Block 2 Nov-Dec (approx)	PBL unit 2: Strategic Leadership	PBL theory 2: Being a consultant – Live client problem
Term 2 Block 3 Jan-Feb (approx)	Elective (choose one from four options)	Marketing in Practice
Term 2 Block 4 Mar-Apr (approx)	Finance for Managers	Global Operations and Supply Chain logistics
Term 3	Capstone project: PBL problem (live client brief)	

Figure 1: Structure of the case study PBL programme
Note: All units are 15 credits apart from the final project (60 credits)

In the programme under examination, students were not given a completely free choice of problem. A choice of problems was selected in advance by the teaching team. This ensured that they were feasible and suitable for the students, although the wording of the problem was deliberately vague. The problems are deliberately ill-structured, problem-solving is led by the student, not the tutor, and thus students need a high level of resilience and the ability to think for themselves (Hung, 2011).

Problems in the field of management consultancy tend to have few 'right answers' or examples of 'best practice' that can be widely applied (Cotič and Zuljan, 2009). The world of management is messy and unstructured. Hence, whereas disciplines such as project management or accountancy have rules and models that can be taught in the classroom, consultancy teaching must deal with people and the uncertainty this brings, so instead it is more common to teach 'techniques' and 'ideas' in a more general sense that is not discipline specific (Markham, 2019). Student confidence is therefore very important. PBL is a particularly suitable pedagogy because it encourages students to learn and is highly motivational because students can see the link between the problems they are trying to solve and real-world applications (Barrows, 1996).

Because the case study programme is still in its first year, it has not been possible to collect any 'real' employability statistics or to follow students through their career journeys.

Instead, we obtained student perspectives and explored how they felt the programme was helping their career development. This was done via informal discussions and with formal surveys taken at a unit level. We have also spoken to client organisations who are involved in the final projects. The findings presented below are an indicative selection of those we obtained.

Findings and discussion

We sought to understand how students felt about the programme as a whole and the extent to which they thought their employability had been enhanced. Figure 2 shows a selection of findings.

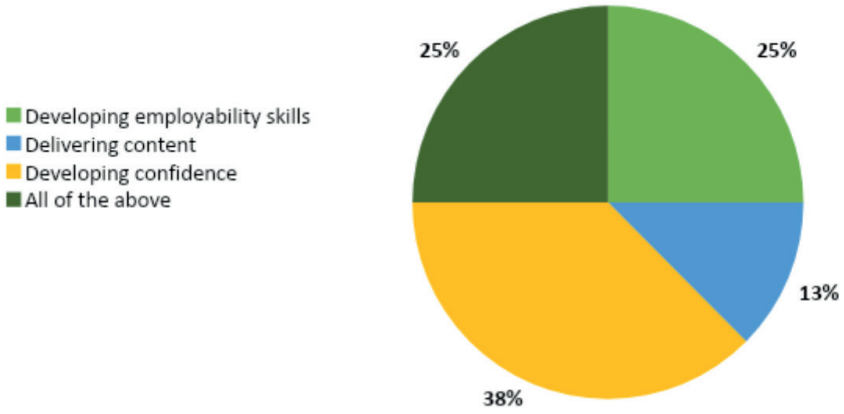


Figure 2: Student perceptions of how PBL has helped their career development (extract)

Employability and confidence come out strongly as positives, and these were further supported by students in their survey and reflections. The following comments were typical:

'The practical relevance of the programme is very good. I enjoy working with clients'

'I'm a lot more confident now. I'm not afraid to ask questions. I used to be worried about seniority, but now I realise that managers are just like us'

'I'm gaining new skills and am learning things I didn't know before. I question things a lot more. I've gained confidence, and I'm less hesitant about putting my views forward.'

These views were echoed by the client organisations, which have offered some of the students a position in their organisation.

'The course has prepared [the students] well for the workplace. They're very confident and they're asking the right questions. They're challenging our assumptions and are making us think. They'll do well in the workplace. I'd rather employ this sort of student who can think for themselves than someone who learned everything from a book.'

Conclusion

This case study presents an avenue and blueprint for using a pedagogical approach to embed employability in the postgraduate curriculum. As Boud and Felletti (1997, p.2) explain, PBL is "a way of conceiving the curriculum as being centred upon key problems in professional practice". This contrasts with the more widely used methods of developing employability, which focus on teaching and include tacking new employability modules on to existing programme structures and developing CPD modules that run at university level and across programmes.

This is particularly relevant for postgraduate business education because short-term courses (one-year) do not allow for a long-term employability strategy to be developed. The PBL approach has thus two key benefits: it allows for a more expedient embedding of employability in short (one-year) programmes, and it has a positive impact on students' perception of their work-readiness. We look forward to developing further these interim findings as the case study programme progresses.

References

Angeli, C. (2002). Teachers' practical theories for the design and implementation of problem-based learning. *Science Education International*, 13(3), pp. 9–15.

Arrowsmith, C. and Cartwright, W. (2019). Embedding employability skills in the curriculum and extending into postgraduate programs. In *Handbook for Teaching and Learning in Geography*. Edward Elgar Publishing.

Barrows, H. S. (1996). "Problem-based learning in medicine and beyond: A brief overview". *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*, 68, pp. 3–12. https://doi.org/10.1002/tl.37219966804

Bennett, D., Knight, E., Divan, A., Kuchel, L., Horn, J., van Reyk, D. and Burke da Silva, K. (2017). How do research-intensive universities portray employability strategies? A review of their websites. *Australian Journal of Career Development*, 26(2), pp.52-61.

Boud, D. and Feletti, G (1997). Challenging problem-based learning: Introduction to the second edition. In D. Boud and G. Feletti (eds) *The challenge of problem-based learning* (2nd edn). London: Kogan Page. pp. 1-14

Bridges, S., Botelho, M., Green, J.L. and Chau, A.C., 2012. Multimodality in problem-based learning (PBL): An interactional ethnography. In *Problem-based learning in clinical education* (pp. 99-120). Springer, Dordrecht.

Buchanan, S., Harlan, M. A., Bruce, C. S. and Edwards, S. L. (2016). Inquiry based learning models, information literacy, and student engagement: A literature review. *School Libraries Worldwide*, 22(2), pp.23-39. doi:10.14265.22.2.03

Clouston, T.J., Westcott, L., Whitcombe, S.W., Riley, J. and Matheson, R., 2010. Problem-Based Learning in Health and Social Care, Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.

Cotič, M. and Zuljan, M. V. (2009). Problem-based instruction in mathematics and its impact on the cognitive results of the students and on affective-motivational aspects. Educational Studies 35(3), pp. 297–310. https://doi.org/10.1080/03055690802648085

Edström, K. and Kolmos, A. (2014). PBL and CDIO: complementary models for engineering education development. European Journal of Engineering Education, 39(5), pp.539-555. https://doi.org/10.1080/03043797.2014.895703

Hung, W. (2011) Theory to reality: a few issues in implementing problem-based learning. *Educational Technology Research and Development*, 59(4), pp. 529–552. 10.1007/s11423-011-9198-1

Kirschner, P. A., Sweller, J. and Clark, R. E. (2006). Why minimal guidance during instruction does not work: An analysis of the failure of constructivist, discovery, problem-based, experiential, and inquiry-based teaching. Educational Psychologist, 41, pp. 75–86.

Klegeris, A. and Hurren, H. (2011). Impact of problem-based learning in a large classroom setting: student perception and problem-solving skills. *Advanced Physiological Education* 35(4), pp. 408-415. https://doi.org/10.1152/advan.00046.2011

Koh, G. C.-H., Khoo, H. E., Wong, M. L., and Koh, D. (2008). The effects of problem-based learning during medical school on physician competency: A systematic review. *Canadian Medical Association Journal*, 178(1), pp. 34–41. https://doi.org/10.1503/cmaj.070565

Leal Filho, W., Y.-C. Jim Wu, L.L. Brandli, L.V. Avila, U.M. Azeiteiro, S. Caeiro, and Madruga, L.R.D.R.G. (2017). Identifying and Overcoming Obstacles to the Implementation of Sustainable Development at Universities. Journal of Integrative Environmental Sciences, 14(1), pp. 93–108. doi:10.1080/1943815X.2017.1362007

Markham, C. (2019). *The Art of Consultancy*. London: Legend.

Nagarajan, S. and Edwards, J. (2014). Is the graduate attributes approach sufficient to develop work ready graduates?. *Journal of Teaching and Learning for Graduate Employability*, 5(1), pp.12-28.

Oliver, B., Jones, S., Ferns, S. and Tucker, B. (2007). Mapping curricula: ensuring work-ready graduates by mapping course learning outcomes and higher order thinking skills. In *A conference for university teachers* (p. 103).

IMPACT OF SELF-AWARENESS INTERVENTIONS ON STUDENT EMPLOYABILITY

Andrea Ward CMBE, Management School, University of Sheffield
Dr Raymond Randall, Management School, University of Sheffield

Many universities are building employability into their curriculum and designing parallel extra-curricular experiences. In a jobs market made even more competitive by the coronavirus pandemic, competencies associated with leadership, dealing with change and reflection are vital as graduates enter work contexts that are unpredictable and rapidly changing.

Undergraduates are discovering much about themselves and the majority are likely to change their career interests during their time at university (Quinlan et al., 2020). Therefore, it is important to provide students with appropriate tools and support during their personal and professional development. There are many tools available to students but no roadmap for students to guide them about how to reflect on their findings and take informed and self-determined actions.

This roundtable discussion was a dialogic approach to critically evaluate the merit of using self-awareness tools in the context of a student's degree and their other concurrent experiences. The discussion examined how interventions can be delivered to help students structure and maintain personal and professional development. During the roundtable 4 questions were posed by the hosts Dr Raymond Randall and Andrea Ward.

1. What interventions should be made available to support students with the development of self-awareness?
2. How do we integrate self-awareness tolls into their curriculum and associated personal development interventions?
3. How do we establish an infrastructure to support stakeholders in the processes associated with 1 and 2 above?
4. What are students' views on engaging in these activities from the start of their self-awareness in the medium-to-long-term?

During the discussion it appears many institutions use a range of tools such as strengths-based VIA, Team Focus, strengthscope, AQR's MTQ48, a mental toughness questionnaire, whichever tool was used there was a clear positivity about using these to support students. The discussion inevitably brought in the pandemic and how this both presented challenges as well as opportunities regarding the deployment of specific tools and interventions. However, it had underlined the importance of being adaptable and there was a consensus that self-awareness was linked with adaptability.

Other interventions purported included regular reflective writing exercises, personality measures and documenting experiences in learning journals. This resonated with the notion of "Life-wide Learning", taking reflection from one context to identify attributes that can then be deployed in another context. Others in specific modules took part in creating, participating in and observing development centres, and this multi-dimensional approach created deeper learning both for themselves as individuals as well as leaders or supporters of others. Career development logs were also mentioned as was Lumina Learning https://luminalearning.uk/

The discussion explored integration of interventions into the curriculum which created more disparate thoughts and it was concluded whatever was agreed that it needed to be well judged because different people would have different views of the intervention. Labelling seemed to be important, e.g. mental toughness hadn't proved a universally popular label in comparison with such terms as strengths based. Some interventions were part of assessed modules but there appeared to be no conclusion on whether this had more use than those that were not included in assessments. It was generally felt that integration into modules had an important impact on the 'reach' of the intervention beyond those who were already doing some form of self-awareness work. An interesting point was that for some, a lack of integration of self-awareness interventions into the curriculum was seen as a positive as it allowed them to do something 'special' that differentiated them from others who did not engage in this type of activity. There were several examples of embedding for different cohorts, but many seemed to focus on students 'later on' in their studies.

In relation to an infrastructure to support stakeholders, the main point that emerged here was about giving staff the confidence to engage with students in the sort of discussions associated with self-awareness work. Being ready to share personal experiences that resonated with students was mentioned as a means of stimulating self-awareness work and reflection. Another point raised was that staff were more supportive when there was evidence or a belief that the intervention would support or improve other student outcomes (such as assessment outcomes or success in the job market).

The final area covered in the discussion was about students' views of this type of intervention and it was concluded that cohorts will differ and be diverse – some will be enthusiastic, others less so. There were some comments in the discussion that SA interventions needed to be linked to module assessments to stimulate broad and deep engagement in the activities. At the same time some flexibility/choice in the specific tools/interventions that students used was seen as a positive.

In summary, it was clear that there were pockets of practice that were being utilised and many were driven by individuals in their teaching practice rather than through a wider spread strategy of intervention. No one has yet published any findings, but one person is undertaking their doctorate in this area. It certainly stimulates debate and a call for much more sectors wide buy-in to embedding these interventions into university experiences.

DEVELOPING ENTERPRISING STUDENTS THROUGH CO-CONSTRUCTED INTERDISCIPLINARY ACADEMIC PRACTICE IN THE FIELD OF VISUAL BRAND COMMUNICATIONS

Dr Rotimi Olaniyan, Senior Lecturer and Full-Time MBA Course Lead, Nottingham Business School, Nottingham Trent University
Martine Hamilton Knight, Senior Lecturer in Visual Communications, School of Arts, Nottingham Trent University

Influenced by pedagogical philosophies surrounding interdisciplinary studies in the field of business education, the co-authors sought to understand how best to institute more collaborative and interdisciplinary interventions into practice-based learning through shared academic and industry practice. Working on a set of planned interventions targeted at a group of Marketing and Photography students at NTU, the study sought to create an interdisciplinary response to the teaching of visual brand communications, anchored on triadic reflective lenses (Industry, students, and academics collaborating).

The study sought answers to three specific questions:

1. What new conceptual frameworks could be developed to help broker a better understanding between both practice communities in the way visual brand communication was currently taught?
2. How effective these Interdisciplinary academic practice methods built around these co-constructed frameworks were in improving the work readiness of students from both disciplines?
3. How interdisciplinary collaboration between both co-researchers improved their individual, industry- focused academic practice?

