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North East Regional Learning and Teaching Conference 2016

Innovation in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education



*Hosted by:
Northumbria University
18 March 2016*

Time	Slot			
8.30-9.00	Arrival and registration: lobby area of the Sutherland Building (Great Hall)			
9.00-9.20	Conference opening and introduction to conference themes: Jonny Hall (Associate Dean Learning and Teaching, Northumbria University) (Great Hall)			
9.20-10.00	Keynote address: Professor Sue Rigby (Deputy Vice-Chancellor, University of Lincoln) (Great Hall)			
10.00-10.30	Student panel (Great Hall)			
10.30-10.50	Q&A session & discussion (Great Hall)			
10.50-11.15	Refreshment break			
11.20-11.50	Skype One-to-One Consultations: An Innovation in Academic Writing Support McKay, A. & Nathan, P. Durham University Room: 209 Chair: Richard Sober	A Case Study of Malaysian Academics and Their Experiences of Teaching a Western Programme of Study Watson, I. Northumbria University Room: 205 Chair: Rosa Spencer	We Need to Talk About Science... Boulton, S. J. University of Newcastle Room: 201 Chair: Bob Matthews	Towards a Toolkit for Creating Multimedia Learning Opportunities in Flexible Pedagogies: Using Technology Enhanced Learning! Proctor, M.R. University of Sunderland Room: Great Hall / Chair: Scott Burgess
11.50-13.00	Lunch, posters and networking			
13.00-13.30	Developing Materials for Listening and Speaking in English for Academic Purposes: Process and Product Joubert, M. & Sequera, J. Durham University Room: 209 Chair: Rosa Spencer	Using Flipped Learning to Place Undergraduate Sport Students and their Employability at Centre Stage: Insights and Food for Thought Hayman, R. & Mullen, L. (student) Northumbria University Room: 205 / Chair: Bob Matthews	Embedding Research Impact into the Curriculum to Promote Employability Skills Guy, J. H. & Beard, A.P & Andre, E. (Student) University of Newcastle Room: Great Hall Chair: Richard Sober	Encouraging Student Participation in Large Lectures using Mobile Polling Techniques. Archer, D.T. & Lee L. (Student) University of Sunderland Room: 201 Chair: Mark Proctor
13.40-14.10	Video for Reflective Student Teaching: Using Editing to Create Focused Self-review Tan, E. & Dragas, T. Durham University Room: 201 / Chair: Mark Proctor	'On the Edge': Exploring the Practice of Supervising Master's Dissertation Students Macfadyen, A. & English, C. Northumbria University Room: 209 / Chair: Richard Sober	Developing Students as Partners: Identifying and Overcoming Barriers Bryson, C. & Whelan, E. (student) University of Newcastle Room: 205 Chair: Bob Matthews	Transforming Assessment: Using a Rubric Approach Effectively to Support Learning Anderson, S.D. & Graham, S. University of Sunderland Room: Great Hall Chair: Rosa Spencer
14.10-14.35	Refreshment break			
14.40-15.10	Exchanging Practice Across Europe: Developing Soft Skills in the Curriculum – Staff and Student Perspectives Dr Pickard, A. J. & Prof Strachan, R. Northumbria University Room: 201 / Chair: Rosa Spencer	Flexibility in the HE Learning Environment: What is it, Who Wants it and Can New Furniture Enhance it? Thomas, U. & Robson, G. & Dr Woolner, P. University of Newcastle Room: 209 / Chair: Mark Proctor	Providing Better Support to Students via Their Virtual Learning Environment and Existing Content Stamoulos, M. (Student) & Bowerman, C. University of Sunderland Room: Great Hall / Chair: Richard Sober	
15.20-15.50	Exploring the Student Experience of Using a Co-produced Academic Writing Tool (SALT) Dr Becker, S. & Shahverdi, H. (student) & Spence, N. (student) & Kennedy, L. Teesside University Room: 201 / Chair: Rosa Spencer	Whose Language Centre is it Anyway? A Multimodal Answer McDonald, P. University of Sunderland Room: 205 Chair: Bob Matthews	Employability is Personal: Integrating 'Flipped Learning' to Engage Students with Their Own Career Development Bolton, S. & Herbert, G. University of Newcastle Room: 209 Chair: Richard Sober	Becoming an Outstanding Teacher: Student Teachers' Voices and Stories of Practice Spedding, T. & Dr Nixon, L. University of Sunderland Room: Great Hall Chair: Mark Proctor
15.50-16.00	Conference closing: Closing remarks by the Chairs of the conference - on behalf of the Three Rivers Consortium (in the workshop rooms)			



- 1 21 & 22 Ellison Place
- 2 Campus Services
- 3 Burt Hall
- 4 Camden Court
- 5 Clapham House
- 6 Claude Gibb Hall
- 7 Drill Hall
- 8 Ellison Building *i*
- 9 Ellison Terrace
- 10 Northumbria Nursery
- 11 Glenamara House
- 12 Hadrian House
- 13 Health Centre
- 14 Library *i*
- 15 Lipman Building
- 16 Lovaine Halls and Flats
- 17 Business and Law Building *i*
- 18 Newcastle Unitarian Church (Durant and Turner Halls)
- 19 Nixon Hall
- 20 Northumberland Building
- 21 Pandon Building
- 22 Rutherford Hall
- 23 St James' Church
- 24 Design Building
- 25 Sport Central
- 26 Squires Annexe
- 27 Squires Building
- 28 Squires Workshops
- 29 Student Support and Wellbeing Centre
- 30 Students' Union
- 31 Sutherland Building *i*
- 32 Sutherland House (Security)
- 33 Trinity Building
- 34 University Gallery and Baring Wing
- 35 Victoria Hall
- 36 Wynne-Jones Centre
- 37 Mea House

Foreword

Now in its 9th year, this regional conference builds upon the success of previous partnership events held by the region's Universities (Northumbria, Durham, Newcastle, Sunderland and Teesside).

The theme of the conference this year is Innovation in Learning & Teaching in Higher Education and aims to showcase and share innovative practice across the region across the following themes:

- Transforming assessment
- Embedding employability
- Student access, retention, attainment and progression in higher education
- Internationalising higher education
- Flexible learning
- Student engagement through partnership
- Technology enhanced learning
- Education for Sustainable Development

Your contribution will lead on developing a regional understanding of innovative practice and encourage colleagues to explore opportunities to enhance their own practices.

The 3 Rivers Consortium comprises one member of staff from the five regional universities.

- | | | |
|---------------|---------------|--|
| • Durham | Bob Matthew | robert.matthew@durham.ac.uk |
| • Newcastle | Rosa Spencer | rosa.spencer@newcastle.ac.uk |
| • Northumbria | Scott Burgess | scott.burgess@northumbria.ac.uk |
| • Sunderland | Mark Proctor | mark.proctor@sunderland.ac.uk |
| • Teesside | Richard Sober | r.sober@tees.ac.uk |

Dani Turner (Northumbria) has been responsible for the administration of the conference.

External Keynote Speaker:

Professor Sue Rigby

Deputy Vice Chancellor (Student Development)

University of Lincoln

“Teaching and Learning in HE – what can we measure and what should we value?”

Teaching and learning in UK Universities is the focus of relentless and high level scrutiny with the impending introduction of the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF). The emerging processes behind the TEF raise fundamental questions about what matters in learning and teaching in the sector, and what we can measure. This talk examines both sides of this problem, and probes the significant gaps between the two.

Professor Susan Rigby is Deputy Vice Chancellor for Student Development at the University of Lincoln. She is responsible for the student journey from application to alumni activities, and has oversight of the College of Science.

Sue is a palaeontologist by background, and did her PhD on Graptoloid Ecology at the University of Cambridge. Following time lecturing at the Universities of Leicester and Edinburgh she spent time as Head of the Grant Institute, Assistant Principal and then Vice Principal for Learning and Teaching at the University of Edinburgh. She is an HEA Principal Fellow.

