



University of
Sunderland



THREE RIVERS

THE NORTH EAST UNIVERSITIES CONSORTIUM

INNOVATIONS IN LEARNING

Tuesday 27th June 2023

PROGRAMME

Three Rivers Consortium Committee: Rosa Spencer (Newcastle) | Susan Mathieson (Northumbria) | Mark Proctor (Sunderland) | Jean Mathias (Durham) | Samuel Elkington (Teesside)

 **#3Rivers2023**

THREE
RIVERS
THE NORTH EAST UNIVERSITIES CONSORTIUM

Welcome

Welcome to the **Three Rivers Conference 2023**.

Building upon the success of previous partnership events held by the region's Universities (Teesside, Durham, Newcastle, Sunderland, and Northumbria), our theme for 2023 is '**Innovations in Learning**'.

We are delighted to welcome our keynote speaker **Professor Chris Headleand** with his talk on Innovating Student Engagement. Professor Headleand is a National Teaching Fellow with over 20 years' experience in a variety of teaching and learning roles. His research interests include Virtual Reality, Student Engagement, Serious Games, and Learning Communities.

Three Rivers 2023 will be hosted online by Newcastle University. The aims of the conference are to develop a regional understanding of key issues in learning and teaching in higher education, share effective learning and teaching practices, to invite new people into our learning and teaching support networks and provide networking opportunities.

Table of Contents

[Agenda](#)




Abstracts for Presentations 

Abstracts for Workshops 

Abstracts for Lightning Talks 






Agenda

09:30	<p align="center">Conference Welcome – Microsoft Teams – Open Room Dr Rosa Spencer (Professional Development Manager, Academic Services) Professor Ruth Valentine (PVC Education (Interim), Newcastle University)</p>				
10:00	<p align="center">Keynote Speaker Address  'Innovating Student Engagement' Professor Chris Headleand</p>				
11:00	<p align="center">15-minute break 11:00-11:15</p>				
11:15– Session 1	<p>Open Room</p> <p>This room will be open for general queries and assistance during the day.</p>	<p>Redheugh Room </p> <p>Theme: Assessment</p> <p>Student Perspectives on Assessment: How student partnership in assessment design can ensure academic potential Alison Cornforth</p> <p>Authentic Assessment for Student Engagement: Lessons from Modernising Ancient Modules Dr Stephanie Holton & Ashna Mathur</p> <p>AI generative tools and assessment in Civil Engineering programmes Dr Davide Motta, Dr Craig Warren & Alex Wood</p>	<p>Millennium Room </p> <p>Theme: Flexible and Digital Learning</p> <p>Developing augmented teaching tools for undergraduate physics Philippa Petts et al</p> <p>Escape room style seminars in neurological clinical reasoning Bas Olthof & Rebecca Hancock</p> <p>The detrimental impact of slide-based apps on teaching and learning Nick Riches</p>	<p>Metro Room </p> <p>Theme: Student Retention and Success</p> <p>The Curriculum Inclusivity Toolkit Dr Alys Einion</p> <p>Success Measures within Degree Apprenticeships Kevin Smith & Dr Nick Mapletoft</p> <p>Experiences of undergraduate students: Pregnancy, parenthood and caring for children whilst studying at university Tom Disney, Lucy Grimshaw & Justine Gallagher</p>	<p>Tyne Room </p> <p>Theme: Employability and Entrepreneurship</p> <p>BUILD- PLAY - LEARN: Improving employability skills and workplace behaviours with LEGO® Serious Play® Gordon Duffy-McGhie</p> <p>Identifying employability support through the lens of 'Career Crafting': A Construction Management perspective Dr Hazel Ponton</p> <p>Reflective Pedagogy Ruphina Obare</p>



12:15	5-minute break 12:15-12:20				
12:20 – Session 2	<p>Open Room</p> <p>This room will be open for general queries and assistance during the day.</p>	<p>Redheugh Room</p> <p>Working Group 1: Student Retention and Engagement</p> <p>Leader: Dr Samuel Elkington</p>	<p>Millennium Room</p> <p>Working Group 2: Innovation in Doctoral Training</p> <p>Leader: Dr Helen Cramman</p>	<p>Metro Room</p> <p>Workshop A</p> <p>MOOC Adventures: Internationalising Higher Education through Student-Partnerships and Flexible Digital Learning</p> <p>Leader: Iain Keenan</p>	<p>Tyne Room</p> <p>Workshop B</p> <p>Mobilising an Entrepreneurship Education Community of Practice for the North-East</p> <p>Leader: Professor Robert Newbery et al</p>
13:15	Lunch 13:15-14:00				
14:00 – Session 3	<p>Open Room</p> <p>This room will be open for general queries and assistance during the day</p>	<p>Redheugh Room</p> <p>Theme: Support Learning & Teaching</p> <p>Building research and data skills in the undergraduate population Dr Liz Cunningham</p> <p>Enhancing support and recognition for teaching mentors Sophie Meller et al</p> <p>Fuzzy Evaluation Mappings in Assessing Pedagogical Quality Pascal Stiefenhofer</p>	<p>Millennium Room</p> <p>Theme: Student Engagement through Partnership</p> <p>Here's some we made earlier Kay Hepplewhite</p> <p>Zine making as a pedagogical tool for transformative learning in Law Peter Whitton et al</p> <p>Bridging the Transition Gap Liv Jonassen, Sara Bird & Lauren Asperry</p>	<p>Metro Room</p> <p>Theme: Student Retention & Success.</p> <p>Positive action for Promoting the Retention of Female Students (PROFS) in male-dominated disciplines Helen Hooper et al</p> <p>Exploring the 'self' in self-directed learning: the role of tutors and technology in scaffolding a successful self-directed learning experience Davina Thompson & Dr Emily Williams</p> <p>Graduate sensibilities: a metamodern pedagogical framework for a wicked world Sarah Bowman et al</p>	<p>Tyne Room</p> <p>Theme: Mental wellbeing in HE; Internationalising HE</p> <p>The Role of Faith in the Mental Health and Wellbeing of Black Pentecostal Christian Students of East African descent at Universities in the UK Ronalds Busulwa</p> <p>Can creativity workshops support both wellbeing and achievement gaps? Lindsey Ferrie & Manahill Baig</p> <p>A Student-Led Approach to Collaborative Intercultural Encounters: Fostering Global Citizenship, Intercultural Sensitivity and belonging via global education experiences at home. Linda Jose</p>