Methodology

This was participatory action research focussed on preparing students with improved future employability skills in the field of visual brand literacy and communications. Sweeney and Hughes (2017) argue that while 'Visual literacy has increasingly become essential for communicating and navigating the modern world, the implementation of visual (brand) literacy modules across the curriculum of business schools has not been widespread.' They argue for business schools to promote visual literacy amongst their students through experiential learning via practical project-led activities for business school students who wouldn't necessarily expect to achieve their outcomes in this manner.

The UK government has also recognized this as a contemporary requirement. In a recent report for the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) (2019), Burning Glass Technologies stated that: 'Digital marketing is the third fastest-growing and second most versatile skill cluster requiring sales, marketing and communications experience and may be married with a desire for individuals to couple those skills with an ability to design, using visual software and media.'

The co-collaborators have been industry practitioners in allied fields of practice (marketing and photography respectively) and agree with this school of thought from their experience in practice. They identified this as highlighting a gap within the curriculum at the higher education level and therefore a sufficient justification to explore interventions in the way that visual brand identity is taught within higher education institutions and Nottingham Trent University particularly.

In meeting the need of students, the authors argue that visual brand literacy needs to be further presented as an interdisciplinary practice.

Action research is executed as a series of iterative cyclical processes which start with planning the study with a view to identifying and articulating a clear problem which should then be subjected to a set of actions. These actions are then observed and ultimately reflected upon. This 'reflective analysis' of 'evidence-based practice' as has been suggested by several authors (Carr and Kemmis, 1986; Allwright and Bailey,1991; Kemmis, 2006) required the researchers to be clear about stances, and the purpose from the very start.

Guided by the research aim and questions, the co-collaborators had chosen to take an abductive approach to the building out of a thematic understanding of the problem area through the exploration of literature (Glaser and Strauss 1967), while still being open to new revelations.

This led to the identification of three broad themes and another set of three narrower intersecting themes (which the co-collaborators referred to as thematic intersections). Each of the six themes identified had a significant bearing on how the central research question could be answered and as such required a detailed review. The three broad themes as well as a set of three intersecting themes are presented in appendix 1 and served as the guiding conceptual framework for the study which helped the study build a better basis for understanding.

Findings and contribution

The Student Lens

In meeting the need of students, the authors argue that visual brand literacy needs to be further presented as an interdisciplinary practice. This can be done by further exploring the changes to professional photographic practice and previously established business models and matching same to marketing expectations as a consumer of photography, and the ramifications of how they are taught, so as to meet the new demands of the marketplace.

The Collaborating Academic Lens

There is a clear resolve on the part of each author to act as Razzaq et al (2013) proffer, as 'brokers of communities of practice'. This search for meaningful dialogue, as well as a sense of methodological purpose, paid off in this case with the development of a conceptual proposition which the collaborators took into the teaching intervention in furtherance of their role as 'interdisciplinary moderators'. A role described by Kidron and Kali (2015) as being vital in 'assisting community of learners in delving deeply into each disciplinary domain and in making the connections between domains.

The Industry Lens

It would seem that there is not much that has been looked at from the point of view of matching visual expressive style and the photographer who delivers it, to the strategic intention of the brand in an integrated explanatory way. The fusing of boundaries has allowed both co-collaborators to develop a novel explanatory typological framework for visual expression in brand communications (see appendix 2) This has helped students see greater professional opportunity post university.

Conclusion

The authors offer a proposition that suggests that co-collaboration does work and has the potential of improving the ability of both marketing and photography disciplines that were focused upon, to increase student confidence, knowledge and practice-oriented learning outcomes, by paying sufficient attention to the three broad themes explored and illustrated in appendix 1.

The development of interdisciplinary processes and explanatory models offer students a powerful way of better understanding the 'real world' and how their fields of study are interconnected with other professional domains in ways that throw up better future employability opportunities for them.

To be successful in meeting these requirements of both students and industry, the authors recommend that academic departments, course and module leaders must be challenged as part of the pedagogical processes to pay more attention to interdisciplinary approaches that bridge and broker practice communities.

References

Allwright, D., and Bailey, K. M. (1991) Focus on the Language Learner. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Carr, W., and Kemmis, S. (1986) Becoming critical: Education, knowledge and action research. London: Falmer.

DCMS, Burning Glass Technologies. (2019) No Longer Optional - Employer Demand for Digital Skills (June 2019) Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and Burning Glass Technologies.https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/807830/ (Accessed 10/12/19)

Glaser, B., and Strauss, A. (1967). The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research. Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.

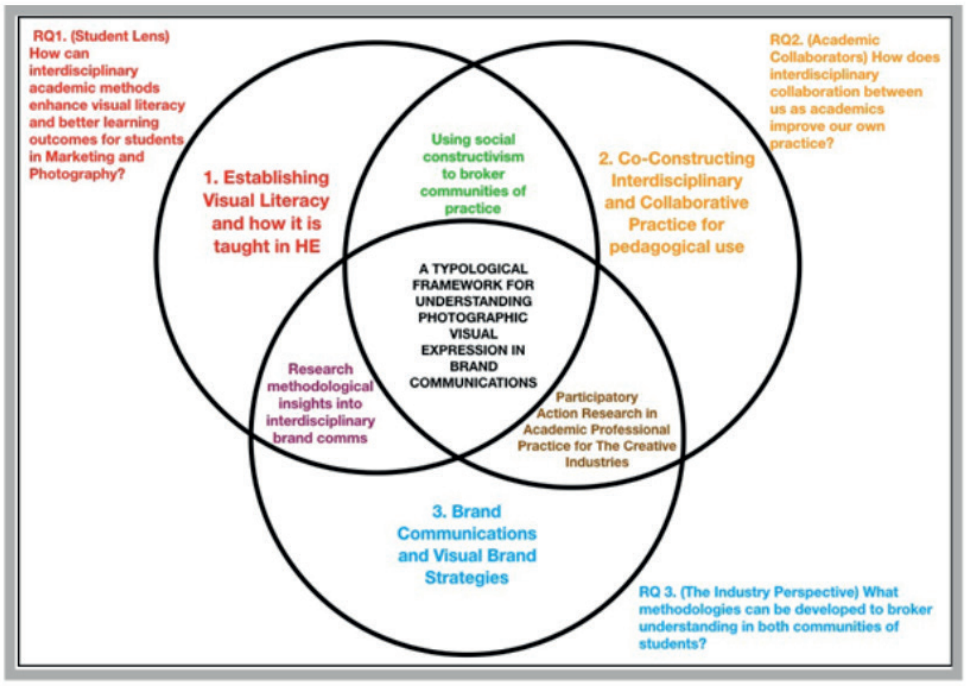
Kemmis, S. (2006). Participatory Action Research and the Public Sphere T and F Online published regionally in Educational Action Research Journal Volume 14, issue 4, 2006.

Kidron, A and Kali, Y. (2015). Boundary Breaking for Interdisciplinary Learning, Research in Learning Technology; Jafalla, Vol 23.

Razzaq, J, Townsend, T and Pisapia, J. (2013) Towards an Understanding of Interdisciplinarity - The Case of a British University. Association for Interdisciplinary Studies Journal Volume 31 pp.149-173

Sweeney, S and Hughes, D. (2017) Integrating Visual Literacy training into the Business Curriculum. A case study at Dublin Business School. DBS Business Review, Vol 1

Appendices



Appendix 1: An exploration of key themes through the THREE Key Lenses

LEVEL OF VISUAL EXPRESSION		BRAND SITUTATION	PHOTOGRAPHER CREDENTIALS	EXAMPLES
ICONIC ARTISTERY	• The production values of the visual expression matches the same levels found iconic art. • The Photography reflects an exceptionally high order of iconic artistic expression which is driven more by the recognisable vision of the photographer as an artist than it is about the brand. • The brand however benefits from its association with the iconic stylized values of the photographer's visionary/iconic	A Creative, edgy brand that has either reached Iconic status or is aspiring to it. Usually managed by a strong creative leader.	Artist Visionairies/ Iconic Photographer	Julia Fullerton - Batten
TECHNICAL MASTERY	• The campaign visual exhibits technical excellence which speaks to the technical competence and mastery of the photographer rather than an artistic vision. • The campaign is clearly brand values driven, and they are appropriately captured in the best technical light, but the expression cannot said to be edgy	Category leading and professionally managed brands. A strong and competent creative team	The Creative Craftsman / Master Photographer)	Benjamin Swanson
VISUAL UTILITY	• The campaign values are mono-dimensional and though might be of good quality, rather basic and functional. • The out put is driven by the need to achieve basic levels of imagery required achieve the communications objective.	Most SME brands requiring mostly functional branded communications - mostly run in-house	The Visual Technician/ The Utilitarian Photographer	Jenny Hale
STOCK	• The campaign values are functional, possibly graphic led and not image driven • The imagery is simple, typifying the subject in a generic fashion • Stock houses offer syndicated catalogue stock which is rented or bought as either rights managed or royalty free license model • Price based on campaign duration and physical size supplied	Could be any size company not prepared to prioritise visual brand values or perception - tasks outsourced	Stock agency image files - practitioner's source unknown	Getty

A WORKSHOP TO EXPLORE A NEW SCHOOL-LEVEL APPROACH TO EMBEDDING EMPLOYABILITY AND ENTERPRISE IN UNDERGRADUATE BUSINESS EDUCATION

Professor Eleanor Davies, Associate Dean Teaching and Learning, Huddersfield Business School
Dr Nicola Stenberg, School Director of Executive Education, Huddersfield Business School

Consistent with the trend towards an explicit focus on employability within higher education (Clarke, 2018; Harvey, 2005), it is now common practice for courses to offer core modules dedicated to student employability (Tymon et al. 2020), particularly in vocationally oriented courses such as business and law (Pettigrew, Cornuel & Hommel, 2014). However, effective design and delivery of these core modules is challenging due to the emphasis on knowledge in traditional management education and the existence of competing perspectives on how to adequately prepare graduates for the labour market (Groves et al., 2018). The dearth of practical examples of embedding employability in management education is also highlighted in the literature (Groves et al., 2018).

In this highly practical '60-minute challenge' workshop we pooled our collective knowledge and experience to further our understanding of the conditions needed to place meaningful employability at the heart of the business/management student experience. The workshop provided an opportunity for educators to better understand how to encourage students to identify with and take ownership of their own authentic employability journey. More specifically, we aimed to achieve the following objectives:

- Explore the meaning of 'employability skills' in business and management context, mindful of critical perspectives
- Draw on collective examples of teaching interventions to identify sound pedagogical principles
- Examine how formative and summative assessment processes can be used to nurture nascent interest in employability.

Professor Eleanor Davies and Dr Nic Stenberg shared their experience of introducing the ASPIRE programme into the undergraduate business and management curriculum in Huddersfield Business School. ASPIRE is an acronym for

Academic Skills
Sustainable Career Management
Professional Skills
Intercultural awareness
Resilience
Enterprise

The series of three progressive modules offers students a coherent and learning experience that is designed to support them to fulfill their academic, personal and professional potential. The programme tracks the students' journey through university by supporting them to adjust to higher education in the first year, explore career and placement options in their second year and prepare for transition to the workplace in their final year.

During the workshop delegates shared knowledge about the conditions that support a school-level approach to embedding employability in business education. Key themes were:

- Transcendence of traditional organisational boundaries, integrating both academic and professional specialisms
- Scaffolding of each of the key strands across three years
- Explicit employer engagement in teaching and assessment practices providing a heightened real-world relevance for students who traditionally have found the agenda to be abstract
- Assessment practices that promote self-awareness, self-development and self-expression: the ability to articulate learning and achievements is critical to employability.

References

Clarke, M. (2018). Rethinking graduate employability: The role of capital, individual attributes and context. Studies in Higher Education (Dorchester-on-Thames), 43(11), 1923-1937

Groves, C. J., Orbaek White, G. D., Panya, F., & Stewart, J. (2018). Can business schools increase student employability by embedding action learning into undergraduate management education? An account of practice. Action Learning: Research and Practice, 15(3), 258-266.

Harvey, L. (2005). Embedding and integrating employability. New Directions for Institutional Research, 2005(128), 13-28.

Pettigrew, A, E. Cornuei, E., and Hommel, U. (2014). Institutional Development of Business Schools. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Tymon, A., & Batistic, S. (2016). Improved academic performance and enhanced employability? the potential double benefit of proactivity for business graduates. Teaching in Higher Education, 21(8), 915-932.

ESTABLISHING A NEW MENTOR PROGRAMME – DRIVEN BY A STAKEHOLDER'S AGENDA

Patricia Perlman-Dee, CFA, Senior Lecturer in Finance, Employability Lead AMBS, Alliance Manchester Business School, University of Manchester

What Millennials want and need

Since 2020, Millennials are the largest generation of the workforce. Millennials have another approach and attitude to work life balance. A large portion, 72%, of Millennials would like to be their own boss, but if they have to work for a boss, 79% would want that boss to serve more as a coach or a mentor. In another survey, 75% of Millennials not only want mentors but deem it crucial for success.

Looking at recruitment, with graduate students being Millennials, more than 60% listed mentoring as a criterion for selecting an employer after graduation. Retention rates have been much higher for mentees and mentors (72% and 69%) than for employees not involved in mentoring programs (49%) (Kantor and McKeogh, 2016).

New Mentoring Programme

At AMBS we are looking to set up a new innovative mentoring programme. There have been mentoring programs in the past, but this has been more focused on the goodwill of alumni giving back and mentoring students. The matching of mentor and mentees has mainly been a manual and administrative process. Getting the right match is key for the mentoring relationship to flourish (Prince, 2021).

The benefits of mentoring for the mentee are well established; It can help increase confidence, set and achieve goals, develop connections, accountability, provide guidance and inspiration.