She is Chair of the HEFCE Learning Gain project and a member of the Scottish Funding Council QA review group. She spent six years on the Higher Education Public Information Steering Group and was the academic lead on that Committee’s work on Taught Postgraduate Information Needs. Internationally, she has contributed to the development of reward and recognition processes for staff in learning and teaching through the U21 network, and developed the first MOOC to be shared by students in the U21 Universities. Sue is interested in innovation in learning and teaching and has set up a variety of large-scale and multi-University projects, including the THES prize-winning ‘Making the Most of Masters’. She also develops and participates in leadership activities in learning and teaching. She is an honorary professor at the University of Edinburgh and works in their Institute of Academic Development.

Paper Sessions

Lead Presenter: Andrew McKay

Session Title: Skype one-to-one Consultations: An innovation in academic writing support

Institution: Durham University

Co-presenter: Nathan, P. B.

The University of Durham Academic Writing Unit, situated in the English Language Centre has run a formal one-to-one consultation support service for home and international students for many years. The service provided more than 800 consultations in the academic year 2014-2015 providing academic writing and other support to nearly 500 students. In order to meet the needs of students studying on distance learning programmes, the needs of disabled students and those studying at Durham's Queens campus based in Stockton, the Academic Writing Unit decided to supplement its face-to-face consultation provision with a Skype service. A number of researchers have conducted research demonstrating the value of such Skype provision (Hampel & Hauck 2006; Lee & Astle 2014; Odo & Yi 2014; Tuomey 2014).

In this presentation we report on our experiences at Durham in introducing the Skype system. We identify both the strengths and the challenges of the Skype system based on interviews with tutors providing consultations and the students experiencing the Skype service. Although the Skype system was introduced primarily for reasons of flexibility and convenience for students, research has shown that it has added benefits of increasing students' ability to negotiate feedback (Odo & Yi 2014). Interviews with Durham Skype tutors indicate that it may be also a valuable tool for conducting consultations with female students from cultures where face to face interviews with male tutors is culturally inappropriate as the use of the video service is optional. On establishing the service we anticipated that there may be technical issues, particularly as the technology was unfamiliar to some tutors. Indeed, previous research had found that technical problems resulted in students rating Skype as the least effective feedback mechanism (Lee & Astle 2014). However, we have not found this to be a major problem. Based on the interviews and feedback, we conclude that Skype provides a valuable additional arm to our one-to-one consultation provision which we intend to expand and develop in the coming years.

References:

Hampel, R. & Hauck, M., 2006. Computer-mediated language learning: Making meaning in multimodal virtual learning spaces. *The JALT CALL Journal*, 2(2), pp.3–18. Lee, C. & Astle, R., 2014. Favorable types of medium in corrective feedback on writing: Harness the power of technologies or continue the traditional ways? *Multimedia-Assisted Language Learning*, 17(2), pp.112–129. Available at: <Go to ISI>://KJD:ART001886805. Odo, D. & Yi, Y., 2014. Engaging in Computer-Mediated Feedback in Academic Writing: Voices from L2 Doctoral Students in TESOL. *English Teaching*, 69(3), pp.129–150. Available at: <http://scholar.google.com/scholar?hl=en&btnG=Search&q=intitle:Engaging+in+Computer-Mediated+Feedback+in+Academic+Writing+:+Voices+from+L2+Doctoral+Students+in+TESOL#0> <http://scholar.google.com/scholar?hl=en&btnG=Search&q=intitle:Engaging+in+Computer-Medi>. Tuomey, E., 2014. Discussing Writing: Peer Feedback on writing essays in an online forum for learners of English. Lancaster University.

11:20-11:50

Paper

Lead Presenter: Ian Watson

Session title: A case study of Malaysian academics and their experiences of teaching a western programme of study

Institution: Northumbria University

This presentation adds to the growing body of knowledge relating to the Internationalisation of higher education, it adds to this corpus by investigating not only the traditional student experiences of Trans National Higher Education (TNHE) but primarily of the staff teaching on an overseas course. The study investigates the experiences of teaching staff at a Northumbria University partner college in Malaysia. It considers the factors affecting the teaching of the eastern educated student using a western learning theory. Staff teaching the western designed programme, to eastern educated students face a number of issues, e.g. the education of the staff themselves, have they received eastern or western education? Foundations for the research rely upon the following: The eastern educated staff are from a Confucian influenced culture that seeks a middle way so allowing for correctness of the others viewpoint, it is often considered 'soft', and feminine, with the teacher central to the learning process and very much textbook and rote learning with government direction and influence, (Teoh et al 2014, Ng 2008, Zhang 2007). Western designed programmes of study are aimed at western educated students with typically looks at the confrontation between thesis and antithesis, leading to a new synthesis and superior power, often considered 'hard' and masculine. The learning process is student centric, with academic freedom to choose learning materials and is largely free from government direction, (Ng 2008, Zhang 2007, Bin Sirat (2010). The research details how staff adjust and adapt to the differences in learning and teaching styles to enable their students to achieve the best from the western designed programme. It also explores the cultural and academic factors affecting the teaching of a computer science course and the governmental, college and embedded cultural pressures and influences that the staff face. The data was gathered and analysed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, a technique adapted from Psychology that allows the voice of the respondent to be interpreted by the researcher using a flexible approach to identify key themes. These themes were contextualised in the literature reviewed, and include: Influence of the Confucian Heritage Culture; the three selves (eastern, transitional and western); staff scored by students; the rote learner and respect for authority. This investigation highlights and informs attendees that the franchising of a British designed programme of study is much more than simply sending teaching materials to a partner institution, there needs to be taken into consideration many cultural, pedagogic and governmental influences if our courses are to be successfully taught to eastern educated students.

References:

Bin Sirat M. (2010) Strategic planning directions of Malaysia's higher education: university autonomy in the midst of political uncertainties. *High Educ*, Vol 59, pp 461-473
Ng I. C. L. (2008) Teaching business studies to far East students in the UK. In L. Dunn & M. Wallace (Eds). *Teaching in transnational higher education: Enhancing learning for offshore international students* (1st edition pp. 36 - 54). New York, NY: Routledge
Teoh, H. C., Abdullah, M. C., Roslan, S. & Daud, S. M. (2014). Assessing students approaches to learning using a matrix framework in a Malaysian public university. *Springerplus*, 3(1), 1-11. doi:10.1186/2193-1801-3-54.
Zhang (2007) A cultural look at information and communication technologies in Eastern education. *Education Tech Research and Development*, 55 pp. 301-314.

11:20-11:50

Paper

Lead Presenter: Sarah Jayne Boulton

Session title: We need to talk about Science...

Institution: University of Newcastle

An increasingly competitive graduate job market for entry-level positions presents challenges for students in their final year of undergraduate study. At interview, students are expected to articulate their professional expertise and interests to a panel of strangers, who may or may not have any experience in the student's chosen field. In the Biomedical Sciences, as in many specialist disciplines, students are immersed in a technically demanding world of complex terminology and nomenclature, where the pursuit of precise, accurate and concise presentation is paramount. After 3 years of biomedical scholarship, students trained in the use of a highly specialised vocabulary find themselves struggling to articulate their accumulated knowledge to a largely non-specialist wider world audience. Through the use of enhanced digital learning strategies and public engagement, I sought through a module called Science Communication at Newcastle University (originally designed by Dr Vanessa Armstrong) to develop the intrinsic communication skills of level 6 Biomedical Science students. The aim was to get them talking about their scientific learning and interests using clear, simple language. A 'two-tier' approach to written communication training was devised using an existing Personal Development Planning tool familiar to the students, the University's ePortfolio system [1], alongside an externally-hosted public facing website, thirtysixteen.co.uk. Having first explored other examples of good scientific blogging practice online students were tasked with writing short blog posts on any scientific topic of their choosing. Initially these were shared with the course participants via a closed, private ePortfolio-based community. After peer appreciation and submission editing, blog pieces were then published on the public facing website for comment and sharing on social media as the students wished. ePortfolio presented a safe environment where students could share examples of their work to receive peer-to-peer feedback along with comments from the module leader, while the website provides an opportunity for moderated interaction with the lay audience. Blogging was supported in the classroom with training from journalist, press office and museum curator guest lecturers. An open, accepting and honest class culture was established through transactional analysis and informal discussion of good communicative practice [2]. By creating space for playful interaction with serious topics within the Biomedical Sciences field such as disease and morbidity, the students reported a sense of ease with the subjects and were able to think creatively about contextualising and coding high-level research findings for a lay audience. The integration of peer-to-peer learning opportunities with assessment criteria provided gentle motivation to engage with peer learning activities while encouraging the adoption of personal development practices for improving communication skills. This two-tiered 'inside-and-out' approach to honing and demonstrating learning outcomes has instilled wider spread cultural change in student perception and critical thinking patterns, as evidenced by analysis of the reflective summaries generated by students on completion of the Scientific Communication module. An unintended outcome of this learning was that many students reported that they discovered newfound ability to summarise and assimilate information sources in other areas of their studies, allowing them to engage more efficiently with revision practices and essay writing. Participants also reported improved confidence in communicating and contextualising their own studies, improving interactions with family members and friends.