15:05	5-minute break 15:00-15:05				
15:05 – Session 4	<p>Open Room</p> <p>This room will be open for general queries and assistance during the day</p>	<p>RedheughRoom</p> <p><u>5 Minute Lightning Talks</u></p> <p>Themes for this session include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> +Student retention and success +Flexible and digital learning +Student engagement through partnership +Employability and entrepreneurship +Internationalising HE +Place: engagement with our region +Flexible and digital learning <p>Presenters:</p> <p>Mark Widdowfield Dr Victoria Roper Leah Maughan Dr Cristina Navarro Reguero Aleksy Kozikov Dr Bidy Casselden Caroline Burns Dr Susan Bock SeyedReza RazaviAlavi Gabriel Martinez Vera</p>	<p>Millennium Room </p> <p>Theme: Flexible and Digital Learning; Supporting Learning and Teaching</p> <p>Active learning using digital resources Camilla Lauren-Maatta</p> <p>ChatGPT and Higher Education: Quo Vadis? Suman Bhattacharya</p> <p>Exploring student perceptions on blended delivery modes in the post-Covid era Dr Zhijuan Wu</p>	<p>Metro Room </p> <p>Workshop C</p> <p>Theatre in the Round: Exploring the use of 360 video to support critical interpretation of drama</p> <p>Leader: Alistair Brown</p> <p>Co-Presenters: James Youdale & Mark Childs</p>	<p>Tyne Room </p> <p>Theme: Student Engagement through Partnership; Education for Sustainable Development</p> <p>Diversifying the Chemistry Curriculum with Students J. Litka Milian & Alex Harvey-Reid</p> <p>Collaborative Curriculum Redesign for Sustainable Education: Challenges and Best Practices Dr Malgorzata Rabenda Derman & Michelle Black</p> <p>Using a sustainability focused, co-created engineering assessment as a vehicle for staff development. Dr Samantha Gooneratne & Dr Mike Knowles</p>
	16:05	Conference close and final comments – All Rooms			

Keynote Speaker Abstract

Title

Innovating Student Engagement

Author(s)

Professor Chris Headleand

Head Of Department - Games Design & Tech, School of Digital, Technologies and Arts. Staffordshire University

Abstract

Student Engagement is a hot topic in university education. Most institutions and academics agree that they should be engaging students, but what does that actually mean? Ask five different educators, and you will get five different answers! In this talk I will explain what student engagement is, and provide some practical guidance on how to scaffold practice to encourage various forms of engagement in your teaching and learning practice.

[Click to return to the agenda](#)

Three Rivers Conference 2023 Presentation Abstracts

Title

Student Perspectives on Assessment: How student partnership in assessment design can ensure academic potential

Author(s)

Alison Cornforth

Student Library and Academic Services, Northumbria University

Abstract

Background: The number of mature students has been growing across the sector in recent years (OFS, 2021). Mature students are more likely to have taken a non-traditional route to education, may have a poor school experience and as a significant majority are students with Specific Learning Difficulties, they are more likely to have practical strengths. From my co-produced research with students, assessment and the potential for failure were identified as key concerns, causing anxiety and impacting on academic identity and a sense of belonging for students. These issues can be applied to all students, due to increasing students from diverse backgrounds as a result of Widening Participation.

Aim: To highlight the need for student partnership in assessment to learn from students and address the key underlying issues to ensure all students can achieve their academic potential.

Focus: This presentation is based on a research study with mature students to identify the issues around assessment and why inclusive assessment is necessary. Student voice will be the focus throughout, alongside solutions suggested by students for developing assessment to ensure academic potential. It will be theory-based, including the social construction of assessment and multiple intelligences theory to back up student voice.

Working Structure: The structure will begin with brief background information on the diverse student population, moving onto how students feel about assignment criteria and assignment formats, why there is a focus on written assessment, students' views on a need for change and their ideas on possible solutions.

[Click to return to the agenda](#)

Three Rivers Conference 2023 Presentation Abstracts

Title

What is authentic assessment? This talk explores the wide range of benefits – as well as the challenges – of diversifying assessment in some of our most traditional exam-focused modules.

Author(s)

Dr Stephanie Holton

Senior lecturer in Classics, Newcastle University

Abstract

This talk explores the implementation of alternative assessment across different stages and modules in Classics and Ancient History over a three-year period. In our subject area, modules have traditionally been assessed through memory-based examinations – particularly for ancient languages, where exams are intended to check student retention of grammatical forms and vocabulary. While this type of assessment may be essential at the early stages of language acquisition, our post-Beginners' and non-language modules focus more on developing understanding and analysis of ancient literature, history and culture, which significantly broadens scope for assessment types. Yet, memory-based examination remains the most popular method of measuring student attainment.