A number of factors contributed to the initiative of setting up a new mentoring programme, but one of the main drivers was that it was noticed by the advisory board of the university that certain groups of graduates did not do so well after graduation in career progression. In particular, we noticed that females seemed to struggle a bit more.

There were numerous discussions on how we could support this group and also other minority groups and the idea was born of a specific mentoring programme that could focus on specific group of students. What support would they need and how could we best provide this?

Corporate Partner Mentor Programme

The idea of the Corporate Partner Mentor Programme was born. We would work with individual organisations on specialised and tailored mentoring programme, making sure we could target and match specific student groups and aligning this with the goals of the organisation.

Historically, a mentoring programme has focused on the benefits for the mentee and possibly the mentor and the benefits they can derive from engaging in a mentoring programme. However, with the AMBS Corporate Partner Mentor Programme, additional stakeholders could be served: the organisations (the companies) and the university (the institution).

The benefits of mentoring for the mentee are well established; It can help increase confidence, set and achieve goals, develop connections, accountability, provide guidance and inspiration.

The benefits for the mentor are also recognised; improved communication skills, improved management skills, intellectual challenge, sense of making a difference, prompting reflection and possibly change in behaviour, as well as developing own personal goals.

The stakeholders

Besides the individual mentor and mentee, other stakeholders will benefit. For the university, a corporate mentoring programme will support and develop students. It will provide students with access to professionals early on. A Corporate Partner Mentor Programme will also strengthen the university's relations with external companies, giving both parties another area for cooperation and developing relationships beyond research and teaching.

What makes the Corporate Partner Mentor Programme special is the focus on working in alignment with an external organisations interest, strategy, and goals. In the past many corporations' goal has been to maximise shareholder value and profit. Today most companies have other items very high up on the agenda of corporate social responsibility (CSR).

CSR

Many organisations have explicit CSR goals. Some align with the UN 2030 agenda's 17 Sustainable Development Goals, and some have expanded on these (UN, 2021). For many organisations goals on the CSR agenda include access to education, diversity and Inclusion, community initiatives, empowering minority groups, good health and wellbeing, gender equality, volunteering etc (Siemens, 2021, BNY Mellon, 2019).

When an organisation chooses to engage with the Corporate Partner Mentoring Programme, this will align and meet many of the CSR goals and priorities set out by the organisation. It is hard for a CSR aware organisation to not engage with a Mentoring Program. It also sheds a positive light on the organisation showing they are willing and want to invest in their own people too.

The benefits for the organisation are substantial: engaging staff in external mentoring of students shows engagement of leadership development, increased knowledge share, development of emotional intelligence, improved culture/transfer of culture and, perhaps most importantly, direct access to a potential talent pool for recruitment (PLD. Murray, 2021).

A four-way relationship with a pilot

Bringing this all together, this four-way relationship between mentees (students), mentors (employees), the institution (the university) and the organisations (the companies) provide clear explicit benefit for each stakeholder, aligning with set out goals and strategies.

What is next? As this is a new initiative, we are setting up a pilot scheme. We have engaged with three separate organisations from different sectors: all with a local presence in Manchester but with a global business model. Each organisation is currently reviewing what goals and student groups to engage with and prioritise.
We have reviewed a number of mentoring platforms. We are not interested in manual paper matching. With AI and the technology these days the platforms are fantastic, doing everything from highly sophisticated matching, goal setting, monitoring and evaluation. The pilot is intended to run from October/November for six months. We decided to focus on the Corporate Partner Mentor Programme rather than a big generic mentoring programme. We feel the impact can be more substantial with a targeted approach, making sure all agendas are aligned. Engagement is key from all sides.

Conclusion

A new Corporate Partner Mentor Programme is looking to be established at AMBS. The mentoring programme is unique in that it benefits four separate stakeholders. With the focus of mentoring benefiting the students by establishing the Corporate Partner Mentor Programme, the university will benefit from strengthening external relationships and companies can achieve CSR goals as well as developing staff and directly establish contacts with a potential talent pool

References

https://www.huffpost.com/entry/give-them-what-they-want-_b_8783712 [Accessed online 23 May 2021]
https://www.guider-ai.com/blog/how-to-match-mentors-and-mentees [Accessed online 23 May 2021]
https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/[Accessed online 23 May 2021]
https://new.siemens.com/global/en/company/sustainability.html [Accessed online 23 May 2021]
https://www.bnymellon.com/us/en/about-us/esg-and-responsible-investment/enterprise-esg/strategy.html [Accessed online 23 May 2021]
https://www.pldworks.com/blog/mentoring-just-tick-box-exercise-for-organisations [Accessed online 23 May 2021]

THEME:
STUDENT HEALTH AND WELLBEING

AIRFIX TEACHING: ENCOURAGING TIME ON TASK THROUGH STRUCTURED MATERIALS

Professor Roger Saunders CMBE, Associate Professor for Curriculum Innovation, De Montfort University

The issues

Teaching in higher education has always presented challenges but these have been exacerbated by the impact of remote learning and an increased sense of isolation for students. While we can control what happens in timetabled sessions, it has been difficult to find effective ways to support and guide students outside of the classroom. One reason may be the significant change in routine from secondary education offering structured days over a relatively full week with numerous requirements for homework to the more limited contact requirements and fewer points of formative engagement in higher education, aligning to the development of self-learning skills.

A consequence of this reduced contact and expectation of self-directed learning is often that students are ill-prepared for classes, having not done the appropriate reading or considered the questions to be studied. At best, this may mean having to go back over reading or questions in class meaning a loss of time and less effective participation. At worst, it can disincline students from attending and so limited contact becomes even less and students may have even less understanding of the material and processes, ultimately negatively affecting performance.

A further consequence is that students often aren't able to pace the material and this can lead to cramming. The monitoring of attendance and engagement with online materials will often show peaks and troughs with the former reflecting early motivation and a growing awareness of assessment deadlines. Despite assessment material being available from day one and courses being structured around progress towards the assessment, students often leave assessments until the last minute and this reduces the time they have to absorb the material, understand the structure and ask questions for clarification. It would be more useful to both students and staff to be able to identify and address learning needs earlier and on a more regular basis.

An analogy

The analogy I presented in explaining how I developed my response to these issues was based on model making, one of my hobbies. Many people have made models from the various plastic kits that are available or are at least aware of them. The models are made of various components that come attached to numbered sprues. These are like the information we provide to students related to our subject area. They are the pieces that we expect students to do something with, putting them together to create a recognisable output (assignment or exam). The second element is an instruction sheet that shows how to put the pieces together. This represents all the material and input we provide showing students what we expect them to do with the information. At its simplest this would be the assignment brief, but it might also include instructions on layout, tips on source material and so on. Lastly, there is a picture of what the final model should look like and this also includes details on painting and decals, the transfers that add more realistic detail. This represents the ideal output, such as those indicated by a grade descriptor or examples of excellent previous student work.

Ideally this leads to a completed model that looks like the picture on the box, or in the case of student work an assignment/exam that is close to the model answer that the module author had in mind when writing the learning outcomes and assessment. Sadly, as we are all aware, students often make an approximation, leaving out ideas or information, not fully understanding concepts, not appropriately supporting arguments, not proof-reading work and much more. There will always be some students who, for a variety of reasons beyond our control, struggle in certain subjects. However, many of the issues that we identify in final submissions should be avoidable if the students follow a few simple rules:

1. Attend all the sessions
2. Read all the material
3. Ask questions when things aren't clear
4. Follow instructions carefully.

If they do these things their performance should improve, but how can this be encouraged?

The solution

My solution was to focus on the instruction sheet element and in particular to break this down into a series of weekly engagement activities. The first iteration was in the form of a workbook and for past year this was developed into a study guide. In both cases the idea was to provide a single point of reference for the module so students didn't have to try to search for materials prior to class. I wanted the students to feel that this wasn't a handbook written with the module in mind, but a piece of personal guidance for them and as such I tried to make the language as conversational as possible.

The study guide was more visual than the workbook and this also helped address issues such as decolonisation through the inclusion of a diverse range of images reflecting a broader cultural spectrum.

Surveys were conducted using a third-party platform amongst the cohorts for the two years exposed.

The study guide told them what to do, step-by-step, week-by-week and linked directly and frequently to the assessment. The workbook had required students to submit in class every week to be signed off with the advantage being that they would then receive formative feedback on the work that they had submitted. This wasn't possible to replicate in the same tangible way for the study guide because of remote learning, though students were still encouraged to submit tasks via the virtual learning environment (VLE) on a weekly basis. The lack of a physical artefact and a tangible process had a substantial and negative impact on this part of the use of the study guide, even though the reward of formative feedback was still offered. One other addition to the study guide was a range of reminders for other student support services, such as mental health, which meant that these were much more integrated and therefore, hopefully, more visible to the students. It would be possible to extend this to personal tutoring, placements, careers support and academic study skills services.

Method of evaluation

Surveys were conducted using a third-party platform amongst the cohorts for the two years exposed. The same questions were asked to allow for a direct comparison and qualitative feedback was also collected. The results were anonymous and collated into tables to draw a comparison. The cohort size was 59 for the workbook and 51 for the study guide, all final-year students studying on a core advertising module. For the workbook n=38 and for the study guide n=24, representing 64% and 47% respectively.

The results

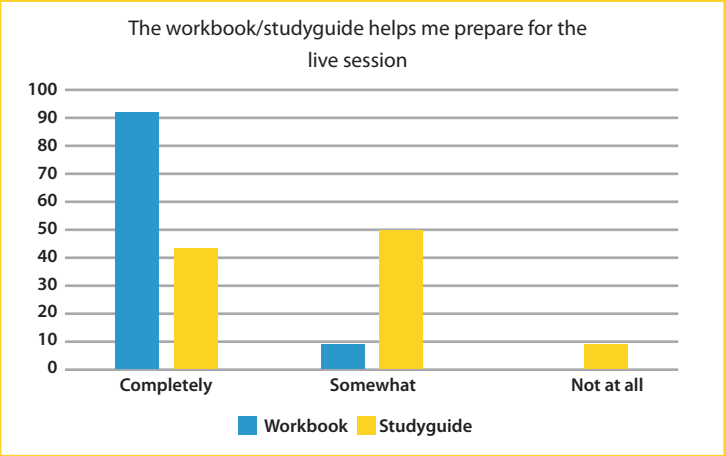


Figure 1

This shows that over 90% of students felt the workbook had completely helped them to prepare for classroom sessions. Although this fell for the study guide the number of students providing positive responses was still nearly 90%.

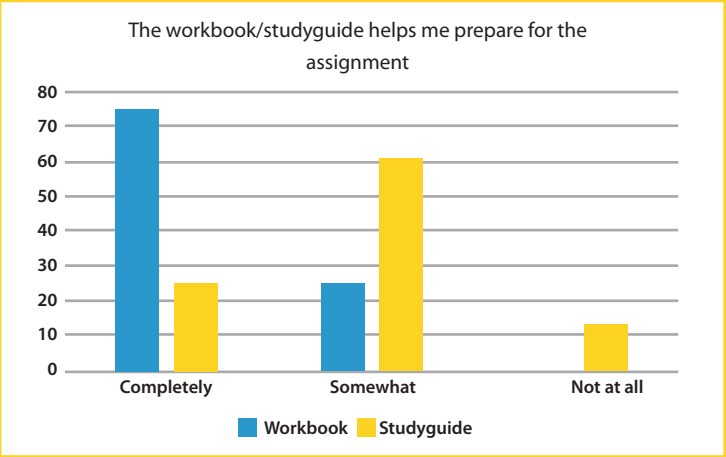


Figure 2

100% of students felt that the workbook helped them with the assignment with more than 70% saying completely. The qualitative feedback suggested that, at least in part, this was due to encouraging the students to work little and often, rather than leaving things until the last minute, giving them more opportunities to ask questions. The study guide was acknowledged as helpful for the assignment by over 80% of students, but only 25% felt it helped them completely.

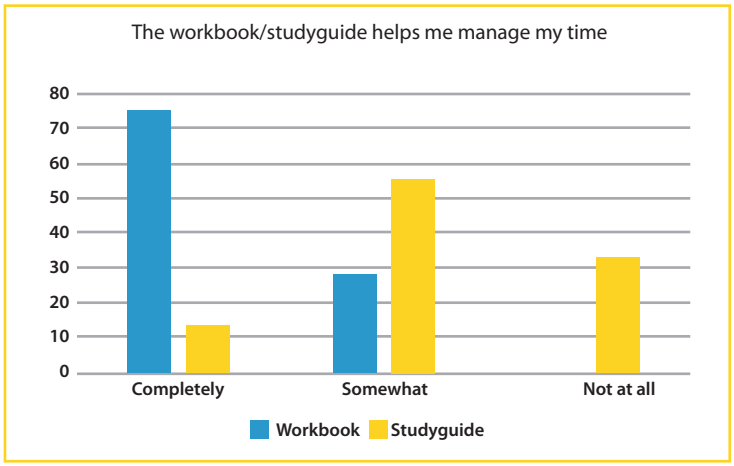


Figure 3

100% of students recognised that the workbook functioned positively as a time-management tool. This fell to 70% for the study guide, with the majority saying it had only partially helped.