References:

1. QAA (2009) Personal development planning: guidance for institutional policy and practice in higher education.
2. Ashcroft, K., and Foreman-Peck, L. (1994) Managing Teaching and Learning in Further and Higher Education, Falmer Press.

11:20-11:50

Paper

Lead Presenter: Dr Mark Richard Proctor

Session title: Towards a toolkit for creating multimedia learning opportunities in Flexible Pedagogies: using technology enhanced learning!

Institution: University of Sunderland

The key aim of this paper is to help delegates develop ways of working to create multimedia learning objects that support the introduction into the curriculum of Flexible Pedagogies which use student-centred e-learning approaches.

This paper describes the experience of introducing Flexible Pedagogies into a cross disciplinary research degree development programme. It includes reflections on the effectiveness of the process, on the quality of the product and on the reactions of the students.

The presenter will:

- propose that flexible learning is a valuable and integral part of the modern higher education learning landscape which impacts on the student experience.
- highlight the alignment of ontological and pedagogical perspectives with systems approaches for using technology to introduce flexibility in learning and teaching (described in a review by Gordon and Higher Education Academy (HEA) (United Kingdom), 2014).
- demonstrate how to use a combination of free and cheap computer software to generate high quality online learning objects.
- consider a number of key aspects and issues of flexible learning that need to be considered for supporting face-to-face learning in blended learning approaches (discussions will include the work of Ellis, Ginns and Piggott, 2009).

This paper includes information on the use of Flexible Pedagogies, so delegates can understand the purpose and approach used here; showcases the presenter's toolkit for creating multimedia learning objects, so delegates leave knowing how to create similar learning objects; and offers examples of online learning objects, so delegates can assess the quality of these learning objects.

Delegates may leave with a better understanding of the purpose, the challenges, the opportunities, and potential impact of introducing flexible learning into their students' curriculum. Most importantly, they will leave with a cheap and easy to use toolkit for creating online multimedia learning objects; thereby removing the time-sapping trial and error activities associated with finding software and learning how to use it in teaching. If delegates can use PowerPoint, a Dictaphone, and they are happy to spend a few hours learning some simple software there will be no looking back!

References:

Ellis, R. A., Ginns, P. and Piggott, L. (2009) 'E-learning in higher education: some key aspects and their relationship to approaches to study', Higher Education Research & Development, 28(3), pp. 303–318. doi: 10.1080/07294360902839909.

Gordon, N. and Higher Education Academy (HEA) (United Kingdom) (2014) Flexible Pedagogies: Technology-Enhanced Learning. Flexible Pedagogies: Preparing for the Future Series. Higher Education Academy. Available at: <https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/flexible-pedagogies-technology-enhanced-learning>.

13:00-13:30

Paper

Lead Presenter: Michelle Joubert

Session title: Developing Materials for Listening and Speaking in English for Academic Purposes: Process and Product

Institution: Durham University

Co-presenter: Sequera, J.

This presentation details the ongoing design and creation of new materials for a Listening and Speaking module which runs as part of the English Language Centre's (ELC) Year-round Pre-session course for international students at Durham University. The course is designed to develop students' academic literacy skills before they move on to their degree programmes in the UK. The project is collaboration between four ELC staff members (Gillian Powell, Jessica Sequera, Michelle Joubert and Lesley Kendall) with the aim of bringing our materials in line with linguistic research into listening and speaking. Current research emphasises the need to teach students meta-cognitive strategies for listening in their second language (Vandergrift 2004; Wenden 1998), the importance of skills input (for example note taking) and more scaffolded learning (Azevedo and Hadwin 2005; Gibbons 2015) which our previous materials lacked. We are therefore currently designing three terms (i.e. three distinct levels) of materials that build skills in listening and speaking which are necessary for the UK university context (e.g. poster presentations, seminars, lectures and presentations). This is in the hope that our students will be better self-regulators by the time they move on to their degree courses which is particularly important for our students because they come from a variety of educational and cultural backgrounds and therefore may not be familiar with the UK context. In this way, we hope that we are able to empower our learners by helping them to develop skills to progress onto, and hopefully, succeed in their future courses. As such, we feel our presentation is in keeping with the theme of 'Student access, retention, attainment and progression in higher education'. In terms of 'access', our materials cater to students from a variety of nationalities and educational and language backgrounds. By familiarising them with UK academic culture as well as helping them to develop academic literacy skills, we widen opportunities for them to gain access to further education in the UK as well as make them feel they belong. In addition, our materials are designed to help students connect their previous learning and life experiences to their current learning in order to make it more engaging and concrete. Our materials also include much peer-led learning which is aimed at building "students' expectations and confidence" (HE framework) and recognising that students learn in different ways, which is how our project relates to the 'attainment' criteria of the HE framework.

Finally, we assist our students in 'progression' by ensuring constant feedback (teacher feedback, peer feedback and even self-evaluation) which allows us to develop progression plans with students to promote "shared responsibility and commitment" (HE framework) to learning. An important part of our presentation is discussing how, in order to undertake this project, we decided on a systematic and collaborative process which would allow us to combine our experience and knowledge so as to create coherent and uniform materials that share content with our reading and writing classes. In this presentation, then, we will share both our experiences of the materials writing journey (the writing process we developed for this project, the insights we have come to about collaborative planning, materials writing in general and what our next steps are) and examples of our materials (elaborating on how they have changed, how they have allowed us to be more innovative in learning and teaching, and how they ensure student access, retention, attainment and progression). Our hope is that our experiences and the results (thus far) of our project may encourage teachers to think about their own materials writing processes, and perhaps even take ideas away with them that they can then use in their own context. In addition, we hope that our presentation will spark discussion about the materials themselves and the process of materials development in general.

References:

Azevedo, R and Hadwin A. (2005) 'Scaffolding self-regulated learning and metacognition – Implications for the design of computer-based scaffolds' *Instructional Science*, 33, pp. 367–379. Gibbons, P. (2015) *Scaffolding language scaffolding learning: Teaching English Language Learners in the Mainstream Classroom*, Heineman: NH. Nicol, D. and Macfarlane-Dick, D. (2006) 'Formative assessment and self-regulated learning: a model and seven principles of good feedback practice', *Studies in Higher Education*, 31 (2), pp. 199-218. Vandergrift, L. (2004) 'Listening to learn or learning to listen?' *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics* 24, pp. 3-25. Wenden, A. (1998) 'Metacognitive Knowledge and Language Learning', *Applied Linguistics*, (19) 4, pp. 515-537.

13:00-13:30

Paper

Lead Presenter: Dr Rick Hayman

Session title: Using Flipped Learning to Place Undergraduate Sport Students and their Employability at Centre Stage: Insights and Food for Thought

Institution: Northumbria University

Co-presenter: Mullen, L. (student)

An extensive research base suggests employers are looking to recruit graduates who are adaptable, able to cope with new and challenging situations, show initiative, think strategically, are willing to try new things and have self-motivation, confidence and effective self and time management skills (Andrews & Higson, 2008). To create such dynamic and flexible individuals, a growing body of research emphasises the need to move away from traditional teaching and learning approaches such as lectures and ensuing seminar formats as they may be unbecoming for the changing size, profile and diversity of the 21st century United Kingdom Higher Education (HE) student population. Flipped learning is a pedagogic approach which affords considerable opportunity for students to engage with problem based learning and inquiry orientated strategies (Butt, 2014). This format exposes students to new materials for the first time outside of formal lecture settings and requires the completion of pre assigned activities, either independently or in small groups, before scheduled sessions. Class time is then spent within highly participatory, interactive and student led learning environments where theory can be applied in practice. This type of approach requires students to take greater ownership of their learning and supports them to learn independent of academic staff.