This talk will discuss the practicalities as well as the pedagogical benefits of implementing more authentic assessment types across these modules, from initial design through to engagement and preparation to final delivery, covering both teacher and student perspectives. It explores how alternative assessment can be beneficial in finding a more inclusive approach to assessment and improving student engagement, while also more authentically meeting the threshold and typical standards of attainment in QAA subject benchmarks. It also considers the challenges of effectively implementing alternative assessment, from working remotely during the Covid pandemic to 'scaling up' the model for larger-enrolling modules and confronting new concerns around AI.

[Click to return to the agenda](#)

Three Rivers Conference 2023 Presentation Abstracts

Title

AI generative tools and assessment in Civil Engineering programmes

Author(s)

Dr Davide Motta & Dr Craig Warren

Faculty of Engineering and Environment; Department of Mechanical and Construction Engineering, Northumbria University

Abstract

Generative AI applications are currently evolving at a rapid rate and could potentially revolutionize education. Much of the impact is expected to be positive. For instance, for the students, supporting personalized learning and facilitating revision; for the teaching staff, producing teaching plans and partially automatizing time-consuming tasks such as marking and generation of feedback for the students. All this may result in more meaningful teacher-student interaction and a better focus on knowledge sharing and critical thinking. However, the use by students of AI tools in assessments, as essay mill or generators of answers to both quantitative and qualitative questions, may significantly hinder their learning and their development of skills to judge the logic, accuracy, and appropriateness of AI-generated content. This may also introduce unfairness in student assessment and bias, as AI tools may not be suitable for all learners. We present an investigation on the impact of these tools on assessment in the Civil Engineering programmes and an attempt to produce suggestions for assessment modification and/or rewriting to ensure fair assessing of the learning outcomes.

[Click to return to the agenda](#)

Three Rivers Conference 2023 Presentation Abstracts

Title

Developing augmented teaching tools for undergraduate physics courses

Author(s)

Philippa Petts, Ross Parker, Helen Cramman

Physics, Durham University

Abstract

This proof-of-principle project was funded by the Durham Centre for Academic Development to develop augmented reality (AR) teaching materials for first-year undergraduate physics courses. Two computer science students coded interactive simulations for 3D magnetic and electric fields using bar magnets and point charges, as well as a fully interactive virtual optical table that can be customised with lasers, concave and convex lenses, and reflecting plates for teaching introductory optics concepts. The simulations were programmed using Unity and the Vuforia software development kit for use with a Microsoft HoloLens headset, as well as ported to a Meta Quest 2 for use in virtual reality (VR).

The simulations were evaluated by undergraduate students and academic staff members, who found the tools to be highly engaging and immersive. The AR teaching materials provided a unique and interactive learning experience, allowing students to explore and manipulate physical concepts in ways that would be impossible with traditional teaching methods. The students reported that the AR simulations enhanced their understanding of the physics concepts being taught, while the academic staff members noted the potential of AR technology to improve physics education.

Overall, this project demonstrates the potential of AR technology to enhance undergraduate physics education and provides a foundation for further development and implementation of AR teaching materials in the future.

[Click to return to the agenda](#)

Three Rivers Conference 2023 Presentation Abstracts

Title

Escape room style seminars in neurological clinical reasoning

Author(s)

Bas Olthof & Rebecca Hancock

School of Medicine, Newcastle University

Abstract

Neurological clinical reasoning is a complex skill that requires students to integrate knowledge of anatomy, physiology, and pathology to make accurate diagnoses. However, students often find this skill challenging, and they may be shy to answer questions in larger groups for fear of being wrong. Escape room seminars are a gamified approach to learning that can help students develop their neurological clinical reasoning skills in a fun and engaging environment.

In these seminars, students are divided into small teams tasked with diagnosing different clinical cases which contain a clinical vignette, social history, family history, medications etc. The students are invited to explore each case and reason their way through the differentials. In order to gain access to the physical examination and imaging data to confirm their diagnoses, the teams need to solve puzzles about related physiology in order to unlock this data. This type of learning environment is highly motivating for students and allows them to practise their clinical reasoning skills in a safe and supportive environment.

In addition, these seminars also help to foster team learning. When students work together to solve these tasks, they must communicate effectively and share their knowledge with each other. This type of collaboration helps students to develop their critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

Overall, escape room seminars are a valuable tool for teaching neurological clinical reasoning. They are fun, engaging, and effective, and they can help students to develop the skills they need to be successful in their medical careers.

[Click to return to the agenda](#)

Three Rivers Conference 2023 Presentation Abstracts

Title

The detrimental impact of slide-based apps on teaching and learning

Author(s)

Nick Riches

School of Education Communication and Language Sciences. Newcastle University

Abstract

PowerPoint, and other slide-based software, plays a central role in our educational practice. This talk discusses why this app, and similar apps, may negatively affect learning. While many regard PowerPoint simply as a presentation aide, it is a central component in a wider ecosystem. Lecturers use it as a design tool. Students use it as the basis for notetaking in lectures, and for revision purposes. The centrality of PowerPoint is promoted by institutional policies which stipulate slides be made available to students in advance. PowerPoint is skeuomorphic: a new technology which mimics older technologies. In particular, it simulates physical slides inserted into carousel projectors which persisted until the early nineties. Such slide-focused design has a number of negative consequences. Lectures often lack clear visual signposting, a factor which may impact on the comprehension and consolidation of textual information (Sanchez et al. 2001). Students who adopt slide-based notetaking and revision strategies also perform more poorly on assessments (Leon & García Martínez, 2021). Moreover, skeuomorphism leads to information silos, making it difficult to transfer information from PowerPoint to other formats. This impacts on the quality of student notetaking, and makes it onerous for lecturers to create handouts, with many relying on the PowerPoint "handout" function, which results in a grid of slides. The talk will propose an alternative workflow based on open-source technology which facilitates signposting, reduces information silos, and promotes better note-taking practice. However, ultimately, the way forward is to design new apps which are better suited to university teaching.