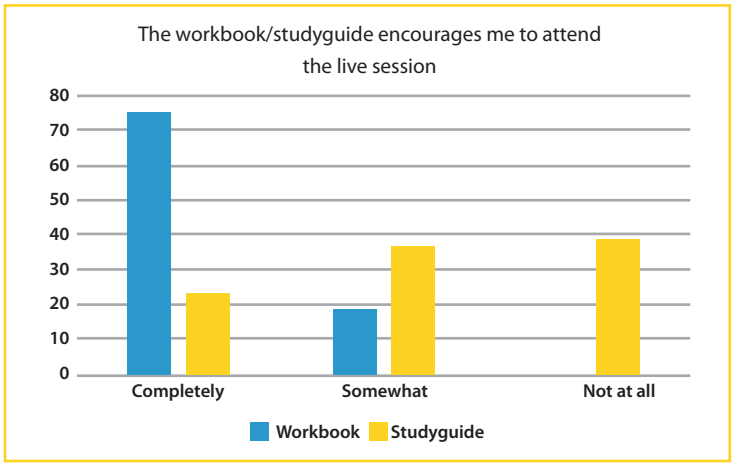


Figure 4

Figure 4 shows that the workbook had a significant positive impact on attendance but the study guide was much more limited. However, it was clear from speaking to students that remote learning and the other various impacts of Covid-19 played a significant role in affecting their attendance at live sessions.

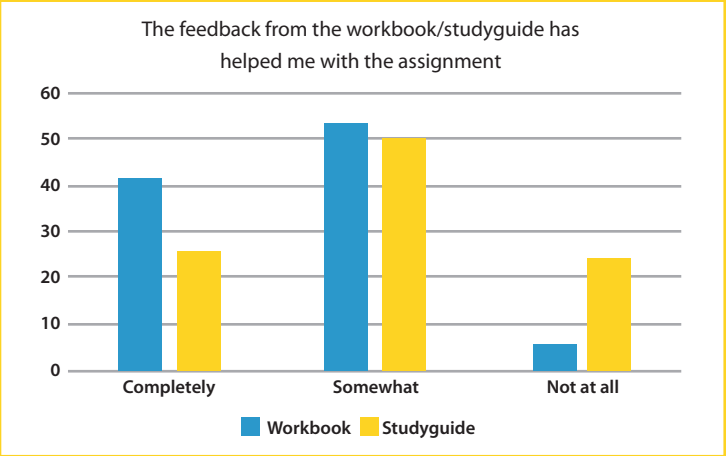


Figure 5

This was possibly the most disappointing result and interestingly the one that remained closest to the same for both the study guide and the workbook. It's unclear why the students didn't feel that completing the tasks and following the guide had helped them with the assignment. However, in module-level feedback some students did identify that they wanted a greater volume of feedback.

This had been difficult given the limited nature of what was required for the formative submissions. It would also be useful to see how the response to this question correlated to the marks received since prior informal research conducted by the author has indicated that the perceived value of feedback is often related to satisfaction with the mark: I am pleased with my mark, the feedback is good; I am unhappy with my mark, the feedback was poor.

Conclusions

The study guide will be reviewed along with the feedback from students. We will return to both an e- and physical copy of the study guide. It will be referenced on a more regular basis, and we will give greater and more frequent formative feedback.

MISSION IMPOSSIBLE? DEVELOPING GRADUATE RESILIENCE AND WELLBEING SKILLS FOR FUTURE WORKPLACE LEADERS

Christine Wightman CMBE, Associate Head of Department of Accounting, Finance and Economics, Ulster University Business School
Nikki McQuillan CMBE, Lecturer in Events Management, Ulster University Business School
Cathy Moore, Employability and Careers Consultant, Ulster University

Project Aim

The lightning pace of change in the workplace and the difficulties posed by the pandemic are beyond any individual's imagination, and for transitioning students this contributes to the current climate of increasing mental health and wellbeing challenges. Nevertheless, recruiting employers expect graduates to be 'work-ready', focusing on resilience as one of the top three desired skills (CBI, 2019). This research paper shares the evaluation of an institution-wide intervention, namely the 'Graduate Resilience' project, which aims through emancipatory pedagogy to develop transitioning student's understanding of resilience and personal wellbeing, deepen their self-awareness as professionals, and prepare them for the future workplace. It is anticipated that the positive outcomes of this research may stimulate CABS colleagues to consider piloting such an intervention within their own institution, particularly in light of the current pandemic and concerns surrounding student mental health.

Methodology

Employers are seeking to recruit graduates who can confidently demonstrate 21st Century Skills and contribute to organisational performance.

Employers are seeking to recruit graduates who can confidently demonstrate 21st Century Skills and contribute to organisational performance. Transitioning graduates therefore need to be 'work ready' and resilient for their future of work. McIntosh and Shaw (2017) argue in developing the resilient graduate, the learning environment cannot be separated from the real-world context in which the student will eventually find themselves. Higher education should therefore be committed to providing students with emancipatory learning opportunities aligned to this concept of 'being', thus developing a clearer sense of themselves and their capabilities, how they gain self-confidence and how to become the best version of themselves on (and beyond) graduation.

For Magowan (2018) on the future of work claims, the future of work is learning and adapting in a 'dynamic flux' and that learning is not exclusively about technology and criticality. Learning must therefore be emancipatory, focus on identity, mindset and enablers to learn and adapt continuously. Barnett and Coate (2005) purport that students can develop a capacity for 'being in the world' and become independent thinkers despite continuous feelings of failure and rejection.

A study by Unite Students (2016) in the UK states that students are increasingly experiencing mental health problems and mental distress. Furthermore, recent longitudinal studies into the current pandemic report elevated rates of anxiety, depression, stress, suicide risk and post-traumatic stress and was found to be pronounced among the young and student population (Daly et al., 2020). Resultingly, there has been a plethora of requests for policy makers and educationalists to address the issues facing students in the sector and to make provision to support and develop their resilience both whilst studying and in preparation for the complex and ever-changing world of work.

Workshop Design and Content

This 'Graduate Resilience' workshops were first piloted in a compulsory final-year module on a number of courses in Ulster University Business School and subsequently delivered on programmes across three faculties in the university. The pandemic necessitated modifying the curriculum content and design of the workshops, to migrate them to a virtual delivery platform, but, at the same time, retain integrity and student learning gains. The workshops took the form of two 1½-hour workshops (45 minutes/break/45 minutes) each, delivered across two consecutive weeks to facilitate pre- and post-workshop activities, along with personal reflection. The design team encouraged the workshops to be credited as part of a module assessment element to encourage engagement and participation. Module coordinators were involved in the delivery again to build trust and cooperation from the student cohort. Finally, it was important to accommodate scalability that the design content was transferable and customisable to any discipline in higher education.

Graduate Resilience Workshop 1 Design

The learning aims from Workshop 1 were to enable students to:

- Develop an understanding of stress and the physical and mental effects (Triune brain theory)
- Distinguish the difference between good and bad stress in relation to wellbeing and performance
- Gain an understanding of emotions and developing emotional self-awareness (emotional self-awareness test)
- Explore the effects of emotions on resilience levels, wellbeing and performance (failure/success effects)
- Appreciate techniques for resilience and wellbeing (breathing exercises and mindfulness activities)

Graduate Resilience Workshop 2 Design

The learning aims from Workshop 2 were to enable students to:

- Understand the difference between growth and fixed mindset
- Appreciate the benefits of a growth mindset
- Explore the link between emotional intelligence and resilience
- Appreciate the importance of mindfulness
- Share their opinions on how to develop effective teams (Google case video)
- Adopt tools and techniques for building resilience and mindfulness to develop personal wellbeing (practical tips, activities and breathing exercises)

Evaluations/Impact

Over 100 students participated in the pilot in 2018/19, followed by 409 across three faculties in 2019/20 and a further 350 students in the online delivery version in 2020/21. Evaluative feedback data was gathered through Mentimeter pre- and post-workshop, focus groups, past graduates (observers) and employability consultants (observers).

Student Evaluations/Feedback:

Evaluative findings for 2020/21 show the 'Graduate Resilience' workshops actively embed practical coping strategies for resilience and mindfulness in transitioning graduates from various subject disciplines.

Graduate Resilience Workshop 1:

	Pre %			Post %		
	Yes	No	Unsure	Yes	No	Unsure
Q1 I understand the physical & mental effects of stress	68	14	18	94	2	4
Q2 I know the difference between good and bad stress in relation to my performance	45	23	32	89	4	8
Q3 I appreciate the value of emotional self-awareness	65	6	29	94	2	4
Q4 I appreciate techniques designed to enhance personal resilience and wellbeing	31	49	19	66	21	13
Q5 This workshop was useful				91	4	5

Graduate Resilience Workshop 2:

	Pre %			Post %		
	Yes	No	Unsure	Yes	No	Unsure
Q1 I understand the difference between a fixed and growth mindset	45	17	39	98	1	1
Q2 I appreciate the benefits of a growth mindset	61	4	34	99	0	1
Q3 I understand the link between emotional intelligence and resilience	55	16	29	96	1	3
Q4 I know how to develop effective teams	58	13	29	98	1	1
Q5 I am able to use tools and techniques to build resilience and develop personal wellbeing	68	8	24	95	1	4
Q6 This workshop was helpful				91	3	6

The key learnings reported by students included the workshops provided:

- Insights into personal resilience levels
- An awareness of emotional intelligence and the impact on performance
- An understanding of coping strategies – how to calm down
- Appreciating it is OK to be unsure and be stressed – but more important to learn how to deal with it
- An understanding of the importance and benefits of having a growth mindset and the power of positivity
- Knowledge of how to work effectively within and leading a team
- A realisation that failures are sometimes the key to success
- Appreciating there are many different perspectives in an organisation
- An ability to adopt breathing techniques for stress and anxiety

Student focus group feedback was extremely positive with many impactful statements such as a student commenting: *'My mindset has completely changed from last week because of the millennials video and the workshop. I now think that when I am stressed it is only "right now" and it will pass soon… Made me feel really different and I am waking up much more positive…'*

Another student acknowledged: *'It is about listening to people and realising that they are not always in the wrong and you are not always right either.'*

One student noted: *'I have to learn to deal with my anger. I was so stressed and so angry with the rest of the team when it was me that was the problem!' Another student stated: 'It is easy to blame others too and so challenging as you could shout all you wanted at others, but your hands were going up too, it's about understanding what other people are thinking and why they are behaving…'*

Challenges Encountered:

- Emancipatory learning design may challenge the academics' comfort zone
- Student apathy and disengagement whereby they 'don't know what they don't know' in terms of the resilience required for the 'real world of work'
- Sensitivity to the subject area of mental health and wellbeing
- Academic resistance to embedding resilience skills into final-year curriculum
- Maintenance of emancipatory pedagogic design

Key Takeaways

There are many natural opportunities to nurture resilience throughout the student experience, depending on the high education institution's approach with respect to teaching, learning and assessment strategies (McIntosh and Shaw, 2017). The pedagogic approach used in the 'Graduate Resilience' project was emancipatory and unique in comparison to the more traditional method students may experience in higher education (Fraser and Bosanquet, 2006). Interventions such as the 'Graduate Resilience' workshops challenge the traditional academic approach through effectively adopting an emancipatory design which enables transforming transitioning student's perceptions of expected 'work-ready' skills through embedding such learning in unique and innovative emancipatory pedagogy. Grundy (1987) further supports this arguing that an emancipatory pedagogical approach results in 'a transformation of consciousness in the way one perceives and acts in the world'.

References

Barnett, R. and Coate, K. (2005), *Engaging the curriculum in higher education*. Maidenhead, UK: Society for Research into Higher Education.

CBI (2019), Education and learning for the modern world: CBI/Pearson Education and Skills Survey report 2019. Available at: https://www.cbi.org.uk/media/3841/12546_tess_2019.pdf [Accessed 5 January 2020].

Claxton, G. (2002), *Building learning power: Helping young people become better learners.* Bristol, UK: The Learning Organisation.

Daly, M. Sutin, A.R. and Robinson, E. (2020), Longitudinal changes in mental health and the Covid-19 pandemic: evidence from the UK Household Longitudinal Study. Psychological Medicine 1–10. Available at: https://doi.org/ [Accessed 9 January 2021].

Fraser, S. P. and Bosanquet, A.M. (2006), The curriculum? That's just a unit outline, isn't it? *Studies in Higher Education*, 31 No.3, pp269-284.

Grundy, S. (1987), *Curriculum: product or praxis?* London, Falmer Press.

Magowan, H. (2018), *Work to Learn: The future of work is learning.* Available at: www.futureislearning.com [Accessed 12 Dec 2019].

McIntosh, E. and Shaw, J. (2017), *Student resilience: Exploring the positive case for resilience.* (Report). London: Unite Students. Available at: http://www.unite-group.co.uk/studentresilience [Accessed 12 December 2019].

Unite Students (2016), *Student resilience: The Unite Students Insight Report 2016* Available at: http://www.unitestudents.com/insightreport [Accessed 12 December 2019].

CREATING CONNECTIONS IN CHALLENGING TIMES

Jennifer Rose CMBE, Associate Professor, Alliance Manchester Business School, University of Manchester

Feeling connected is a vital part of student health and wellbeing.

Feeling connected is a vital part of student health and wellbeing. Christopher Peterson, a distinguished psychologist and educator, would often begin lectures by stating: 'I can sum up positive psychology in just three words – Other People Matter. Period. Anything that builds relationships between and among people is going to make you happy.'

Students need to be supported both online and face to face building relationships can be much harder, in fact, one of the great concerns the cohort of 2020 have is that they will not be able to form connections (Pearson/Wonkhe student expectations survey, July 2020). This article contains useful ideas on encouraging connections that will enable students to flourish and reach their potential.

Firstly, opening up a discussion about the meaning of connection will help students to focus their energy on creating connections with others. A lecturer can discuss times when they have felt connected (to other people or to the wider world) and share vulnerability in examples of times when they have felt disconnected and cut off. With the rise of social media young people can feel that they are the only ones feeling disconnected in an otherwise social world (Primack, Shensa et al, 2017) and sharing this vulnerability will create a deeper and more authentic connection to students (Brown, 2018).