Flipped learning has gained popularity within HE in recent years and has been influential in improving student employability skills across wide ranging educational contexts and disciplines. For example, Ryan (2013) reported undergraduate biochemistry students who engaged in flipped learning enhanced their soft skills and developed proficiencies appropriate for employment and lifelong learning. Limited research has explored the suitability of flipped learning as a mechanism for placing sports coaching students and their employability at centre stage throughout their university experience. Likewise, few studies have investigated how designing, planning and delivering a flipped classroom approach may impact upon the professional development of academic staff. The session will explain how timetabled sessions were transformed from places where students historically disengaged, attended intermittently and underperformed, to dynamic engagement with consequent improvements in attendance, achievement and employability skills. Insight into tutor experience and resultant impact on their motivation, satisfaction, pedagogic practice and professional development will also be shared. Findings and best practice which may inspire academic colleagues across wide ranging disciplines to engage with alternative teaching and learning approaches to aid in maximising the overall university student experience and their own ongoing professional development will be shared. The audience will have opportunity to ask questions and discuss the implications of the findings in relation to employability, engagement, curriculum design and delivery and academic practice.

References:

Andrews, J., & Higson, H. (2008). Graduate Employability: Soft Skills Versus Hard Business Knowledge: A European Study, *Higher Education in Europe*, 33, 411-422. Butt, A. (2014). Student Views on the use of a Flipped Classroom Approach: Evidence from Australia. *Business Education and Accreditation*, 6, 33-43. Ryan, B. (2013). Flipping Over: Student-Centred Learning and Assessment. *Journal of Perspectives in Applied Academic Practice*, 1, 30-39.

Lead Presenter: Jonathan Guy

Session title: Embedding research impact into the curriculum to promote employability skills

Institution: University of Newcastle

Co-presenter: Dr Andrew Beard & Andre, E. (Student)

Introduction

University staff are being challenged to simultaneously improve the standard of learning and teaching, the academic value of our research and, most recently, the impact of that research. Equally, a recent paper on student expectations and perceptions of HE cites that one of the main reasons why students choose to study in HE is 'to improve their career prospects as a pathway for career enhancement' (Kandico and Mawer, 2013). Thus a new 20-credit module was created, where final-year undergraduate students were tasked with organising a conference on current issues in animal science. The aims were to develop students' scientific knowledge of animal science, understanding of the impact of this research outside academia and to practice, implement and refine key employability skills. As part of the conference students were tasked with presenting an individual large-format 'research impact' poster. The topic of these presentations was selected from the database of impact case studies provided by the recent REF exercise, a resource which, to our knowledge, has not been fully exploited in UG teaching. For the event to be judged a success, the Conference delegates comprising students from local FE and HE institutes should also benefit from sharing of scientific knowledge and gaining a better understanding of the impact of research.

Teaching and learning activity

Ostensibly the students have complete control of the module during the 10-week planning process leading up to the conference. In practice two members of staff are involved to ensure fair play, raise potential problems that might arise (e.g. concerning health and safety of delegates) and provide mentoring when solicited. Briefing sessions are also provided by staff from the University Careers Service, to highlight opportunities for students to develop specific employability skills in the module, and the Research Impact Office to introduce the notion of research impact and the REF. The students have to arrange themselves into an efficient organising committee, select the theme of the Conference, secure keynote speakers to complement their own student presentations and secure donations sufficient to cover the costs of the event. Students have full responsibility for running the Conference itself, everything from welcoming delegates to chairing sessions, delivering a number of theatre presentations (in groups) on topics relevant to the theme of the Conference and participation in the poster viewing and discussion session.

Much of the learning in this module is by nature self-directed. In groups, students undertake background research about their particular theatre topic before preparing an illustrated talk. During 'dress rehearsals', teaching staff provide constructive criticism about the scientific content and delivery of these talks. Alongside this, to give each student an understanding of a specific research area in the field, students produce a 'research impact' poster. This piece of assessment aims to 1) develop an awareness of the increasing focus on 'impact' within the assessment of research; since students were able to do this in a relevant research area, this enabled them also to develop their analytical skills to critique both the research and its associated impact; and 2) to further develop the skills required to generate and present a conference poster during the poster viewing and discussion session, a presentation format that students may encounter in academia and beyond.

Results

Both invited guests and academic staff attending the event judged the inaugural 2015 Conference to be a success and commended the standard of presentations, academic content and professionalism with which the event was organised. When asked to reflect upon the 'success' of the module for developing them as individuals, students rated the module as being above average for the acquisition of subject-specific knowledge as well as promoting key employability skills. In particular, the module developed their skills of team working, being innovative and taking initiative. Students considered that the module had given them the freedom to make decisions. One student commented that what she enjoyed most "was the sense of responsibility and feeling proud to be part of a team which worked well together". Students described how they enjoyed that it was "very different to any other module" and that it can be a means of differentiation, since it "sets you apart from others (i.e. job applicants)". Other students enjoyed

the "challenge of presenting in front of a larger audience than I am used to,increasing my confidence", and the opportunity to "deal with a variety of different people, from donors to guest speakers, so it was a new experience I am unlikely to forget". Clearly the ability to communicate effectively and to start to build their own network of contacts within their chosen field of employment are skills that employers look for.

The extent to which students' awareness of research impact in animal science was promoted was highly variable, reflecting how some students benefited from this task: the module "has improved my understanding of research impact" and helped to show "how scientists translate their papers into language that is comprehensible"; "before this module I didn't know about the REF or the areas of impact that are considered when analysing overall impact...I didn't know how important this was"; "it is important to take a step back when conducting research to understand how it will affect the wider community".

Preparation of research impact case study posters requires students to grasp not only the experiments being undertaken, but how that research affected society. In future employment, the ability to translate research outcomes into societal or commercial benefits is likely to be a key attribute that differentiates high calibre candidates. The module involves a degree of risk since, as anyone who has organised a conference or large public event will testify there are a great many factors which can go wrong. However, employers want graduates who are prepared to take risks, to enter their organisation/business with a proactive and reflective approach, not ignoring problems or mistakes, but people who take responsibility for their collective outputs. The conference 'dress rehearsals' afford students the opportunity to receive constructive criticism on the content and delivery of their presentations. This can be both rewarding, for students to 'fine tune' what is already a very competent theatre talk, but for other students this feedback can be more challenging since their presentation may initially fall some way short of a professional presentation and require a series of incremental improvements.

Conclusions

This exercise has illustrated how research impact can be integrated into the curriculum to foster development of employability skills. Students can be given responsibility for the development of their own knowledge and skills, and be allowed to assemble a particular toolbox of skills depending on what role they played in the conference. However, clearly this exercise is not without risk. Giving students themselves control of this event has the potential for failure, if the students fail to assemble themselves into a coherent team, prioritise the tasks, organise each part of the conference and host the day in a professional manner. The module can only build on skills which have been introduced previously in the course and provide a relatively safe environment in which these skills can be practiced. Delegates to the Conference were informed not only about the latest research around the topic of genetic selection in animals but, more widely, were informed of the impact of some of the most dynamic research undertaken across the UK.

References:

Kandico, C.B. and Mawer, M. (2013). Student expectations and perceptions of higher education. Kings Learning Institute, London.