[Click to return to the agenda](#)

Three Rivers Conference 2023 Presentation Abstracts

Title

The Curriculum Inclusivity Toolkit

Author(s)

Dr Alys Einion

Midwifery and Health Science, Northumbria University

Abstract

The Curriculum Inclusivity Assessment Toolkit is a means of assessing educators', teams' and institutions 'progress towards a fully inclusive curriculum. The aim of the CIAT is to directly and actively embed equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) across all curricula and teaching and learning activities and resources. A research-based interactive toolkit, it was developed at Swansea University through a process of comprehensive consultation and pilot testing and is a detailed approach to raising awareness of equality, diversity, inclusion and decolonisation of education. this session will outline the theoretical foundations of the kit, discuss its implementation and embedding as part of university quality assurance processes, and explore how to use such an approach to enhance individual and team performance to improve student engagement, reduce attrition and enhance the learning experience.

[Click to return to the agenda](#)

Three Rivers Conference 2023 Presentation Abstracts

Title

Success Measures within Degree Apprenticeships

Author(s)

Kevin Smith, Dr Nick Mapletoft & Libby Hampson, UCQ

Dr Derek Watson Sunderland University

Abstract

The introduction of degree apprenticeships in England in 2015 has not resulted in a significant increase in mature students accessing higher education provision overall. While there are likely to be a complex number of reasons contributing to this, the extent to which employers understand and value degree apprenticeship provision may be an influencing factor, the terminology may be another. As employers are pivotal in the decision-making process for degree apprenticeship recruitment, their comprehension of the impact that degree apprenticeship graduates have upon business outcomes is essential in developing this aspect of higher education.

Success measures within education have usually focused upon quantifiable outcomes, such as retention and achievement. Within Higher Education, undergraduate success is often measured by retention on programme and degree classification. While these measures have merit in traditional undergraduate provision, the introduction of degree apprenticeships and the influence that employers have on these programmes suggests that new success metrics are required to make this more meaningful to the key stakeholders, and to support employer engagement to recruit employees within degree apprenticeships.

Having delivered degree apprenticeships since 2016, University Centre Quayside (UCQ) has undertaken a single institution case study investigation with initial findings suggesting that the use of work-related measures, based upon the impact that vocational learning has within the workplace, is a more effective and accurate reflection of graduate effectiveness and could generate more meaning for employers. The other finding suggests that, rather than the degree apprenticeship raising the perception of all apprenticeships, the term apprenticeship may be preventing more degree apprenticeship recruitment.

[Click to return to the agenda](#)

Three Rivers Conference 2023 Presentation Abstracts

Title

Experiences of undergraduate students: Pregnancy, parenthood and caring for children whilst studying at university

Author(s)

Tom Disney, Lucy Grimshaw, Justine Gallagher, Andrea Carrick

Health and Life Sciences, Northumbria University

Abstract

The number of students at university who have caring responsibilities for children is increasing each year, as is the number of students who become pregnant. Evidence suggests these students are less likely to complete their degree compared to their non-parenting peers and are at greater risk of a variety of hardships that may engender significant precarity, while the landscape of policy and practical support remains for this group uneven across higher education. This paper will report on the findings of a project which aims to address this and examines the experiences of pregnancy, parenthood and caring for children whilst at university for undergraduate students. The project involves a two-phase approach; firstly, it comprises a survey of both undergraduate students and university staff (academic and professional) to gauge awareness and experiences of support whilst also exploring attitudes which may shape experiences of pregnancy, parenthood and caring for children at university. The survey findings will be developed with a subsequent qualitative focus group with participating undergraduate students to discuss the findings. Finally, data from both phases will be developed into a zine, which will be used to raise awareness and improve policy and practice in this area. In this paper we will reflect on the findings from our research and conclude with next steps for policy and practice in higher education in the UK. Delegates will learn about evidence of innovative practice but also about challenges to creating family-friendly universities. The paper links to the 'Student retention and success' subtheme.

[Click to return to the agenda](#)

Three Rivers Conference 2023 Presentation Abstracts

Title

BUILD- PLAY - LEARN: Improving employability skills and workplace behaviours with LEGO® Serious Play®

Author(s)

Gordon Duffy-McGhie

Education & Society, Sunderland University

Abstract

Good - Better - Best: explorations and interpretations of 'organisational excellence in the context of technical and employer-led education reform.

Following the Review of Post-18 Education and Funding (2018), and the Skills for Jobs White Paper (2021), successive governments have sought to reform higher and vocational education. Recent reforms aim to restructure funding models, widen participation, and boost the economy by ensuring qualifications align with employer-defined occupational standards. In addition, new powers have been given to regulators to 'drive up quality and standards' and ensure qualifications deliver 'good outcomes'. Improving learners' employability skills and career outcomes is a laudable and principled aim, but are current pedagogical approaches, designed to embed employability skills and workplace behaviours within increasingly complex qualification frameworks, effective? And are existing quality assurance processes proving successful at raising standards?

This research study explores how leaders and teaching staff are meeting the challenges of reform and examines what role 'organisational excellence' plays in the drive to raise standards. Furthermore, the study argues that for effective change implementation to take place, it needs to be informed (and driven) by a shared interpretation of what success and excellence look like within specific contexts.

The proposed presentation includes case studies carried out at Teesside University and Middlesbrough College which explore the ways teaching and support staff have engaged learners in employability skills development using LEGO® Serious Play® methodologies.