Explaining the importance of connection will help to motivate students into creating connections and forming social groups which will enhance their health and wellbeing. There are plenty of researched links between connection and happiness (Seligman, 2011) as well as Longevity (Holt-Lunstad, Smith and Layton, 2010), however, a more convincing statistic may be from the 'One Day University Love League' that 'one-fifth of British students meet the love of their life on campus', (Penke, 2018). Besides these benefits, and that a group of peers will keep the others on track for course logistics, there are deeper discussions to be had about learning as a social construct. Cole in 1996 and Dudley-Marling in 2012 explained: 'A social construction of learning indicates that what people learn is largely about participating in various communities... The sociocultural context is not just where learning takes place or where knowledge is constructed; it is part of what is learned.' Thus, creating a community of practice will enable students to understand the context of what they are learning and creating these connections is part of what is learned.

A classic way to spark connection is with an icebreaker. These are often dreaded by students so something simple often works well. Questions such as 'Where did you grow up?' 'Where are you now and what is the weather like?', 'What is one word to describe how you are feeling?' or 'What are you are watching at the moment?' can work just as well online in a word cloud as face to face. Asking students to introduce themselves on Padlet with something they enjoy or to find out about someone else (for example, in a breakout room) and introduce them can start a conversation which will later lead to connections. Another favourite is a game called 'Find Someone Who Bingo' where students are given a list of statements (e.g., I can speak three languages, I've done a marathon) and they need to write down the name of someone from the group who has done this from the class.

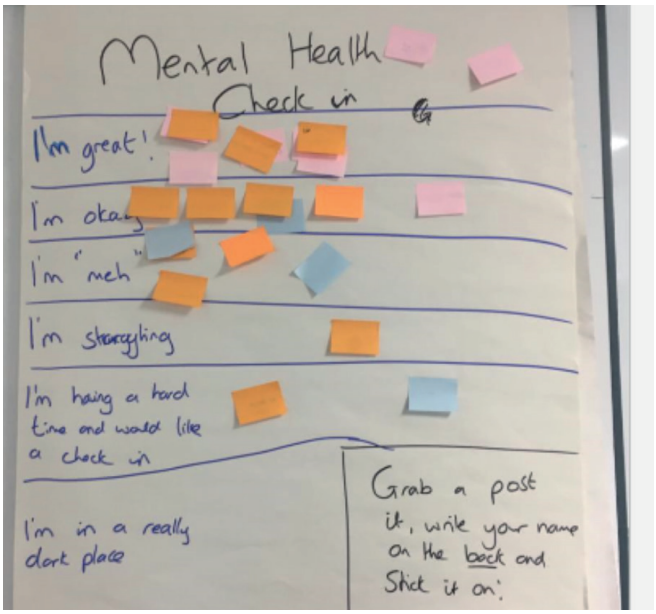
Online informal tools such as the wonder.me platform, where individuals can meet online in a virtual meeting room space, piazza.com discussion boards where students can 'Search for Teammates' and www.differ.chat, as well as the usual social media channels, Skype and WhatsApp groups can facilitate connections. Generation Z students are digital natives used

to connecting in this way (Thompson and Vailes, 2019) so ask them what they use in the ever-changing world of technology.

In a face-to-face classroom, simple discussion tasks such as 'Think, Pair, Share' can work well. This is where students consider their response to a question, pair up with the student next to them and share their thoughts. Asking students to swap and review work can work well in a classroom with a positive environment and asking groups to share their answers with each other and then present their best version to the class instantly creates a connection.

More long term, group coaching works very well – for example, a pair of friends coaching a group of students in the year below was found by students to be very productive as well as fun. At Manchester, I created an awards ceremony event that celebrates the most helpful and friendly students as nominated by their peers encouraging and recognising the benefits of connection for other students in a cohort.

A mental health check-in at the beginning of class can help identify students who are feeling isolated or disconnected. To do this draw up the table such as the one below and ask students to write their name on the back of a post-it note and stick them on to the relevant section. Later, those who are struggling or feeling disconnected can be followed up with. It can be done using a poll online, although the follow up is more difficult in this case if it is anonymous.



There are just some suggestions on creating connections - for more ideas and to share your thoughts you can connect to this Padlet https://manchester.padlet.org/mzyssjrh/9p1aj7m7e4d2upx8. By facilitating connections and reducing isolation the anxiety and feelings of isolation many students suffer from can be reduced. Strong connections can transform classrooms and engage and motivate students, making learning fun and places of education to be safe environments to share thoughts. Who knows one of the connections created at university may mean that a student meets the love of their life!

References

Brown, B. (2018) The Gifts of Imperfection: Let Go of Who You Think You're Supposed to Be and Embrace Who You Are. Hazelden Information & Educational Services.

Cole, M. (1996). *Cultural psychology: A once and future discipline.* Cambridge: Belknap.

Dudley-Marling C. (2012) Social Construction of Learning. In: Seel N.M. (eds) Encyclopedia of the Sciences of Learning. Springer, Boston, MA. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4419-1428-6_96

Holt-Lunstad, J. Smith, T. Layton, J. (2010) Social Relationships and Mortality Risk: A Meta-analytic Review. PLoS Med 7(7): e1000316.

Penke L (2018) One fifth of British students meet the love of their life on campus https://tsrmatters.com/blog/one-fifth-of-british-students-meet-the-love-of-their-life-on-campus/ Accessed 1 September 2021

Primack, B. A., Shensa, A., Sidani, J. E., Whaite, E. O., Lin, L. Y., Rosen, D., Colditz, J. B., Radovic, A., & Miller, E. (2017). Social Media Use and Perceived Social Isolation Among Young Adults in the U.S. American journal of preventive medicine, 53(1), 1–8.

Seligman, M. (2011). Flourish: A visionary new understanding of Happiness and Well-being. New York, Atria Paperback.

Pearson/Wonkhe student expectations survey (2020) https://wonkhe.com/wp-content/wonkhe-uploads/2020/07/Pearson-Wonkhe-student-expectations-survey-published-version.pdf Accessed 1 September 2021

Thompson, D. Vailes, F. (2019) *How to Grow a Grown up: Prepare Your Teen For the Real World.* Penguin.

Wenger, E. McDermott, R. Snyder, W. (2002) Cultivating Communities of Practice, Harvard Business School Press

EMBEDDING MENTAL WELLBEING FOR STAFF AND STUDENTS

Zoë Allman, Associate Dean (Academic), De Montfort University

Launching the second day of LTSE 2021 was a keynote panel discussion entitled 'Supporting the mental health and wellbeing of staff and students'. Among the panellists was Zoë Allman, academic project leader for De Montfort University's project to embed mental wellbeing in the curriculum and national leader for the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Collaborative Enhancement Project 2021 to embed mental wellbeing.

It is recognised that it is important to be focusing on the topic of staff and student mental wellbeing now, particularly in light of the pandemic.

It is recognised that it is important to be focusing on the topic of staff and student mental wellbeing now, particularly in light of the pandemic. Prior to the pandemic activity was occurring across the sector around mental wellbeing in the curriculum but the pandemic has acted as a catalyst to raise this as a key topic at national conferences (including LTSE), at the higher education (HE) provider level, and amongst academic and professional services teams.

Before the pandemic there was a tendency to focus on embedding mental wellbeing for students, and at De Montfort, as with other providers, the focus was initially on the impact of this activity on student mental wellbeing. Following the pandemic and the associated changes to many long-established working practices, whilst it is recognised there was still a need to focus on student mental wellbeing, there is now greater discussion, and importantly action, around embedding mental wellbeing for staff. There has been a growing awareness across the sector that those who are active in embedding mental wellbeing for the benefit of students must themselves feel supported, encouraged, and in a state of good mental wellbeing. Extending this concept, much of what is considered to be good practice around embedding mental wellbeing for students also translates to staff.

De Montfort University, along with 12 other HE providers, joined Advance HE for the first iteration of the Embedding Mental Wellbeing in the Curriculum Project in the summer of 2019. It was a project bringing together providers to review activity across the sector, share best practice, and develop plans to further embed mental wellbeing in the curriculum. At De Montfort the focus of the project was on enhancing staff and student online resources, developing resources to empower academic colleagues to deliver in-session embedding mental wellbeing content, enhancing the staff welfare training and academic development offer, and recognising and celebrating the activity already occurring in this area.

The 'University Mental Health Charter' (Hughes and Spanner) was published in 2019 and there has since been increasing activity in the area. The pandemic has increased the focus on mental wellbeing, and this has been seen in HE, for example with the 2020 Student Minds publication, 'Planning for a Sustainable Future: the importance of university mental health in uncertain times'. This has recognised the idea that if providers are going to ensure effective embedding mental wellbeing for students, then it is important to ensure the effective embedding of mental wellbeing for staff as well.

The pandemic has highlighted a range of wellbeing offers beyond the curriculum, but when we embed mental wellbeing for students we seek to recognise trigger points in the curriculum or taught activity, and aim to address these proactively to reduce the impact of the triggers by preparing the individual for what is to come – acknowledging that there will be a level of mental and possibly physical response, anticipating and preparing for this. Embedding mental wellbeing content within the curriculum allows us to ensure students are best prepared to acknowledge, anticipate and recognise those triggers, with a view to

best managing their response. This is an approach we could do more to support for staff within the HE sector as well as students.

In January 2021 JISC issued a 'call for universities to embed wellbeing in curriculum, to save student mental health' and upon reading it's clear that there is a focus on staff here as well; again, acknowledging that if we are to ensure the effective embedding of mental wellbeing for students we need to ensure the mental wellbeing of staff too. In May 2021 Student Minds launched The University Mental Health Charter Award, a whole university approach that invites providers to reflect on mental health across the institution, exploring areas of strength and development to inform improvements.

Following on from the initial Advance HE Embedding Mental Wellbeing in the Curriculum Project a number of the collaborating partners wanted to further explore this important topic, to provide definitions for embedding mental wellbeing, share good practice examples, and provide clarity around the associated benefits. In early 2021 the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) supported a proposed Collaborative Enhancement Project from a team representing seven HE providers and a students' union focusing on this subject. The collaborative project includes the development of a set of resources to enhance support in the sector for embedding mental wellbeing, making these available from 'Blue Monday' (January 17, 2022), refocusing a day typically considered to be the most depressing of the year on to positive aspects of support and activity around mental wellbeing for the sector.

Embedding mental wellbeing remains a priority as we transition to greater on-campus activity following the increased use of blended approaches seen during the pandemic. At this time it is important to reflect on what has been achieved during this unprecedented time, consider approaches to embedding mental wellbeing at whatever level an individual is operating and continue to explore what else can be done to enhance embedding mental wellbeing for staff and students.

References

Hughes, G. & Spanner, L. (2019). *The University Mental Health Charter*. Retrieved from https://www.studentminds.org.uk/uploads/3/7/8/4/3784584/191208_umhc_artwork.pdf.

JISC & Emerge Education (2021). *Student and staff wellbeing*. Retrieved from https://repository.jisc.ac.uk/8276/1/student-and-staff-wellbeing-report.pdf.

Student Minds (2020). *Planning For a Sustainable Future: the importance of university mental health in uncertain times*. Retrieved from https://www.studentminds.org.uk/uploads/3/7/8/4/3784584/2005_planning_for_a_sustainable_future_a5.pdf.

INTERVENTIONS FOR ENHANCING INTERNATIONAL ORIENTATION

Dr Jane Lynch, Reader in Procurement, Cardiff University
Professor Helen M Williams, Chair in Organisational Psychology, Cardiff University

Students of all nationalities struggle with homesickness and loneliness, but international students face additional challenges.

The health and wellbeing of our students has never been more important. Students of all nationalities struggle with homesickness and loneliness, but international students face additional challenges. Our study takes an innovative approach by gathering rich insights using student peer-to-peer research. A key takeaway from this research includes insights from a student-led research project on the challenges facing international students and of new interventions which have since been piloted to address the issues identified.

International students are a positive resource, not just in terms of providing a source of income, but as 'cultural carriers' of knowledge and experience (Paige, 1990), which improves the experience of home students and university staff (Arthur, 2017). In essence, international students are crucial to fostering a multicultural learning environment.

However, it is well documented that international students have more difficulty adjusting to university life than home students (Bodycott, 2012; Ramos, 2014; Arthur, 2017). It is therefore no surprise that there has been an upward trend in health and wellbeing issues such as anxiety and stress amongst international students (Forbes-Mewitt and Sawyer, 2016). Dealing with everyday issues such as building new friends and living independently can lead to anxiety, periods of insomnia, and reduced confidence levels – these feelings are heightened by family pressures to achieve well (Winter, 2019). Bodycott (2012) supports the argument that Chinese and Asian students are more likely to display a greater degree of passiveness to negative experience and tend not to seek support from peers unless they are from similar backgrounds. Whereas students of other nationalities are more likely to reach out for support cross-nationally, due to a perceived lack of peer support from peers in their respective nations (Yu and Moskal, 2018).

Most of the existing research acknowledges numerous challenges facing overseas students with industry reports quoting statistical evidence of growth in the numbers of overseas students and increasing reliance by universities on this recruitment. However, there is less evidence when it comes to making practical suggestions for important interventions or ways to overcome or prevent the challenges overseas students face in adjusting to life as a student in the UK. Our applied research helps to build on this gap in the literature and provides interesting insights for future research.

Research aim

The health and wellbeing of our students has never been more important (Weale, 2019; Winter, 2019), even before the recent pandemic, Covid-19. Students of all nationalities are understood to struggle with homesickness and loneliness, but international students face additional challenges such as the need to overcome cultural differences and discrimination (Arthur, 2017; Bodycott, 2012; Ramos, 2014).

This study sought to better understand the deep-rooted challenges facing international students when arriving at a UK university and when integrating with students from other nationalities. Interviews and focus groups with business school students at a UK higher education institution were conducted by student researchers working in partnership with the authors.

Methodology

Between 2018 and 2019, an exploratory study was conducted by two international students under the supervision of the authors to better understand other international students' perspectives on the orientation experience – in managing the 'culture shocks' and transition to UK university life. We examine the following research questions.