13:00-13:30

Paper

Lead Presenter: David Archer

Session title: Encouraging student participation in large lectures using mobile polling techniques

Institution: University of Sunderland

Co-presenter: Lee L. (Student)

Students frequently interact with content and engage with their peers through mobile devices and hence are familiar with expressing themselves using this medium. Mobile learning has been proposed to work on a pedagogical framework of (1) engagement, (2) presence and (3) flexibility, encouraging awareness of self and others through student-content, student-student and student-teacher interactions (Danaher et al 2009). Through the proposed workshop we will demonstrate and encourage delegates to consider how mobile polling can be used to maintain students participation during large lecture classes. Poll Everywhere is an audience response system that is free to use for up to 40 simultaneous user responses (students can respond in groups in larger classes, if required). Polling can be performed by the instructor from a web browser or embedded into a PowerPoint presentation as a slide. The audience can respond via sending a text, using a mobile application (an 'app'), or a website. In addition to free text responses, multiple choice questions and clickable images. More recently, the ability for students to propose and vote on comments has been introduced within the last six months, promoting greater student empowerment. The benefits of real-time online polling are:

- Immediacy of the response
- Equality of voice/opportunity – not just capturing the more vocal students' opinions
- Engages students who rarely participate due to shyness or risk aversion (Graham et al 2007)
- Students can interact with their peers' responses as the poll progresses (proposing and voting)
- Questions can be created or altered quickly during the session

Previous research indicates that the use of mobile polling encouraged students to become highly engaged on a behavioural, cognitive and emotional level (Noel et al 2015). The opinions of a large class can be captured quickly, which informs facilitation of the session. Staff can seek consensus, clarification and encourage debate using individual or aggregated student responses during class time and have this information easily accessible afterwards. An audit of over 500 staff and students in 2015 identified that 98% of students and 96% of staff at our institution had a smartphone, indicating that the vast majority of students can access the full functionality of the tool. However, one of the strengths of Poll Everywhere is the capacity for the small minority of students with non-smart phones to respond to questions, encouraging equality of voice. Impact On a Likert Scale from 1-5 (strongly disagree-strongly agree), students rated the use of Poll Everywhere 4.5 in terms of satisfaction. Students feedback largely mirrored those findings of Heaslip et al. (2014), namely that the anonymity allowed, the use of technology, break from the routine and opportunities for formative feedback and discussion made them participate to a greater extent than ordinary classes. I ran a workshop on mobile polling for staff from another University in the North East in 2015 with very positive responses from several staff members and their students when they subsequently implemented it in large lectures: Initial feedback: 'I can see so many opportunities where this would be an excellent strategy to help engage students'. Subsequent feedback: 'A couple of students came up to me after the session to say how impressed they were with the technology and how well it had worked to get them talking about the issues.'

Objectives:

- To raise audience awareness of the use of mobile polling systems to engage students in learning and teaching
- To reduce the barriers to the use of these systems by offering a hands on opportunity to create and respond to polls
- To encourage delegates to consider how to adapt their teaching to engage students with mobile polling in their large lectures.

Schedule:

- 3 min introduction setting the scene – introducing the popular mobile polling options available.
- 5 min demonstration of the use of Poll Everywhere with delegates responding to a variety of available polling options.
- 12 min hands-on experience of creating polls using either delegates' devices or a selection of tablets we will provide.
- 10 min open questions on the use of online and mobile polling.

Materials provided:

- Ten tablets/notebooks will be provided by the presenter to enable delegates without devices to produce polls
- Attendees will be provided with a user guide to using Poll Everywhere and a list of alternate mobile audience response systems such as Socrative and Zaption.

This session will be beneficial for those interested in the theme of technology enhanced learning because of the capacity for mobile polling to engage students and the greater functionality cost-effectiveness, ease of use and flexibility afforded compared to traditional audience response systems (clickers).

References:

Danaher P, Gururajan R and Hafeez-Baig A (2009) Transforming the practice of mobile learning: promoting pedagogical innovation through educational principles and strategies that work, in *Innovative mobile learning: Techniques and technologies*, eds H. Ryu & D. Parsons, IGI Global, Hershey, 21-46. Graham CR, Tripp TR, Seawright B and Joeckel GL (2007) Empowering or Compelling Reluctant Participators Using Audience Response Systems. *Active Learning in Higher Education* 8: 233-58. Heaslip G, Donovan P and Cullen JG (2014) Student response systems and learner engagement in large classes *Active Learning in Higher Education* 15: 11 –24 Noel D, Stover S and McNutt M (2015) Student perceptions of engagement using mobile-based polling as an audience response system: Implications for leadership studies, *Journal of Leadership Education* 14: 53-70

13:40-14:10

Paper

Lead Presenter: Elaine Tan

Session title: Video for reflective student teaching: Using editing to create focused self-review

Institution: Durham University

Co-presenter: Tan E.

This session will explore the use of video for classroom observation and reflective teaching practice and documents the work undertaken in this area with a group of student teachers. The project was undertaken over the course of one term with nine students who undertook a series (n=7) of videoed classroom sessions an hour and a half each. The videos were captured from two angles, that of the students and of the teacher using a number of discrete high definition web-cameras and button microphones. The idea of capturing these videos was to provide the students with an opportunity for self-review and reflection on developing teaching practice through the review and active engagement with this footage. These videos formed the basis of a reflective weekly exercise for these student teachers. The reflective activity involved a close scrutiny of the classroom session, comprising of an analysis of their own performance and a review of how the students in the classroom responded to and were engaged with the activities during the lesson. Using the lecture capture platform (Kaltura) integrated into Blackboard; students were asked to watch, review and select an extract of practice that they felt was notable and would stimulate discussion. The use of a Kaltura building block in blackboard as a platform allowed students to create their own clips of a large section of footage and take ownership of these generated materials. The use of the platform to give ownership of the clip to the student was important from two respects. Firstly that it allowed for download, multiple viewing and created a sense of privacy and ownership regarding the material, providing space for review and reflection. Secondly, that it allowed for students to build their own personal repositories; spaces where the only information displayed in their galleries were the videos that they themselves had created from the materials provided. This space allowed for an isolation of the points that each week they had highlighted for exploration and selection and laid out in an easily navigable way. This gallery had the effect of creating was an evolving series of clips that progressed as their teaching technique evolved. The next step in this process was the use of these self-generated clips as the basis of a reflection. The act of extracting clips from the session helped the students to focus in on the main points for reflection and clarify various aspects for development. When they had created these clips they were then asked to post the selected footage to a class-wide discussion board. In their posting they provided an explanation as to why they had chosen their particular clip and posted questions for discussions with their peers.

During the course of the programme the students created a series of these smaller clips and the associated reflection, review and peer feedback. The effect of this was that they had a number of videos that documented their development as teachers over the course of the module. When reaching the end of the course, they would be able to review their own progress and development in an incredibly tangible and honest manner. The aim of this exercise was to create a way in which students were able to reflectively review their own teaching practice and undertake a self-observation. The use of videos for lesson observation has been used for some time and its efficacy is well documented (Star and Strickland, 2008, Santagata and Angelici, 2010, Koc, 2011 Seidel et al, 2013,) however what is new to the discussion is the role that the virtual learning environment plays in integrating these student generated clips into other interactive elements of online learning. Another aspect that this paper explores is the impact of transferring the ownership and control of the video resources to students and the process of extraction of clips allows the meaning and focus of the footage to be directed by the students themselves.

References:

- M.Koc (2011) Let's make a movie: Investigating pre-service teachers' reflections on using video-recorded role playing cases in Turkey, *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 27 (1) 95-106. J.R.Star and S.K.Strickland (2008) Learning to observe: Using video to improve preservice mathematics teachers' ability to notice, *Journal of Mathematics Teacher Education*, 11 (2), 1047-125. R. Santagata and G.Angelici (2010) Studying the impact of the lesson analysis framework on preservice teachers' ability to reflect on videos of classroom teaching, *Journal of Teacher Education*, 61 (4) 339-349.
- T. Seidel, G.Blomberg and A. Renkl (2013) Instructional strategies for using video in teacher education, *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 34, 56-65.

13:40-14:10

Paper

Lead Presenter: Ann Macfadyen

Session title: 'On the edge': exploring the practice of supervising master's dissertation students

Institution: Northumbria University

Co-presenter: English, C.