[Click to return to the agenda](#)

Three Rivers Conference 2023 Presentation Abstracts

Title

Identifying employability support through the lens of 'Career Crafting': A Construction Management perspective

Author(s)

Dr Hazel Ponton

Department of Architecture, Engineering & Construction, Northumbria University

Abstract

Employability support is increasingly being offered to students at a central University, and programme level to better prepare students for placement and graduation recruitment. However, the levels of engagement with this support vary. Research is required that gathers students' opinions about what support they would actively engage with and what form this support should take. This project aims to gather students' perspectives on the employability support they want to engage with. The concept of 'Career Crafting' is used as a theoretical lens to analyse the student perspective. 'Career Crafting' combines the external compass of proactivity and the internal compass of congruence to assess a student's attitude and behaviour towards career preparation and fit over time. Eight interviews and one focus group gathered qualitative data from students studying Levels 4 – 6 of the BSc Construction Management degree. The data was structured and thematically analysed using NVivo software. The research highlights a wide range of desired support from the central University, programme level, and external partners, such as gaining work experience, the best use of LinkedIn, mentoring from recent graduates from the programme, and WhatsApp chats to support minority groups (female and BAME). The students also highlight the support they did not want, such as engaging with older industry mentors and attending networking events, despite a consistent view that their career is highly significant to them and the knowledge that networking and mentoring can be beneficial. The findings can inform the design of employability support to increase student engagement and, therefore, prospects.

[Click to return to the agenda](#)

Three Rivers Conference 2023 Presentation Abstracts

Title

Reflective Pedagogy

Author(s)

Ruphina Obare

School of Education and Society, Sunderland University

Abstract

Reflective practice has long been a useful skill in several disciplines including teaching and learning and health and social care. In recent years, there has been an increasing interest in the skill and the term has become a conceptual and methodological canopy, making it difficult to draw a distinction between what is and what is not reflective practice (Morrison, 1996).

The focus of most of these studies has been on reflective practice on teacher education, whereas an association between specific reflective practices and pedagogical approaches has received less research attention. In this study, the scholarly works of Dewey's experiential learning theory (Dewey, 1933, 1938) and reflective thought of asking ourselves what is going on and how we think has been used to examine student perceptions of meaningful learning which occurred as result of their participation in a work integrated learning project that utilised different pedagogical practices. The presentation is part of a wider mixed methods action research study consisting of 6 cohorts of mature top up undergraduate health and social care students.

A collection of data from questionnaire surveys, focus groups and reflective essays aimed to capture the learners' attitudes, experiences, and beliefs. A range of opinions and thoughts and a set of trends emerged in the analysis of the quantitative data. The strength of correlation found between key variables appeared to generate lifelong learning skills and transform practice judging by the correlation and significant relations that featured.

[Click to return to the agenda](#)

Three Rivers Conference 2023 Presentation Abstracts

Title

Building research and data skills in the undergraduate population

Author(s)

Dr Liz Cunningham

Newcastle Business School, Northumbria University

Abstract

This presentation will discuss the development of a new Level 5 module designed and delivered during the academic year 2022/23. The aims of this module are twofold. First to help embed data literacy within the undergraduate Business curriculum, benefitting students both during their academic career and as they enter employment. "Students who master data skills will have an advantage in their future careers" (Tableau, 2022) Second, the module introduces students to the concept of Research based learning – developing and exploring their own research questions. "Research-based learning facilitates active student engagement and fosters deep learning" (Archer-Kuhn et al. 2020), important for success at Level 6.

At the beginning of the module, it was essential to bring the concepts of research data and research questions to life for this group of students and make the idea of original research meaningful to them. This was Achieved through inviting groups of students to explore public domain (ONS and HESA) data discovering data sets that were of personal interest to them, reporting interesting findings back to the class. Students then began to develop their own research questions, brainstorming ideas with their peers. For a significant number of students this was a transformative experience. They began to realise that their own interests and experience were valid starting points for original research. This led them to approach data collection and analysis tools and methods with confidence and curiosity, preparing them to engage with authentic learning (Pitchford et al, 2018) at Level 5 and beyond.

[Click to return to the agenda](#)

Three Rivers Conference 2023 Presentation Abstracts

Title

Enhancing support and recognition for teaching mentors

Author(s)

Sophie Meller, Jaden Allan, Michael Elsdon, Rick Hayman, Sue Mathieson

Department of Social Work, Education and Communities, Northumbria University

Abstract

We present research to understand and improve support and recognition for staff who mentor colleagues to develop their teaching. Mentoring is essential for supporting colleagues with their teaching, however, it is poorly understood and recognised, and as a result is uneven and underdeveloped as a pedagogical approach for enhancing teaching. Mentoring is integrated into Northumbria's AdvanceHE accredited professional recognition programme, through the taught PGCAP for academics new to teaching, and the experiential HEA Fellowship route for experienced HE educators new to Northumbria. Mentoring also takes place informally to support colleagues new to teaching, to facilitate educational enhancement across programmes, as well as supporting educational career development. We are interested in understanding perceptions of mentoring in order to better support and develop policies and practices for staff across Northumbria.

As a group of academics located across disciplines and departments, we used cultural historical activity theory (CHAT) as a methodology to explore mentors' experiences of mentoring, in order to develop proposals to improve support for mentoring. We chose CHAT because of its focus on social practices in particular contexts, and its identification of contradictions as a source for change. This fitted our intention to make proposals to policy and practice to enhance mentoring for teaching. Initially we developed vignettes of our experiences of mentoring across disciplines and departments, through questions guided by CHAT. We developed a questionnaire for colleagues who are mentors across departments, using the CHAT framework. In this session we report on our research and initial analysis of the data.