RQ1: What are the main challenges facing incoming students from overseas?

RQ2: What interventions can be put in place to maintain well-being during the induction period?

Using semi-structured interviews and focus groups with Post-it (note) activities, overseas students were invited to share some of their personal fears and challenges when arriving to the university and for early weeks that followed. The experiences of 56 students representing 16 nationalities helps us to understand how we may be able to improve the orientation and induction experience of students moving to the UK to study.

Findings

The research findings are categorised in relation to Bordia et al.'s (2018) model which describes the interconnected responsibilities towards international students, highlighting that the three tiers of academic staff, the business school and the university, have shared duties to fulfil the needs and expectations of these students.

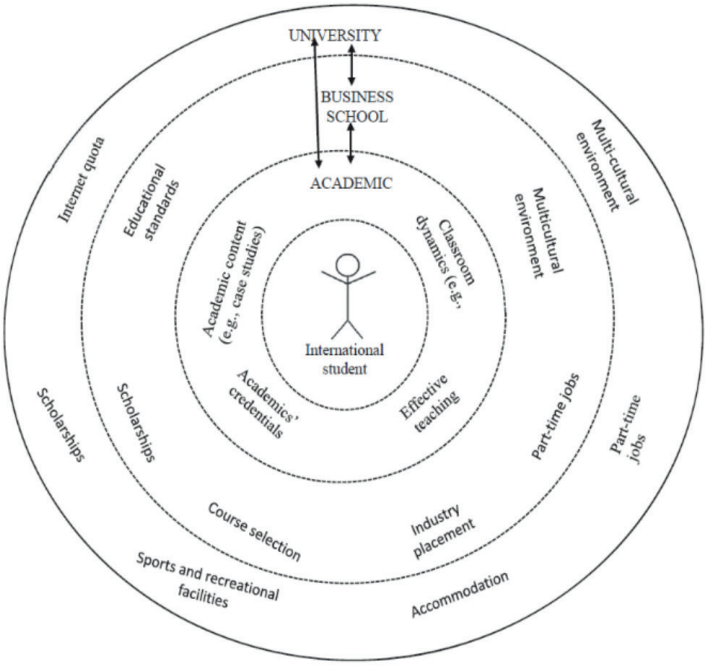


Figure 1: The interconnected nature of responsibilities towards international students (Bordia et al., 2018)

The findings have important practical implications which have led to tangible outcomes in the form of the piloting of interventions aimed at better supporting students arriving in the UK. The findings also have theoretical implications, contributing to our understanding in this important area, and providing interesting insights for future research.

The research has enabled us to review existing provision and it has informed substantive changes to the induction process which included a full revision of activities offered to students. For example, the research has led to greater emphasis on team-building from day one so that students have more opportunities to meet friends. Other interventions include

introducing a set of orientation sessions sometimes delivered in the native language to be sure that students understand important differences such as through the education systems, ways of living and communicating with each other and with academic staff.

Building on the success at school level, some of the interventions are being implemented at university level across multiple schools where greater focus is being placed on pre-arrival support and orientation support on arrival.

Conclusions

We build on existing knowledge by exploring preventative measures. Most research discusses problems which should be addressed through increasing student support services, whereas our research focuses on interventions to prevent these issues spiralling out of control.

We apply our research to overseas students from a range of nationalities rather than specific countries.

An important observation that emerged from the research was the distinction between pre-arrival and on-arrival support needs – these needs are quite different, but universities tend to offer similar support.

Data collection was conducted by students who have experienced the issues under study, meaning they were better able to connect with participants – and their peers were more likely to share their experiences than with a member of staff.

Initiatives based upon our recommendations have been piloted and sharing our experiences will be of value to academic and professional services colleagues with responsibility for student experience and student support.

References

Arthur, N. (2017) Supporting international students through strengthening their social resources. *Studies in Higher Education*, 42:5, 887-894

Bodycott, P. (2012). Embedded culture and intercultural adaptation: implications for managing the needs of Chinese Students. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 34(4), 355-364.

Bordia, S., Bordia, P., Milkovitz, M., Shen, Y., Restubog, S.L.D. (2018). What do international students really want? An exploration of the content of international students' psychological contract in business education. *Studies in Higher Education*.

Forbes-Mewitt, H. and Sawyer, A. 2016 International Students and Mental Health, *The Journal of International Students* (JIS), Vol 6 (3), p. 661-677. ISSN: 2166-3750 [online]

Paige, M. R. (1990). International students: Cross-cultural psychological perspectives. In R. W. Brislin (ed.). *Applied Cross-Cultural Psychology*. London: SAGE Publications, 161-185.

Ramos, A. (2014). The Chinese International Student Experience in a Time of Increased Enrolment at the University of California, Santa Barbara. *International Student Experience Journal*, 2(2).

Weale, S. 2019. Levels of distress and illness among students in UK 'alarmingly high', The Guardian, available at; Levels of distress and illness among students in UK 'alarmingly high' | Universities | The Guardian

Winter, A. 2019. Understanding international student mental health, Universities UK [online] available at; Understanding international student mental health (universitiesuk.ac.uk)

Yu, Y. & Moskal, M. (2018). Missing intercultural engagements in the university experiences of Chinese international students in the UK, *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*.

THEME:
ENCOURAGING AND ENGAGING THE STUDENT VOICE

A PULL STRATEGY TO ENGAGE STUDENT VOICE

Pamela Jeffrey, Progress Coach, University of East London
Rebecca Page-Tickell, Director for Education and Experience, University of East London.

The outbreak of the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic, along with the government directive on social distancing created a void between students and their learning environment; this has had a significant detrimental effect on the wellbeing of students in higher education. It was observed that the shift to online delivery, and the feeling of displacement, resulted in a reduction in student engagement. This paper outlines a call to action by means of a Calling Campaign to actively listen and engage with the audible, though less visible, student voice during a pandemic and beyond. We explore the rationale, design, operation and effectiveness, as well as lessons learnt from the campaign, to assess its success as a strategy to engage the student voice.

This research is based on a Calling Campaign launched to offset the constraint of social distancing for students to voice their thoughts, views and opinions of their personal circumstances in relation to their learning. This phenomenological study was conducted using telephone interviews focussing on a year group involving 1,000 international business students studying at a post-92 higher education institution. Further, these students were selected as they presented an additional dimension of potentially being without a support unit within the UK. The research seeks to understand individuals' perspective on the mental and physical wellbeing effects of online learning as a result of social distancing.

Our 10-year Vision 2028 strategy to enhance lives and change futures to become the UK's leading careers-intensive university required a substantial and immediate shift in our approach to remain credible and to retain the confidence of our students. Our values, as a student-centric learning institution, underpinned our decision to launch a campaign in the summer of 2020 in which we selected, recruited and trained a team of UEL students as Calling Campaign Officers to actively listen and respond to student issues. Specific aspect of the training was the observation of data protection legislation (UK GDPR, 2018) and compliance with research ethics.
Students engaged with questions posed by the team on their mental health, general well-being, financial need, technological and academic support. We adopted a flexible shift approach with calls being made between the hours of 08.30-19.30hrs, seven days a week. This allowed us to maximise the time for campaigners to engage with students in a 15-minute non-judgmental friendly two-way conversation. Depending on the response, students were then signposted to the university's specialist support areas. While the questions were scripted, they were delivered in a non-prescriptive manner. Instead, the personalities of the 18 UEL student callers and two faculty staff – Pamela and Rebecca – were instrumental to signpost support, respond to circumstantial questions, and to elicit some insightful information.

To determine the success of the campaign, a track of responses was recorded, i.e. did the caller make contact with the student, what exactly did the student desire from the conversation? A coding framework was developed to categorise responses using a traffic light system (RAG rating) to track project progress and report back to stakeholders, as well as providing a visual cue for callers to implement corrective action by signposting students to areas of support. The rating measured the level of support students required in response

Results of the calls

Student Feedback/they said

- Phone calls seen as personal and demonstrated a caring attitude from the university
- Post-grad taught student revealed concerns around communication with their dissertation supervisor
- A need to enhance access to physical resources such as books
- Revealed a digital divide – some students in multi living situations with only 1 laptop, students working only via mobile phones
- Issues with internet connectivity
- Increased financial issues, particularly for international students relying on part-time jobs
- Report of exacerbated well-being issues (Anxiety / Depression)

School Remedy / we did

- Continued with the calling campaign
- Set up reinforcement processes
- Library adapted access to meet students' needs
- Exceptional hardship fund launched to source laptops
- University sourced dongles for students to enhance connectivity
- Agreement arranged with the canteen for free of charge meals for students
- Food parcels distributed; students signposted to hardship funds
- Signposted students appropriately

to their issues. The campaign officers applied a multi-touch approach by offering follow-up calls, leaving voicemails, inserting reminders to return calls, responding to queries by email, escalating any areas of concern to the project supervisor and documenting feedback.

An overview of the findings leads us to remain curious and to build on this work to better understand the needs of our students so as to enhance the provision. We explore the lived experience of our students by pro-actively listening to the student voice. We also signpost to research on wellbeing continues to show the high incidence of stress as a major cause of disengagement, students who reported this feeling were immediately signposted to wellbeing support. While proactive action may require additional resources, the results demonstrate that it has proven to be particularly beneficial to the students. It is important to retain the view of students as people – not as data. The gratitude shown in response to a call potentially enhanced a sense of belonging for the student through the interaction of a phone call. It is our intention to present the findings of this campaign and build on the success by scheduling a larger more frequent interaction with students. Deeper analysis of the information will potentially offer new opportunities to flourish by synthesising data, feedback and use it to good advantage.

It is our intention to continue with an agile mindset to build resilience in both students and colleagues. We would like to explore the changes for our students with the focus that this can support as well as developing our culture, and teams to take bold and decisive steps using the freedom and flexibility provided to adapt and act on the individual needs of the students. It is our aim to carry on with a pull strategy to lead students to voice their desires for support. This will be a permanent feature in our approach to engage with the student voice.

THEY SAID, WE DID: ENGAGING STUDENTS AS PARTNERS

Alan McBlane, Senior Lecturer in Events Management, Oxford Brookes University
Dr Brianna Wyatt, Senior Lecturer in Events Management, Oxford Brookes Business University

Introduction

Numerous scholars have discussed the importance of students as partners, student inclusion in curriculum development, and engaging students through feedback as a measure of success. This presentation draws on a retrospective case study to demonstrate the use of these theories in practice to enhance the overall student learning experience. Events management is a relatively new topic at Oxford Brookes University. The first cohort graduated in 2019 and there have been ongoing reviews and minor adjustments, based primarily on student feedback. Central to that feedback – and additional feedback from placement employers regarding students' readiness for the workplace – was the response from students that the learning and teaching activities were largely theoretical and that there were not enough opportunities to run actual events and develop the practical skills needed to enhance their level of employability, with most activities limited to simulation or desktop planning.

The delivery of the module also had to address the potential of students who might choose to go on exchange in the second semester of second year.

In 2019, major changes were proposed during the programme revalidation process including a practical events module that was to be delivered in the second year. This timing was important, as it was felt students would need to give a considerable amount of time to plan and deliver a live event, which could not be effectively done in the third year where they would be concentrating on their dissertations and final coursework.

The structure of the new module allowed students to build on the framework established in first year, when they would have established a basic understanding of the events framework and academic theory. This also served the purpose of preparing some students for placement and others for a summer of work experience and volunteering opportunities.

In doing this there was a recognition that any practical work of this type tends to dominate the students' time (and concentration) and in effect detract from any other modules taught in the same period. The delivery of the module also had to address the potential of students who might choose to go on exchange in the second semester of second year. Consequently, the decision was made to teach this module as a triple (45 credit) module, over a 12-week period in Semester 1.

Assessment

There were four assessed elements of coursework:

CW1 – Event Proposal

This is an individual assessment, but students needed to collaborate with other members of the class and work in teams of 4 to create a cohesive presentation for a realistic project plan for a live event, which could be planned and delivered by Week 10 while working within the resources that were available.

The 15 student groups originally presented a range of event concepts for CW1 which were reviewed by the teaching team and reduced to five events that were believed to be manageable with the time and resources available. This caused some unrest from those whose ideas did not progress, but students quickly integrated into the combined groups and generally worked collaboratively to produce the revised versions of the events.

CW2 – Project Participation

Throughout the module students were expected to actively participate and engage in seminars and workshops to contribute fully towards the overall planning and delivery of an event. Participation included engagement in seminars and workshops, individual initiative and active involvement of the event from inception to completion. No written submission was required, and there were two assessed elements in this coursework.

a)	The Event	(Group Assessment)
b)	Participation and Engagement	(Individual Assessment)

These two elements combined to give a final individual mark

Students were assessed over a seven-week teaching period in every seminar and/or workshop from Week 5 to Week 11.

Students could receive up to 10 marks for each assessed session.

0 Marks	Non-contribution
1 – 3 Marks	Attended but made little or no preparation and offer only limited participation and contribution
4 – 6 Marks	Attended and prepared in advance, participated and contributed appropriately in the planning and completion of ongoing tasks
7 – 10 Marks	Made a significant contribution by, for instance, giving an accurate answer to a question, show a high degree of research and analysis, or attempt to meaningfully provide solutions to several tasks.

Marks were discussed and evaluated by the teaching team at the end of each week.

CW3 – Event Management Portfolio

Students were required to produce an individual events management role portfolio, which built on their experiences of planning and delivering their events.

CW4 – Post Event Evaluation Report

Students were required to provide a Post Event Evaluation Report following the planning and delivery of their events in the form of a 2,000-word report that would cover the entire event, not just an individual allocated area of responsibility.