Students undertaking taught masters' programmes comprise the largest group in the post graduate education and supervision is recognised as being a key influence on student retention and attainment, but there is relatively little research into the supervision of these students as they undertake the dissertation component of their programme. An action research project considered the practice of supervising students undertaking master's programmes in health or education. The initial phase of the project identified that there was a great deal of untapped expertise on this area, but that supervisors sometimes felt a sense of ill-preparedness, under confidence, and being slightly unsure about their supervisory role. During a series of focus groups, interviews and workshops it became apparent that while there were certain techniques or activities which academic staff had found effective in expanding students' understanding or to encourage the development of supervisees' skills, their use of these was embedded within complex practices of assessment of students' needs and progress, and could not be described in a simplistic 'recipe' of strategies which could be relied upon to promote learning. This notion that supervisory expertise is not a definable body of knowledge, but an understanding of students' expectations, beliefs, challenges, abilities, and skills; the experience to recognise some of the possible contributory issues and an awareness of possible appropriate actions which might be helpful, is comparable to situational judgement or 'phronesis', which has been described as the ability to see the right thing to do in the circumstances (Elliot, 2009). Through the creation of a communicative space (Kemmis and McTaggart, 2005) in which practitioners could reflect with one another, a number of key messages for other supervisors were identified. They were:

- Going through the dissertation process with a student will involve becoming aware of their goals, expectations, and external influences which can impact on their ability to study.
- You cannot fully predict when they will need advice, guidance, support, challenge, reassurance or encouragement. • Although they have responsibility for their progress and the quality of their work, you may be involved in assessing and anticipating their needs and creating strategies to help them to achieve the skills and understanding required to reach the required outcomes.
- Your assessment of their progress and feedback on their work may help them to undergo what can be a challenging educational experience.
- Your personal experiences of supervision can affect your approach to supervision but you may also find the way in which others have conceptualised the supervisory role or discussion with other supervisors helpful. The challenges involved in developing the communicative space in which these messages were articulated and a range of supervisor development materials developed will be outlined in this presentation.

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13:40-14:10

Paper

Lead Presenter: Colin Bryson

Session title: Developing students as partners: identifying and overcoming barriers

Institution: University of Newcastle

Co-presenter: Whelan, E. (student)

For over seven years we have been seeking to enhance student engagement (SE) within the Combined Honours degree at Newcastle University through a holistic strategy. This predicated on a belief that strong student engagement underpins transformative learning (Jonansson and Felten, 2015) and beneficial other outcomes (Bryson, 2014). A recurrent strand within this has been working in partnership with students. Despite introducing a host of initiatives to develop both SE and partnership (Healy et al, 2014) such as a variety of peer led schemes and activities and enhanced student representation and co-governance of the department between students and staff, the creation of a partnership learning community (Flint, 2014) has proved to be problematic in seeking to extend this beyond a small core group of students. Bryson et al (2015) have described the extension of much wider opportunities for students as partners as a Model B form of partnership, contrasting with a Model A in which opportunities are only limited to a handful; for example, roles such as students consultant, intern, co-researchers and change agents (Dunne and Zandstra, 2011). We reported at this conference last year on attempts to widen the scope and coverage of partnership through working with all students in modules to co-design and take joint responsibility for the module with staff as the module runs, an example of Model B partnership. Subsequently we have been reflecting on how to mitigate the barriers to widening partnership and fostering active student participation (Cook-Sather et al, 2014). We are undertaking a number of projects to better understand why students are more or less receptive and disposed towards this approach and how we (both staff and existing active student participants) might encourage greater participation and involvement, with its concomitant benefits. We have crude indicators of active student participation through numbers actually involved in roles; and disposition to partnership values through cohort surveys (which allow comparison across several years). However explanation and understanding is more likely to emerge through qualitative research. We report on three projects, one undertaken by a recent graduate in the role research assistant, and two undertaken by undergraduate students themselves as part of final year projects.

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Lead Presenter: Steven David Anderson

Session title: Transforming assessment: Using a rubric approach effectively to support learning

Institution: University of Sunderland

Co-presenter: Graham S.

University educators use inordinate amounts of time and energy producing written feedback on student's assessed work after a period of learning, only to find disappointment in the uptake and perceived value of the feedback to the learner. The learner, on the other hand often states that feedback is a problem (NSS 2015). The key aim of this paper is to highlight strategies to enable learners to get the most from assessment feedback, and also highlight practice that can reduce time and effort in producing efficient and effective feedback. Valuable and effective feedback can emanate from a range of sources, but if the learner does not internalise the feedback and act upon it, they will remain dependent on others to determine their learning. The ability to evaluate feedback and act upon it for learning is an essential graduate attribute as it underpins the capacity to become an autonomous learner (Sambell 2012). Learners' and educators' perceptions of the effectiveness of assessment feedback are equally important in the pursuit of high quality student learning. According to Andrade (2005, p27) 'a rubric is an effective assessment tool that lists the criteria for a piece of work... and articulates gradations of quality for each criterion'. For educators, rubrics arguably make assessing student work quick and efficient. For learners, a rubric can support their learning, providing an opportunity to create autonomous learners, offering an evaluative tool against which progress can be mapped (Andrade, 2000). Action research with a qualitative approach was carried out with students on a module in the Department of Sport and Exercise Sciences at the University of Sunderland. Focus groups were used to evaluate student's perceptions of the effectiveness of using a rubric and corresponding feedback process to improve learning. Student feedback included:

- A visual representation of their mark, colour coded on the backdrop of the rubric.
- Three written comments relating to 'things you did well', two written comments on 'things you could improve on'.
- A blank area for students to enter reflections on 'actions you need to take to improve your grade' with two self-evaluating comments to discuss at a personal tutorial.

Findings included a perceived improvement in understanding of where the student is in relation to grading criteria and their peers. What to do to move into the next band (if that is what the learner desires) and improved personal responsibility for taking action and using the feedback to support learning. The outputs of the evaluation are being used to inform further developments. The presenter will:

- Present the findings of a small scale pilot into the feedback process including details of the tools and techniques used and their effectiveness.
- Discuss the benefits (from the focus groups) in relation to the learner experience e.g. learning gain and in particular developing self determined learning (heutagogy).
- Discuss the implications of the pilot from both an educator and learner perspective.

References:

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14:40-15:10

Paper

Lead Presenter: Dr Alison Jane Pickard

Session title: Exchanging Practice across Europe: Developing Soft Skills in the Curriculum – staff and student perspectives.

Institution: Northumbria University

Co-presenter: Rebecca Strachan

"Northumbria University has been working with other international partners (student bodies, employers and higher education institutions) and four of the leading national state universities in the Ukraine on an EU funded Tempus Structural Measures project called IMPRESS aimed at improving the student journey from recruitment to graduation and beyond. A key part of the project has been the design and delivery of a 'soft skills' module. The module is centred on student learning and development and aims to prepare students for seeking and obtaining employment, and to help them become effective, independent and confident self-directed life-long learners. Soft Skills have been defined by the World Health Organization as ""adaptability and positive behaviour that allows a person to effectively deal with the demands and challenges of everyday life."" This paper reports on the experiences of the Northumbria team working with staff and students across Europe to co-create the module and explores the feedback from an evaluation of the pilot delivery of the Soft Skills module. This work is multi-layered in that it involves both the creation of a module by the soft skills team, comprising two academics from each Ukrainian University and a Lead from Northumbria and also training in student centred approaches to learning and teaching for the academics involved (Race, 2010). This approach is still very 'new' in Ukraine therefore the academic team underwent training in developing learning outcomes to articulate the objectives of the module (Bloom, 1956). Further training was also delivered in the approaches to teaching the skills identified as core to the module:

- Reflective thinking and writing as a learning and teaching framework (Levine et. al. 2008; Hampton, 2010);
- Taking responsibility for your own learning and the nature of learning partnerships in HE (Race, 2010; Strachan & Liyanage, 2015);
- Assessment for learning;
- Critical thinking (Shenton & Pickard, 2014);
- The ability to communicate with the audience;
- Ability to work in a group/team;
- Peer support (Downes, 2007; Pickard, 2008; Strachan et. al. 2010).

For the students in the Ukraine, the approach has also been very different to that usually experienced in their main programmes of study. This has required a careful approach by the module team with strong scaffolding to support the students in their studies and engagement. The paper will also share the outcomes of the final workshop where the pilot evaluation was explored through participatory action research (Reason & Bradbury, 2011), and the team received training on Northumbria Quality processes in order to validate the module. The final workshop also included a number of students who joined the team from the Ukraine and we took this opportunity to design and 'test' the module assessment by 'flipping' the classroom, having the students assess the live debate performed by the academic team members to allow them to experience designing and applying assessment criteria. For the Northumbria team the experience of working in the soft skills team has caused them to reflect on their own approach and practice and identify the key elements of good practice and enhancement. It has also provided the opportunity to explore our respective educational and national cultures increasing our understanding of our differences and similarities during what has been a truly enriching journey of learning, discovery and sharing.