[Click to return to the agenda](#)

Three Rivers Conference 2023 Presentation Abstracts

Title

Fuzzy Evaluation Mappings in Assessing Pedagogical Quality

Author(s)

Pascal Stiefenhofer

Newcastle University Business School, Economics

Abstract

This paper introduces a conceptual framework for developing pedagogical games of mathematical proof (PGMP) designed to help non-STEM students learn mathematical reasoning in a playful manner and without "fear". Within the constructivist learning paradigm it develops an in-class learning activity where social science students learn the concept of mathematical deduction playfully using toys to construct tables from which formal proofs of propositions are derived without calculations. A PGMP pedagogy quality assurance evaluation method based on fuzzy evaluation mappings capturing learning effectiveness, learning efficiency, and learning satisfaction is introduced. Our results from an in-class experiment show that pedagogical games of mathematical proof help non-STEM students to effectively engage with mathematical reasoning playfully. The results are consistent according to a quality assurance consistency index.

[Click to return to the agenda](#)

Three Rivers Conference 2023 Presentation Abstracts

Title

Here's some we made earlier

Author(s)

Kay Hepplewhite

Department of Arts, Northumbria University

Abstract

At Northumbria University, the second year Applied Theatre Practice module for BA Theatre and Performance students introduces the world of socially engaged, participatory theatre. They learn about the theory, ethics and techniques of applied theatre, an umbrella term that embraces a wide range of community located practice. Part of the activities for the level 5 module 2023 has involved students working alongside graduates in their real-world theatre company project in schools and care homes. This experiential learning offers a web of inter-generational activity embedded within critical analysis of current arts practice. It provides industry links, roles models and networking opportunities to build employability of the next generation of North East region's creative practitioners. Woven Nest Theatre company, a Community Interest Company set up by two Northumbria graduates, led a workshop with students. Students then observed and supported creative sessions in Newcastle's West End as part of the company's inter-generational project which brought together primary school children with care home residents, many living with dementia.

My research (2020) examines how the expertise of a community theatre practitioner is multi-faceted, blending creative, relational, social and facilitation elements. Dialogues with experienced practitioners revealed how skills continue to be built post-graduation through a responsive learning cycle which extends reflectively throughout professional life. My presentation explores the rationale for design of the experiential teaching and learning activities of students in 'dynamic flux' (Kolb 2015: 52) of critical reflection, outlining how ongoing connections with the region's arts community provide positive learning partnerships.

[Click to return to the agenda](#)

Three Rivers Conference 2023 Presentation Abstracts

Title

Zine making as a pedagogical tool for transformative learning in Law

Author(s)

Peter Whitton

Durham Centre for Academic Development (DCAD), Durham University

H R G Jones, Prof Law, Durham University

Joy Twemlow, PhD Student Law, Durham University

Abstract

This paper describes the delivery and evaluation of an innovative project to engage Law students in the collaborative study and production of zines (self-produced and published publications) as part of their module on Law, Gender and Society (LGS), a second-year elective module on the Bachelor of Laws (LLB) degree with 120 enrolled students. The project explored the use of zines as a potential transformative pedagogy by drawing on zine history and ethos to connect students' own experience and perspectives directly with the feminist theory and practice discussed in the LGS module.

Zines are often seen as counter cultural publications and were an integral part of third wave feminism as an alternative to the stereotypical portrayals of women, gender and sexuality in mainstream media and are significant in the dissemination of feminist/queer/Black and Brown thought and community activism. Literature suggests that zines have untapped potential as source material to trigger classroom discussion (Buchanan, 2012), as a creative and collaborative classroom activity (Thomas, 2018), as a method of giving students a greater sense of ownership, and exposure to a broader spectrum of opinion and identities and authenticity of voices and sources (Lonsdale, 2015).

By producing zines collaboratively in the classroom, it was hoped that students would encounter different ideas and assumptions from their peers (Desyllas and Sinclair, 2014) and have a rare opportunity to learn in a way that is outside the individual and adversarial techniques common in the study of Law.

Focus groups and surveys were used to evaluate whether in-class zine making provided sense of connection to peers and the wider school of feminist thought, and a suitable medium to convey the legal ideas they encountered throughout the LGS module.

[Click to return to the agenda](#)

Three Rivers Conference 2023 Presentation Abstracts

Title

Bridging the Transition Gap

Author(s)

Liv Jonassen, Sara Bird, Lauren Aspery

Academic Skills Team, Library, Newcastle University

Abstract

Issues around transition to university have been widely discussed, with the recent pandemic highlighting issues such as students' lack of confidence in engaging in higher education and lack of knowledge around some of the expectations and skills required (Morgan, 2020), but one aspect which has been somewhat under researched is the link between academic skills required by 6th form students and stage 1 undergraduate students (Baker, 2016). The Bridging the Gap project is a collaboration between students, the Academic Skills team and the Education Outreach team at Newcastle University. Our project has so far co- created accessible, engaging, interactive resources based on feedback from both A-level students and UG students with the student voice at the heart of the project. We worked with paid undergraduate interns to not only use the information gathered from focus groups to inform resource development but also to consider how our message was communicated to students. To date several resources have been developed and evaluated in the pilot phase around topics such as time management and evaluation of sources. Further, the success of the pilot phase has informed commitment from the library with additional funding for a two-year project coordinator.

This session will outline what we've learned about working collaboratively with students to provide resources to help develop core academic and research skills to build confidence and support the transition from secondary to HE. We will highlight the project phases, how we were able to work collaboratively and how we were able to ensure that the student input and evaluation were central to the project to provide a good practice framework. Reflection on the pilot phase of the project has also enabled us to develop a plan for the next two years which we'll also be able to share to show the project's evolution.