Outcomes

With the announcement of the tiered restrictions in Week 4, and a second national lockdown in Week 7, all events were changed to run virtually. This management of change in effect became one of their key learning outcomes. The students were very resilient to an ongoing process of change, both in the methods of teaching (changes to timetabling, face-to-face, online and hybrid) and the move from physical to virtual events. As a group they rose to the challenges presented to them and a significant number have now developed additional skills in communication and team management.

Collectively the students ran these events all under one banner – Escape The New Normal – in Week 10 as originally planned and promoted these heavily (and creatively) on Instagram, Facebook and a number of internal Oxford Brookes channels.

Participation and engagement at all taught sessions was high, with attendance regularly topping 95%, and the students put a lot of their own time into the planning of each element outside of these sessions. There was strong evidence of teamwork, and a management structure began to emerge after a few weeks with some clear leaders in the group who managed the dialogue with a range of stakeholders including the students' union and the estates and campus services team.

The final element of coursework produced some excellent work, supported by clear evidence of how the groups had been managed.

The employability element of the coursework presented some challenges for students. The teaching for this was delivered in a themed week (Week 6) to allow them time to develop and build the research required for their portfolios, and those that opted to leave that work until closer to hand in struggled.

The final element of coursework produced some excellent work, supported by clear evidence of how the groups had been managed and good identification of resources and the challenges that the students were set during a difficult and demanding period for all involved.

There were no fails on the module and a generally high quality of work. The central importance of working together perhaps drove this, but some fell away in the individual elements required for CW3 and CW4.

Conclusions

Overall, this was a successful first run of this module, and in some ways the challenging circumstances presented further opportunities for strong learning outcomes.

The positive elements of the student feedback appeared to reflect the value that the students placed on being able to deliver events and the ability to put their academic learning into practice.

Their suggestions on ways that the module could be improved tended to focus around three areas – assessment, group work and event choices and some appear to have struggled with the pace of the module.

The teaching team met following the conclusion of the module to discuss the feedback and some suggestions have been proposed to address the three key areas of concern.

- The removal of 'free choice' of events and replacing this with a menu of available options for proposed events in advance of the proposals for CW1. This would also assist with group management.
- The inclusion of an ongoing reflective element of assessment could link directly to employability and replace or amend the current assessment for CW3 'The Event Management Portfolio'. This may also help to build some continuity into the teaching of employability skills and the value of networking. It would also link to the final year module on employability.

The team felt that there is still value in the formal lecture content for employability being taught in one themed week. A similar approach is also being considered for areas such as health and safety, marketing and communication, sustainability, project management and creativity.

Please visit the students' event website www.escapethenewnormal.org for further details of the events that ran.

THEME:
LEADING LEARNING AND TEACHING TEAMS

It could be argued that higher education was "caught out" with some digital competencies at the beginning of the pandemic but with the drive and speed to retain student experiences many jumped on board quickly supported by a wealth of supported provided by many of the institution's digital teams. What is clear is the need to continue to grow the wealth of research in the scholarship field that recognises the impact on learners and continue to establish a clear distinction between the practice and the research underpinning it.

LEADING EDUCATION-FOCUSED CAREER DEVELOPMENT: TOWARDS A COMMON UNDERSTANDING OF SCHOLARSHIP AND ITS OUTPUTS

Dr Susan Smith CMBE, Associate Dean (Education and Students), University of Sussex Business School
Dr David Walker, Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education and Students), University of Brighton

The UK higher education sector continues to increase its reliance on teaching-focused roles with Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) data reporting 32% of overall academic staff employed on teaching-focused contracts in 2019/20 (HESA, 2021). We adopt the term education focused to include the variation in career pathway nomenclature across institutions that align to the HESA teaching-only category. Some examples include teaching-focused, education and scholarship, teaching and learning.

Unlike research career paths, a common sector approach to promotion for those on 'teaching and scholarship' tracks has not yet emerged, leading to variation in practice both at an institutional level and the interpretation applied within business schools. This has contributed to a sense of confusion for those who seek to progress their careers on such tracks. The concerns are increasingly recognised across the sector and emergent work in the UK business school sector is now starting to address education-focused career progression, e.g. British Academy of Management (Anderson & Mallanaphy, 2020).

Many universities have developed role descriptions and promotion criteria for education-focused career pathways (Macfarlane, 2011). However, such work has often been undertaken in a reactive manner rather than as part of a sector-wide movement to embed agreed norms. Whilst scholarship is a widely used term in role descriptors and promotion criteria there remains a broad spectrum of definitions of scholarship activity and output (Bennett et al., 2018) leaving any general agreement on its constituent elements largely unresolved (Chick, 2014; Potter & Kustra, 2011). The range of outputs that may be considered to represent scholarship has also been criticised with some concluding that it '. . . has become too inclusive to be useful' (Canning & Masika, 2020, p. 11). Other significant pressures include but are not limited to the dissociation between disciplinary educational research or scholarship and higher education research (Tierney, 2020).

The consequence is a lack of clarity for those who are seeking to establish education-focused careers (Canning & Masika, 2020). This often leads to a conflation of scholarly teaching with the scholarship of teaching and learning (Potter & Kustra, 2011). The literature broadly agrees that scholarship of teaching and learning typically has a public nature and is characterised by a systematic investigation (Kern et al., 2015). This is confirmed by empirical work with promotion criteria (Vardi & Quin, 2011).

Initial findings from an exploratory study of scholarship criteria across 22 mid-sized UK universities indicate that scholarship is not clearly defined by universities, although many offer indicative evidence which can help to clarify the institutional interpretation. Findings also indicated that pedagogic research is frequently used interchangeably with scholarship without a clear explanation of how they differ (Boshier, 2009). They highlighted that progression through the various career levels typically requires refocusing from one's own practice to a pedagogic research focus.

Institutions offer varying levels of support for those pursuing education-focused careers. This is an essential aspect of any career pathway, and the workshop examined a case

study from the University of Sussex. A scholarship working party was established following the creation of the university's education and scholarship career pathway. This group which benefits from broad representation across the university has worked to develop an institutional definition and support processes for scholarship activity and career planning. An important step has been the institutional rollout of personal scholarship plans, designed to support scholarship planning and provide parity with those on traditional research and teaching tracks who undergo an annual personal research planning cycle.

Building scholarship capacity within the university has been supported by the DARE to Transform network, a developmental hub that has initiated various activities at the institutional level to encourage scholarship activity, practice sharing, and collaboration. It now includes

- a scholarship mentoring scheme, soon to launch its third cohort
- an invited seminar series
- a community of practice where colleagues can share scholarship work and discuss specific themes more extensively
- a blog that serves as an initial means for disseminating scholarship work.

Challenges for the sector remain in responding to the question: 'How do we value the diversity of experience and knowledge in academic progression?' (Bradley, 2021). It remains important to establish a parity of esteem rather than perpetuating a deficit narrative related to education-focused career pathways. The first steps to doing so include establishing a clear definition of what constitutes scholarship of teaching and learning vis à vis pedagogic research, rather than adopting it as a catch-all for a broad spectrum of activity (Tight, 2018).

References

Anderson, L., & Mallanaphy, C (2020). MKE White Paper – Education Focused Career Tracks in UK Business and Management Schools Current practice and recommendations for progress

Bennett, D., Roberts, L., Ananthram, S., & Broughton, M. (2018). What is required to develop career pathways for teaching academics? Higher Education, 75 (2), 271-286. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-017-0138-9

Boshier, R. (2009). Why is the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning such a hard sell? *Higher Education Research & Development*, 28(1), 1–15. https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360802444321

Bradley, S. (2021). Call for action. In *Academic career progression: Rethinking pathways* (p. 43). Advance HE. https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/academic-career-progression-rethinking-pathways

Canning, J., & Masika, R. (2020). The scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL): The thorn in the flesh of educational research. *Studies in Higher Education*, 0(0), 1–13. https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2020.1836485

Chick, N. L. (2014). Methodologically sound'under the 'big tent': An ongoing conversation. *International Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, 8(2), 1–15.

HESA. (2021, January). Higher Education Staff Statistics: UK, 2019/20. https://www.hesa.ac.uk/news/19-01-2021/sb259-higher-education-staff-statistics

Kern, B., Mettetal, G., Dixson, M., & Morgan, R. K. (2015). The role of SoTL in the academy: Upon the 25th anniversary of Boyer's Scholarship Reconsidered. *Journal of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, 1–14. https://doi.org/10.14434/josotl.v15i3.13623

Macfarlane, B. (2011). Prizes, pedagogic research and teaching professors: Lowering the status of teaching and learning through bifurcation. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 16(1), 127–130. https://doi.org/10.1080/13562517.2011.530756

Potter, M., & Kustra, E. (2011). The Relationship between Scholarly Teaching and SoTL: Models, Distinctions, and Clarifications. *International Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, 5. https://doi.org/10.20429/ijsotl.2011.050123

Tierney, A. (2020). The scholarship of teaching and learning and pedagogic research within the disciplines: Should it be included in the research excellence framework? *Studies in Higher Education*, 45(1), 176–186. https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2019.1574732

Tight, M. (2018). Tracking the scholarship of teaching and learning. *Policy Reviews in Higher Education*, 2(1), 61–78. https://doi.org/10.1080/23322969.2017.1390690

Vardi, I., & Quin, R. (2011). Promotion and the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 30(1), 39–49. https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2011.536971

THEME:
UPSKILLING AND RESKILLING THE UK WORKFORCE

From the submissions we can see the strength of impact many institutions are having with their work with local businesses whether that is through partnerships or indeed through executive education and building and reskilling of the workforce.

THE OPEN INNOVATION COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE: ENHANCING ORGANISATIONAL AND REGIONAL DYNAMIC CAPABILITIES

Dr Gary Walpole, Project Director (Circular Economy Innovation Communities project), Cardiff Metropolitan University
Dr Emily Bacon, Lecturer (Circular Economy Innovation Communities project), Swansea University

The presentation outlined an executive education programme, and its impact through video case studies, that was commissioned by Welsh government to enhance the innovation skills of businesses in South Wales. The presentation explored the experiential learning techniques employed, the underpinning pedagogy and tools introduced.

Regional policymakers have previously committed to enhancing business innovation skills in order to augment the regional TRLs.

Regional policymakers have previously committed to enhancing business innovation skills in order to augment the regional TRLs. Only 8% of all businesses are engaged in product and process innovation in the UK (Department of Business, Innovation and Skills, 2016), and businesses in Wales perform less well than their English counterparts. The Department of Business, Innovation and Skills summarised the main findings from the UK Innovation Survey, identifying the main constraining innovation factors for SMEs in the 'broader innovators' category as the costs of innovation, a lack of knowledge and skills, and uncertain markets.

As a result, the Open Innovation Community of Practice (OICoP) was set up as an executive education programme for practitioners in business within South Wales. The programme aimed to address these barriers to innovation through equipping practitioners with the necessary knowledge and skills required to engage with open innovation. OICoP created a regional innovation network/ Community of Practice (Wenger, McDermott & Snyder, 2002) to support businesses to collaboratively develop new products and services. OICoP built on the very successful Developing Innovation Performance of Firms and Supply Chain Clusters (DIPFSCC) pilot funded by Welsh government, which enabled the synthesis of expertise from two Welsh-based research centres at Swansea University and Cardiff Metropolitan University.

The Open Innovation Community of Practice programme enabled businesses to access innovation knowledge and skills development from university experts and Welsh government innovation specialists. The OICoP project set up a regional innovation network (CoP) for businesses to learn in a safe environment and collaborate to share and access their combined knowledge sets which in turn enhanced their Dynamic Capabilities (Teece, 2007).

The programme set up an inter-organisational Innovation Community of Practice and encouraged participating practitioners to set up intra-organisation (internal) Communities of Practice to enhance their Dynamic Capabilities (Teece, 2007). The programme facilitated collaborative innovation between the businesses engaged and supported the businesses to develop their internal innovation Communities of Practice to enable continued development of new products and services. Through creating these inter- and intra-organisational Communities of Practice, managers were provided with peer support to facilitate and sustain innovation.

The programme aimed to invite subsequent participants and organisations into the Open Innovation CoP in order to sustain the innovation CoP, in collaboration with Welsh government, to facilitate the growth of the region's Technology Readiness Level (TRL). The CoPs led to the co-creation of new products and service solutions to leverage economies

of scale available to the network with the support of Welsh government. The programme increased the number of innovation active businesses in Wales, making a positive contribution to national indicator 11 of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act (2015). Through creating inter-organisational innovation implementation networks regional demand for R, D & I support was created and TRLs enhanced. The programme enhanced the Circular Economy (CE) knowledge of managers and businesses, whilst leveraging the knowledge and resources within universities and businesses across Wales.

Over the course of nine months participants engaged with workshops, site visits, action learning, peer learning and support, expert support and collaborative NPD/SS. A summary of the learning events is provided below:

- Initial two-day residential workshop to introduce key theories and models and create a CoP
- Nine workshops around new products or services development
- Four site visits to business premises to view best practice and explore innovation challenges
- Four NPD/SS collaborative mapping sessions
- Four NPD/SS problem solving sessions to articulate challenges and iterate products
- Five action learning sets to support participants to meet ongoing challenges.
- Four case studies outlining the development of new products or services by businesses engaged in the programme.
- R&D funding presentations from the Welsh government and UK Research and Innovation

The presentation evidenced impact data from the mini case studies developed from engaging with participants on the programme. The presentation also highlighted the value of experiential teaching techniques for practitioner audiences. The programme presents evidence to suggest there is value in open innovation communities of practice to enhance the dynamic capabilities of organisations and positively impact regional TRLs. Moreover, the value of experiential teaching techniques for practitioners and the application of social learning theory was evidenced, suggesting that inter-organisational innovation communities of practice can more effectively enhance organisational dynamic capabilities and offer a route to enhance regional TRLs.