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Lead Presenter: Ulrike Thomas

Session title: Flexibility in the HE learning environment: what is it, who wants it and can new furniture enhance it?

Institution: University of Newcastle

Co-presenter: Georgina Robson

Background in their review of international research evidence relating to the impact of the school environment on learning, Higgins and colleagues include the observation that, 'Since different room arrangements serve different purposes, it is necessary for classrooms to have some degree of flexibility' (Higgins et al., 2005: 7 and 28). Within higher education (HE), it is sometimes suggested that that flexibility is still more central, given requirements for high utilisation of space, the need for teaching and learning space to be suitable for a diversity disciplines and, increasingly, a desire for 'innovation' in approaches to learning. Flexibility, however, is not a concept that is free of controversy. A flexible setting is only flexible within the boundaries of its design: a point made by the National Union of Teachers forty years ago in relation to the assumed flexibility of open plan space in British schools (NUT, 1974). There is also the issue of the balance between the flexibility provided by the physical environment and the concurrent flexibility that is therefore expected of users, both teachers and learners. Notably, working specifically within post-compulsory education, Boys contends that flexibility, as a concept to inform designing for learning, is 'deeply flawed conceptually' (Boys, 2011: 27) and argues that continued reference to it reflects an 'inability to properly map learning onto space' (Boys, 2011: 59). This paper addresses this notion of flexibility in the HE context through presenting and reflecting on elements of a recent collaborative research and development project conducted within our university. The aim of this research was to explore students and staff experiences of the physical environment provided at Newcastle for HE learning, considering existing provision but also as a means to develop ideas for innovative spaces and usage. Our intention is to contribute understandings from a localised study to the research base within HE, which some researchers feel is lacking, specifically in relation to the learning environment (Temple, 2008), suggesting implications for institutions within and beyond Europe. Our research questions are: What is the existing situation, as experienced by students and teachers, of flexibility in HE learning environments? What are the needs and desires of users and managers of HE space? What can new designs of furniture contribute in terms of flexibility and innovation in teaching and learning?

Methodology: This was collaborative research, intended to feed into university decision-making regarding the setting for learning, and benefiting from a steering group that included facilities and estate managers together with academics from across the three faculties (medicine; science and engineering; humanities and social sciences). It was therefore party to the challenges and benefits noted by Alvesson (2003) in relation to doing 'insider' researcher within an HE institution. A variety of methods was used to develop our understanding of the existing situation, as experienced by staff and students. These included attending a range of relevant university meetings (e.g. the Teaching and Learning Spaces sub-committee of the University's Teaching and Learning committee; a working party of academics working with Estates to develop an innovative new space; a meeting organised by Estates to assess student views), interviewing teaching and non-teaching staff, 'site-specific' interviews (Duarte et al., 2015) with lecturers and a questionnaire completed by students. In addition, we investigated some concurrent development of the learning environment where Estates had installed in some seminar spaces furniture that was intended to be flexible, through being designed to be easily moveable, and therefore to support 'innovative' teaching practices, such as small group activities and change between activities. We consider the existing situation as experienced by teachers and learners, their suggestions and needs for improvement and the reception of innovative furniture intended to enhance flexibility.

Outcomes:

We will present an analysis in these terms of a subset of the range of data generated by the project. This will centre on:

- Audio recordings, photographs and notes from site specific interviews with 12 lecturers, representing diverse disciplines that include a number of humanities, social science and professional subjects, together with science, engineering, mathematics and dentistry;
- Questionnaires completed by 618 students across undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in a range of disciplines;
- Evaluation sheets left in seminar rooms with new, 'innovative' furniture, completed by students and lecturers. Our understanding will be situated within the other experiences noted above, including interviews and meetings with facilities managers and a timetabling officer.

Preliminary observations from this data support the assertion of complexity regarding the concept of flexibility. It is clear that most learning environments can be flexible if that is the lecturer's intention, but aspects of space and usage, such as heavy furniture and lack of time, can constrain approaches to teaching and learning. Similarly, innovative or flexible furniture does not determine practices but can have an influence. Students' experiences and preferences are also more heterogeneous and complex than sometimes suggested, although there appears to be some agreement about the importance of basic standards. Finally, there is an inevitable tension between Estate aims of catering for all needs through flexibility and individualised desires and requirements, particularly across differing disciplines within HE. There is a danger of flexibility achieved through multi-purpose, multi-disciplinary rooms that fail to support any specific learning or teaching particularly well and betray a lack of identity of which students, from within their disciplinary cultures, are critical.

References:

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14:40-15:10

Paper

Lead Presenter: Marios Nikolaos Stamoulos

Session title: Providing better support to students via their Virtual Learning Environment and exiting content

Institution: University of Sunderland

Co-presenter: Bowerman C.

Virtual Learning Environments (VLE) are an inseparable tool for modern academic institutions. Over the years the amount of data stored has increased which also increases the amount of knowledge available to student. Unfortunately, there is not much progress on the way this knowledge is available to the student. Students still need to browse through course folders, search via keyword based search engines or get the document sent to them from a member of staff. The vast amount of research in Natural Language Processing and in more particular using statistical methods triggered the interest in researching how statistical natural language processing can help the students use their VLE as a tool to support their learning. For our research that is going to be presented in this session, we will summarise on the research undertaken so far on natural language processing in Virtual Learning Environments and also demonstrate the technologies used in a Question Answering system developed and evaluated using a group of students of the University of Sunderland. The main issues of Natural Language Processing systems sometimes is that require expert knowledge and also time that academic staff may not have. The approach taken when developing our solution was to avoid using any domain knowledge needing an expert user and also to make the system language independent, so any learning resources can be used to answer questions. To evaluate the system we used a baseline search engine, which is used in mainstream systems like Blackboard and Moodle. The evaluation metrics were the number of clicks a student should press in order to retrieve the correct answer, the time spent on answering a question, the amount of irrelevant information passed to user and also the user preference. During the research, a Question Answering system that can be used with any content available on the VLE was developed and also new approaches have been derived, to acquire topic signatures automatically, which is a tool of having a dynamic knowledge base in the VLE that contributes on the performance of the developed Question Answering System and also will be able to be used for other Language aware applications within a VLE. Our main hypothesis was to develop a solution that provides better support to the learners, in the areas of faster responses, with less irrelevant content and also with less "clicks". To accomplish that, we broke the QA system in sub parts and worked on each one individually in order to achieve encouraging results. Once each subsystem was developed to a satisfying level, we compared the results of the full system with a baseline. This was an iterative process, consisting of a few phases, in order to fine tune the responses provided by the system. Finally, once the level of responses was adequate, the system was made available to students in order to measure and evaluate against our criteria. On this session, we aim in presenting the initial hypotheses of the research, the methodology used and also the evaluations after two cycles of testing, one data based and the other user based.

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15:20-15:50

Paper

Lead Presenter: Dr Sue Becker

Session title: Exploring the student experience of using a co-produced academic writing tool (SALT)

Institution: Teesside University

Co -presenter: Holly Shahverdi (Student), Nadine Spence (Student) & Luke Kennedy

The session will present findings from the first evaluation of SALT (Student's Academic Literacy Tool), a self-diagnostic; self-assessment booklet used to help students in further and higher education to improve their academic writing (Becker, Kennedy, Shahverdi & Spence, 2015). The SALT is made up of four sections; grammatical accuracy, correct use of language, structure and development of text and relevant use of source material; previous research conducted shows that identifying and explaining these four elements is an effective and efficient way to help students improve their academic writing (Becker, Kennedy, Shahverdi & Spence, 2015). Created as part of a Teesside University Learning and Teaching funded project to actively involve students as researchers and co-owners; SALT has recently won a prestigious competition, (JISC Summer of Student Innovation) and an online interactive version of SALT is currently being developed in partnership with JISC. SALT is also currently being used to support STEM subjects in a number of HE & FE institutions. User testing of pilot booklet (Shahverdi, Kennedy, Spence & Becker, in press) illustrated some variance in students' improvement after using SALT as part of a formative assessment strategy and the current project seeks to both explore factors which may explain this variance as well as producing best practice guidance for institutions intending to use the SALT. The session will present initial findings from thematic analysis of focus groups with level 4 Psychology students currently using SALT in their study skills modules. The team will also report on progress on the second stage of the evaluation project which will evaluate to what extent crucial aspects of learning and development identified in the learning and teaching academic literature; personality type, (Pulford & Sohal, 2006) self-efficacy, (Van der Poel & Gasiorek, 2012) learning styles & locus of control (Deniz, Tras & Ayodan, 2009) and perceived understanding of academic writing (Hammann, 2005) will impact upon student engagement with SALT. The research team aims to use the preliminary data gathered during this project as a basis for more complex, multi-site evaluations in future which will eventually provide all educational institutions involved with the most current, relevant and empirically grounded suggestions concerning improvements in writing style.