[Click to return to the agenda](#)

Three Rivers Conference 2023 Presentation Abstracts

Title

Positive action for Promoting the Retention of Female Students (PROFS) in male-dominated disciplines

Author(s)

Helen Hooper, Linda Allin & Vartul Sangal

Department of Applied Sciences, Northumbria University

Abstract

Women remain under-represented in many disciplines, including STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) and Sport fields, which offer students an excellent range of postgraduate educational and career opportunities.

Positive action is urgently needed to ensure fair promotion and support of under-represented students access to such opportunities, and to retain students from under-represented groups, without unlawfully discriminating against anyone.

This presentation will help clarify the concept of positive action, as a clear understanding of this concept is pivotal to developing inclusive practices aimed at removing barriers and reducing disadvantages for students who possess one or more 'protected characteristic or ground' (such as gender, race or age). Where evidence of imbalance exists, equality legislation allows positive action to promote diversity. In contrast, positive discrimination involves treating someone preferentially over others and is unlawful discrimination.

A variety of initiatives designed to promote the retention of female graduates in the persistently male-dominated disciplines of Bioinformatics (BI) and Sport, will be discussed to provide concrete examples of practice.

Key points of learning include the importance of the tone of messaging and approach to promoting/recruiting students to positive action opportunities; informal and practical workshops; technical upskilling; mentorship to build confidence and discussion of career opportunities. Student feedback has been exceptionally positive. We will also discuss the challenges we have experienced, including some 'push back' from students and colleagues.

[Click to return to the agenda](#)

Three Rivers Conference 2023 Presentation Abstracts

Title

Exploring the 'self' in self-directed learning: the role of tutors and technology in scaffolding a successful self-directed learning experience

Author(s)

Davina Thompson & Dr Emily Williams

Archaeology Department, Durham University

Abstract

This presentation will explore how the quality of self-directed learning was maximised by using flexible and digital learning in the context of teaching visual identification and analysis of materials to MA Conservation of Archaeological and Museum Objects students at Durham University. By adapting existing physical resources and samples to a web based platform, trials indicate improvements to knowledge retention, accessibility and engagement.

An educational construct discussed and interpreted in a multitude of ways, 'self-direction' is widely recognised for its ability to promote and achieve deep learning. Self-direction offers an effective solution to the mastery of core knowledge and skills desired and required by students that often finds itself in opposition with the availability of tutors and timetables. By focusing on the effective scaffolding of student expectations and providing a positive and supported self-direction experience, tutors can support their own teaching whilst simultaneously improving the learning of students in the present and building their future learning capabilities.

This presentation will explore how 22 Self-Directed Learning Packages (SDLPs) created and utilised in the teaching of Conservation for over 25 years at Durham University were recently reviewed and adapted. It will demonstrate how changes to the scaffolding of the self-direction process improved student experience, outcomes and retention of visual identification and analysis. It will demonstrate how the use of digital learning through the use of a web-based platform Pebblepad supported and enhanced the self-directed experience and discuss how 3D scans of material samples might be integrated in the future to further strengthen learning objectives.

[Click to return to the agenda](#)

Three Rivers Conference 2023 Presentation Abstracts

Title

Graduate sensibilities: a metamodern pedagogical framework for a wicked world

Author(s)

Sarah Bowman, Dr Carol Stephenson, Dr Darryl Humble

Faculty of Arts, Design and Social Sciences, Northumbria University

Abstract

This presentation introduces a metamodern framework to challenge current UK higher education (HE) pedagogic practices. The last decade has seen an acknowledgement of radical pedagogies that are risk-oriented, creative, and reflective as a key component of learning. In part, this has been a response to modernist banking methods that are seen to be inadequate in what some term the fourth industrial age. We argue such innovative pedagogies are underutilised due to specific barriers found within the UK neoliberal university. This combined with a perceived antagonistic dichotomy between modernist banking methods (bad) and enquiry and risk-oriented postmodernist approaches (good) is also unhelpful as both approaches are necessary.

This presentation will argue that new forms of pedagogy should support graduates in the development of critical self-reflection by embracing risk-awareness, failure as opportunity, messy collaboration, creativity, and agility. These approaches, as part of a reimagined HE sector will support students to respond to so called 'wicked problems' and thrive in a precarious world. Furthermore, we argue a metamodern framework enables higher education institutions (HEIs) to embrace fear of change challenging the marketised, stratified, risk-averse and metrics driven nature of contemporary HE.

Drawing on literature and a small empirical study involving 15 interviews and 2 student focus groups, this presentation outlines a metamodern framework to encourage a disposition among learning strategists that embraces oscillation between banking and radical pedagogic approaches identifying alternative teaching styles and assessment. In turn this enables the development of student sensibilities – growth, humility, and resourcefulness - empowering students to challenge the growing wickedness with which they must do battle.