References

Department for Business Innovation & Skills (2016). Headline findings from the UK Innovation Survey 2015. Available at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/536491/UKIS_2015_Main__report_Final_v.pdf

Teece, D. J. (2007). Explicating dynamic capabilities: the nature and microfoundations of (sustainable) enterprise performance. *Strategic Management Journal*, 28(13), pp. 1319-1350.

Wenger, E., McDermott, R. A., & Snyder, W. (2002). *Cultivating communities of practice: A guide to managing knowledge*. Harvard Business Press.

THEME:
SUPPORTING DISADVANTAGED AND UNDERREPRESENTED STUDENTS

ELIMINATING THE AWARD GAP THROUGH SUSTAINED PANEL DISCUSSIONS FORUM- A REGIONAL COLLABORATIVE APPROACH

Dr Olatunde Durowoju, Senior Lecturer, School of Business and Management, Liverpool John Moores University
Dr Hannah Holmes CMBE, Deputy Faculty Pro Vice Chancellor, Faculty of Business and Law, Manchester Metropolitan University
Dr Adam Shore CMBE, Director of School of Business and Management, Liverpool John Moores University
Dr Charles Knight, **CMBE** Associate Dean for Student Experience, Salford Business School, University of Salford
Pradeep Passi, Director of EDI, University of Central Lancashire

The award gap is a deeply rooted inequality issue within higher education institutions (HEIs) (Mowat, 2018) and there has been an increased call for HEIs to pick up the pace of eliminating this gap (UUK, 2019, OfS, 2020). Successful interventions exist but these are ad hoc rather than systematic and tied to specific programmes within individual HEIs. Therefore, there is a need to scale these up across HEIs to meet the ambitious target set by universities (OfS, 2020). To achieve this, collaboration between HEIs is essential where meaningful dialogues can occur, and best practices can be shared. Currently, there are not many forums or opportunities for doing this. To meet this need, the Northwest Award Gap Group (NWAGG), a collective of academics from across north-west business and law schools (with similar demographic profiles), was set up with the aim of working towards eliminating the award gaps for Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) student groups.

Methodology

With the focus on interventions within individual universities (Sequeira, 2019), not much attention has been directed at cross-university collaborative interventions. It stands to reason that cooperation between universities would increase resources and strengthen interventions to reduce the gap (AdvanceHE, n.d.). Therefore, the NWAGG collaborative model will provide the scale needed to make significant movement towards the elimination of the award gap by adapting a region wide approach to the problem.

The NWAGG model is based on the reported evidence that the award gap problem exists (UUK, 2019). Therefore, the focus is not on belabouring the existence of the issue but on sharing successful actions at a range of institutions through our events to support ideas and activities in the wider sector.

Using a series of panel presentations (or panels), NWAGG aims to increase visibility of successful award gap interventions across HEIs; create a multi-perspective forum to discuss scaling up opportunities; and offer a platform for sharing what works. Panel presentations has been described as useful mechanism for engaging in meaningful dialogues and scholarly exchange of perspectives between multiple parties (Allen, 2017). Four separate panel events were organised by member institutions on the following topics:

- Minding the Gaps through Learning and Teaching (University of Central Lancashire, UCLAN)
- Bridging the Graduate Outcome Divide for Underrepresented Groups (Liverpool John Moores University, LJMU)

- Valuing staff diversity and inclusivity (Manchester Metropolitan University, MMU)
- Reflections/Future Steps (University of Salford, USAL)

Each event consists of four national speakers (or panellists) carefully selected based on their expertise on the topic and lasts for one and half hours. To generate meaningful conversations, and since the award gap is a multifaceted issue (Godbold and Brathwaite, 2021), members of different stakeholder groups are invited to these events through targeted advertising at stakeholder groups such as Chartered Association of Business Schools (CABS), Higher Education Race Action Groups (HERAG) as well as through HEI faculties. Questions, comments, and examples of what works are invited from the different stakeholder groups in attendance after the panellists have finished their presentations.

The first panel event, organised by UCLAN, was held in February 2021 with 95 participants from across 37 HEIs. Notable speakers from MMU, University of Kent, University of Winchester and UCLAN presented their respective interventions. Based on chat comments during the event, the participants found the event very useful. The second event (organised by LJMU) is scheduled for the end of March 2021 and already 120 participants have signed up for it, showing increased popularity and reach of the NWAGG model. This event has drawn speakers from wider stakeholder groups such as Business in the Community (BITC), large-scale employers such as the Co-op, professional services, and student representatives.

Historically, in HEIs, the attainment gap between Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic students compared to their white counterpart has been very wide.

Contribution

Historically, in HEIs, the attainment gap between Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic students compared to their white counterpart has been very wide. The gap has consistently been at two digits percentage point and it currently stands at 13.2%, and the gap for black students in particular is higher at 23.4% (AdvanceHE, 2019). It is expected that the series of panel events will help to increase visibility of successful approaches to reducing the award gap so others can learn from such best practices in the sector and benchmark their own internal approaches against these. The issue has been that many universities do not communicate on issues like this and there is not as much collaboration on this subject as is necessary. To our knowledge, many of the existing collaborations has not been beyond the dyad. The required scale is simply lacking. As an open forum where dialogue and scholarly discussions can take place, these panel events will also inform scaling up opportunities across the sector. This will help HEIs increase the current pace and scale of interventions and the associated benefits towards reducing the award gap.

Conclusion

While effort is being made to reduce this gap, the pace of progress has been very slow owing to 'lack of visibility' of ongoing projects/research on the topic, 'inadequate sharing' of successful interventions and the 'muted scaling up' opportunities. Addressing these three factors in a collaborative way will help the higher education sector to address the award gap quicker. Going beyond the dyad, the NWAGG model purports to address these issues in a timely and effective manner. Being regional in scope, the collaborative is large enough to achieve significant impact but not too large creating further complexities associated with large systems (Canbäck et al., 2006). We argue that this regional collaborative model needs to be replicated across the country to achieve the momentum required to eliminate the award gap.

References

Advancehe (2019), Equality in higher education: Students statistical report 2019. AdvancedHE.

Advancehe (n.d.), *What works in approaches to the BME attainment gap* [Online]. AdvancedHEAvailable: https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/guidance/teaching-and-learning/student-retention-and-success/what-works-approaches-bme-attainment-gap [Accessed 19th March 2021].

Allen, M. (2017), The SAGE Encyclopedia of Communication Research Methods. Vol. No.

Canbäck, S., Samouel, P. & Price, D. (2006), Do Diseconomies of Scale Impact Firm Size and Performance? A Theoretical and Empirical Overview. *The ICFAI Journal of Managerial Economics*, Vol. III, No.

Godbold, R. & Brathwaite, B. (2021), Minding the gap. Improving the Black Asian and minority ethnic student awarding gap in pre-registration adult nursing programmes by decolonizing the curriculum. *Nurse Education Today*, Vol. 98, No., pp. 104667.

Mowat, J. G. (2018), Closing the attainment gap – a realistic proposition or an elusive pipe-dream? *Journal of Education Policy*, Vol. 33, No. 2, pp. 299-321.

Ofs. 2020. Universities pledge to reduce equality gaps dramatically within five years. *Press and Media* [Online]. Available from: https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/news-blog-and-events/press-and-media/universities-pledge-to-reduce-equality-gaps-dramatically-within-five-years/ [Accessed 29 Jan 2020.

Sequeira, L. 2019. Three unis discuss what they're doing about the attainment gap. *LSE Higher Education Blog* [Online]. Available from: https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/highereducation/2019/05/09/three-unis-discuss-what-theyre-doing-about-the-attainment-gap/ [Accessed 9th May 2019.

Uuk (2019), Black, asian and minority ethnic student attainment at uk universities: #closingthegap. University UK.

SEVEN TIPS ON CREATING AN INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT AND NOT JUST A TICK BOX EXERCISE!

Dr Bernadine Idowu, Senior Lecturer in Biomedical Science, University of West London

The first point is to have the uncomfortable but absolutely critical conversations that are needed for change.

The first point is to have the uncomfortable but absolutely critical conversations that are needed for change. When having these conversations, where we openly discuss race and racism, micro-aggressions, inequality and discrimination, ensure the right people are leading the discussions, as firstly we will be encouraged that people really want to know how they can be the masters of change, most importantly, we will be sharing our lived experiences. We would want to tell you what we consider acceptable and what we do not. It will be OK to say the wrong thing, we would correct you. They are so many genuine people who want to understand, I have seen it. They sometimes call me aside, and we have the conversations, such people really give me hope for the future generations.

Secondly, ensure support from staff management. I have been very fortunate at my previous university, King's College London (KCL), but more so in my current university, University of West London (UWL) where I have been for the past two years, I have met with staff management. I have been listened to and encouraged to suggest initiatives that can support all students, but specifically Black Minority and Ethnic (BAME) students. I will mention some of my achievements below.

Thirdly, when students arrive at university they need to feel a sense of belonging. An initiative I managed at King's College London was the Open Doors Project, where students and staff see pictures of people that look like them on door panels around several campuses, with their profiles, which include their achievements or something they have contributed to, whilst at the university. Interested individuals are subsequently directed to a website to read more about the person. This is an instance sense of belonging, both staff and students have shared this with me.

Fourthly, students need to see representation in the teaching staff, not only will students be encouraged to speak out, as they will feel comfortable knowing the lecturer possibly understands them, they will then aspire to apply for a similar role. Contributing a chapter to a book 'Decolonizing University Teaching and Learning' (Idowu-Onibokun; 2021) I conducted a mini focus group for three Black students I happen to mentor, from various disciplines and they all commented on this. In addition in my article I wrote in the Guardian, I highlighted the importance of visible role models (Idowu-Onibokun; 2018).

The fifth point, the need to Improve staff cultural competence; this is huge, but let's start with something very simple, but effective. Lecturer meets students for the first time in a class, conduct a simple exercise on pronouncing your students name correctly. Ask the student: how would you like me to pronounce your name? It was something I did when I started teaching my students, and they really appreciated it. I was recently on a virtual assessment board, a member of staff was mispronouncing an African name, made a comment on not being able to pronounce it correctly, but was called out by another member of staff as she said one name, but another name was on the screen, wrong student. I was stunned to silence.

The sixth point is the importance of mentoring. At UWL, peer mentoring for all students is prominent, and I am extremely happy with this. I have taken this one step further and I am in the process of organising a mentoring scheme for Black students, with the Black students being the mentors and mentees. This is very easy to organise, as I have run a similar scheme in my charity Youth Against Crime not Crime Against You (YACnCAY), a

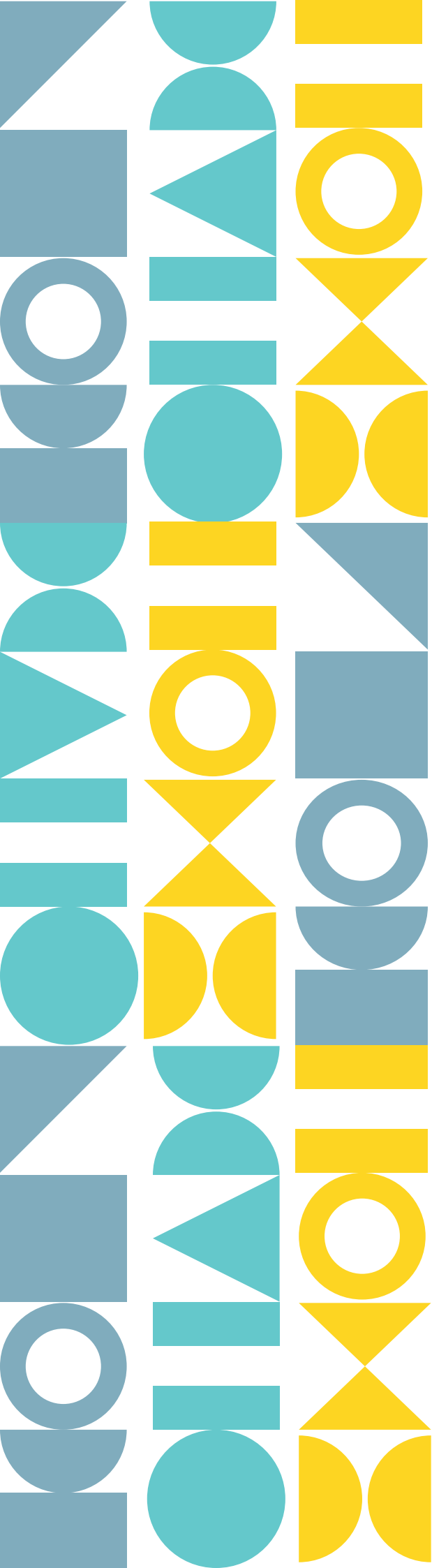
preventative charity, for the past 10 years, and I have seen the success of it, how it has changed people's lives. Personally, I think HEIs should have an opt-out mentoring system as part of student enrolment.

Seventh and final tip: organising networks. Networks are powerful for both staff and students. It should be a closed space for those with protected characteristics. I conducted a group mentoring session, which could have easily expanded to a network, we had a couple of sessions and the impact of it was mindblowing. Individuals were sharing what their peers were thinking was personal to them. It was more of a support network. At times we all need someone to say, it is OK, I know what you are going through, I have been through it before and this is how I dealt with it. As I said networks are powerful and effective.

References

Idowu-Onibokun, B. (2021). Focus Group Responses to Activity and Assessment Strategy among BAME Students in Various Disciplines in D. Tran (Ed) *Decolonizing University Teaching and Learning: An Entry Model for Grappling with Complexities* (Bloomsbury Academic) pp.35-42

Idowu-Onibokun (March 7, 2018) "Who Can Save the Post-Brexit Economy? Black Professors." *The Guardian*. Available at https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/mar/07/brexit-economy-black-professors-minority-ethnic / Accessed April 28, 2020



CMBE
CERTIFIED MANAGEMENT & BUSINESS EDUCATOR

CABS
CHARTERED ASSOCIATION OF BUSINESS SCHOOLS