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Lead Presenter: Pip McDonald

Session title: Whose Language Centre is it anyway? A multimodal answer.

Institution: University of Sunderland

Assessment of student achievement in professional practice presents many challenges. This research contributes both practical and theoretical understandings of how to develop innovation in assessment. It makes an important contribution to the overarching Conference theme of Innovation in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education. It is focused on developing innovative practice in 'transforming assessment' for HE students. The research captures the experiences of post-graduate student teachers as they progress from being graded 'Good' to 'Outstanding' in their Teaching Practice. This research will be of interest not only to teacher educators but also to colleagues from other disciplines involved with the development of programmes of professional practice such as medicine, nursing, social work, pharmacy, law, business, etc. Building upon the work of Harper (2013), we explore the realities, processes and practicalities of students' assessment journeys in their own classrooms and in their own words. While the quality of teachers is considered to be the most important factor underpinning the achievements of their students, teacher quality continues to be highly variable. (William, 2011, Hattie, 2012). The question for Higher Education then becomes, How can we encourage and support all of our student teachers to become 'Outstanding'? The short answer might be that we cannot. To accept this however, is to ignore the point that the vast majority of student teachers want to be the best teachers they can be throughout their careers (Coffield, 2008). It makes sense therefore to concentrate our time and effort on the majority of students who want to get better at what they do because they care passionately about the vocation of education and the enduring values which guide their educational practice. In order to do this, we argue, we need to understand more about what is involved in becoming an 'Outstanding' teacher, not simply, in terms of attaching a grade or a sweeping adjective to a student or to their assessed practical teaching but as an ongoing professional process which moves student teachers and those with responsibility for supporting and developing them, far beyond the realms of 'quick-fixes', empty clichés and shallow 'tips for teachers'. The session we propose will engage the audience in finding out how they can use the guiding principles and practices we have developed for use in their own teaching and assessment. Case studies of student experiences and the assessment tool 'Next Steps to Success' will be shared. We wanted to explore how student teachers' exercise good educational judgement and ability and commitment to do the right thing at the right time for the good of their learners rather than simply working towards a checklist of criteria.

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Lead Presenter: Salome Bolton

Session title: Employability is personal: integrating 'flipped learning' to engage students with their own Career Development

Institution: University of Newcastle

Co-presenter: Gigi Herbert

Employability is personal: integrating 'flipped learning' to engage students with their own Career Development Abstract This presentation provides a case study of integrating flipped learning approaches to enhance student understanding of and engagement with strategies for developing core employability skills. In reviewing the team's approach to integrating flipped resources into the Newcastle University Career Development modules we:

- examine the rationale for taking more of a 'flipped' approach to skills and employability learning and teaching;
- discuss the ways in which the team experienced these strategies as both risky and liberating;
- share some of the tools we have used and discovered to develop the flipped resources;
- reflect on the implications and challenges of taking a flipped approach in the context of developing and delivery a large enrolment (400-500) suite of University wide modules.

The session aims to share with participants some of our learning about some benefits and challenges (expected and otherwise) of implementing 'flipped learning' approaches. The session will also provide an overview of some of the tools we used to produce the supporting materials. This practitioner perspective should help inform participants in evaluating whether these approaches might be integrated into their own pedagogical practice. **Background** The Newcastle Universities Career service Curriculum Team develop, deliver, support and assess a suite of 20 credit, yearlong academic modules that support students in developing their understanding of core employability skills and offer them the opportunity to gain practical experience of applying these in a professional context whilst completing a 70 hour work placement. These are large enrolment, cross-University modules drawing 400-500 students ranging from 2nd year to Masters -level from a wide variety of subjects in any given year. Student learning is supported with regular timetabled teaching sessions to ensure all students are introduced to core principles to:

- ground their understanding of effective use and development of these core professional skills;
- build understanding of how to relate these principles to effective performance in a workplace setting, and;
- inform their reflective learning and guide the goals they set for their own personal and professional development.

As much of the teaching materials had been developed by individual team members, presenting a consistent and coherent set of materials tended to result in a traditional 'chalk and talk' teaching format. However, through module feedback, quality assurance mechanisms and staff student committee, students told us that they wanted more time in class to and explore the principles we were introducing and to engage more through experiential learning. So, we decided to look for ways to change the way we introduced this material to students so as to maintain an important element of experiential learning for our students within the classroom whilst also ensuring coherence and consistency across modules and seminar groups within modules. Drawing on some of the 'flipped learning' techniques and principles, originally developed by Jonathan Bergmann and Aaron Sams (<http://flippedclass.com/about-m/>), we began placing more emphasis on electronic forms of information, developed bespoke videos and embedded wikis throughout the teaching which students could access via the VLE system in advance. Seminars then focussed on the use of practical exercises and activities that would help students to explore the specific relevance of these principles and approaches to their own contexts. The potential impact here for both students and staff was risky and liberating. For staff reducing the amount of classroom contact time devoted to content delivery was precarious as students need a consistent understanding of core principles and approaches if they are to engage effectively with their own reflective learning and, importantly, understand what is expected of them in module assessment. This model has now been embedded for 18 months within the module and feedback on the activities and approaches suggests that for students, these different approaches initially appeared strange but equally very valuable. These indicators suggest that by reviewing the team's pedagogical approach we could influence students' perceptions of the modules whilst maintaining consistency and coherence in terms of the core content students' that to understand and apply in practice.

Lead Presenter: Trish Spedding

Session title: Becoming an Outstanding Teacher: student teachers' voices and stories of practice.

Institution: University of Sunderland

Co-presenter: Dr Lawrence Nixon

Assessment of student achievement in professional practice presents many challenges. This research contributes both practical and theoretical understandings of how to develop innovation in assessment. It makes an important contribution to the overarching Conference theme of Innovation in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education. It is focused on developing innovative practice in 'transforming assessment' for HE students. The research captures the experiences of post-graduate student teachers as they progress from being graded 'Good' to 'Outstanding' in their Teaching Practice. This research will be of interest not only to teacher educators but also to colleagues from other disciplines involved with the development of programmes of professional practice such as medicine, nursing, social work, pharmacy, law, business, etc. Building upon the work of Harper (2013), we explore the realities, processes and practicalities of students' assessment journeys in their own classrooms and in their own words. While the quality of teachers is considered to be the most important factor underpinning the achievements of their students, teacher quality continues to be highly variable. (William, 2011, Hattie, 2012). The question for Higher Education then becomes, How can we encourage and support all of our student teachers to become 'Outstanding'? The short answer might be that we cannot. To accept this however, is to ignore the point that the vast majority of student teachers want to be the best teachers they can be throughout their careers (Coffield, 2008). It makes sense therefore to concentrate our time and effort on the majority of students who want to get better at what they do because they care passionately about the vocation of education and the enduring values which guide their educational practice. In order to do this, we argue, we need to understand more about what is involved in becoming an 'Outstanding' teacher, not simply, in terms of attaching a grade or a sweeping adjective to a student or to their assessed practical teaching but as an ongoing professional process which moves student teachers and those with responsibility for supporting and developing them, far beyond the realms of 'quick-fixes', empty clichés and shallow 'tips for teachers'. The session we propose will engage the audience in finding out how they can use the guiding principles and practices we have developed for use in their own teaching and assessment. Case studies of student experiences and the assessment tool 'Next Steps to Success' will be shared. We wanted to explore how student teachers' exercise good educational judgement and ability and commitment to do the right thing at the right time for the good of their learners rather than simply working towards a checklist of criteria.

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