[Click to return to the agenda](#)

Three Rivers Conference 2023 Presentation Abstracts

Title

The Role of Faith in the Mental Health and Wellbeing of Black Pentecostal Christian Students of East African descent at Universities in the United Kingdom

Author(s)

Ronalds Busulwa

Third Year PhD student and a Mental Health Lecturer at Teesside University

Abstract

The mental health (MH) of university students is of increasing concern and there is a surge in demand for MH support services. The problem appears to be closely connected to increased migration and successful international students' recruitment strategies which have seen more black foreign students including those of East African descent and of Pentecostal faith studying in the UK. Evidence points to common concerns reported by many students such as academic pressures, financial worries, and loneliness all of which can impact their mental health. For foreign students being away from family with no support system, issues with immigration status, racism, adjusting to a new environment, cultural differences, learning a new language, navigating the healthcare system are added problems they must contend with. Needless to point out that this added layer of problems can eventually negatively impact their MH and that those of a religious conviction may turn to faith as a coping strategy. The aim of this research is to explore the role of faith in supporting the MH and wellbeing of black Pentecostal students studying in the UK. A shared understanding of the students' coping strategies and ways in which faith may help or hinder them to maintain mental health will be explored. This paper reports on the emerging findings from the scoping review conducted to understand the scope and nature of available research on the role of faith in the mental health and wellbeing of Black university students in general and from the initial analysis of 20 interviews guided by a hermeneutic-phenomenological approach.

[Click to return to the agenda](#)

Three Rivers Conference 2023 Presentation Abstracts

Title

Can creativity workshops support both wellbeing and achievement gaps?

Author(s)

Lindsey Ferrie, Manahill Baig

School of Biomedical, Nutritional and Sports Science, Newcastle University

Abstract

Creativity in education benefits students' problem-solving, wellbeing, and academic achievement. Additionally, creativity is now a requirement for many degree accreditors. Despite its significance, research on creativity in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) is limited. This study aims to explore the impact of creativity workshops on the wellbeing and academic achievement of biomedical sciences students and provide recommendations for their incorporation into HEIs.

The study included a cross-sectional survey with four sections covering demographics, wellbeing, academic achievement, and creativity. Two semi-structured focus groups were conducted to elaborate on the survey findings. Non-subject specific (NSS) and subject-specific (SS) creativity workshops were designed and conducted to assess the impact of creative outlets on the wellbeing and achievement of biomedical sciences students in a HEI.

The survey results showed a significant relationship between gender and anxiety, with female students reporting higher levels of anxiety. The survey results also revealed lower levels of satisfaction among Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnicities (BAME) students. The focus groups identified three themes: challenges encountered in academia, challenges to effective social interaction, and creativity in science education. NSS and SS creativity workshops positively impacted the wellbeing of female participants but not male students.

This study highlights the importance of incorporating creativity into higher education and the need to address gender and ethnicity disparities in student wellbeing. In this session, we will discuss the findings of this study and explore the practical implications for HEIs in designing and implementing creativity workshops to promote student wellbeing and achievement.

[Click to return to the agenda](#)

Three Rivers Conference 2023 Presentation Abstracts

Title

A Student-Led Approach to Collaborative Intercultural Encounters: Fostering Global Citizenship, Intercultural Sensitivity and belonging via global education experiences at home.

Author(s)

Linda Jose

Education, Communication and Language Sciences, Newcastle University

Abstract

Universities worldwide are increasingly embracing internationalisation, including offering intercultural experiences to all students. However, while many universities proclaim their 'international' status, student cohorts can lack diversity, making it difficult for students to connect with peers from different cultural backgrounds.

We will discuss the case of a school at Newcastle University that is considered highly 'international', yet the diversity of cohorts is imbalanced across different programmes and students do not necessarily find opportunities to experience social connectedness in heterogeneous groups. We collaborated with students to create and deliver a series of twelve extra-curricular collaborative intercultural encounter events across the academic year. They aimed to foster dialogue and social relationships among students from all sections, stages of study and cultural backgrounds. Through student-led encounters, we created an intercultural, multilingual space that facilitated multisensory experiences through project-based activities and teamwork.

Using ethical values-based approaches, we promoted interculturality, global citizenship, reflexivity, inclusion, and social responsibility to develop students' intercultural sensitivity, employability skills, global citizenship, and sense of belonging. We will discuss the content of the events, the recognition offered to students for attending, and the feedback collected through surveys, feedback forms, and focus groups. Our postgraduate students who led the events will also share their experiences.

The project findings highlight how these collaborative intercultural encounters have provided global educational experiences 'at home' on an internationalised campus. It highlights the potential for universities to embrace internationalisation 'at home' while promoting diverse student cohorts and fostering a sense of belonging and connection among all students.

[Click to return to the agenda](#)



Three Rivers Conference 2023 Presentation Abstracts

Title

Active learning using digital resources

Author(s)

Camilla Lauren-Maatta

Department of Biosciences, Durham University

Abstract

This session will look at engagement of first-year undergraduate Biosciences students with digital learning resources, as part of an active learning approach, where traditional lecture-style teaching is mixed with digital learning or other alternative approaches. Students were able to access the resources, consisting of four Macmillan digital textbooks and a range of interactive resources such as quizzes and animations, as they studied the Biosciences core modules. The engagement was surveyed over two years using an anonymous questionnaire to find out how and when students used the resources and how useful they found them.

[Click to return to the agenda](#)

Three Rivers Conference 2023 Presentation Abstracts

Title

ChatGPT and Higher Education: Quo Vadis?

Author(s)

Suman Bhattacharya

Entrepreneurship and Innovation, Northumbria University

Abstract

Recent developments in Artificial Intelligence (AI)-based technologies, such as ChatGPT, have created overwhelming user interest (Chow, 2023). Such technologies that offer pre-trained large language models capable of natural language processing tasks and producing generative (human-like coherent, and original) outputs have also drawn the attention of academics, practitioners, and policymakers, including those in the Higher Education (HE) sector (UNESCO, 2023). It raises several interesting questions and debates within academia about the potential implications – both in terms of opportunities and challenges. Will it be simply keeping up with the emerging technologies, like the universities experienced with virtual/distance education and Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs)? Or will the effects be more complex and disruptive – fundamentally challenging (and eventually changing) how we work within HE regarding teaching, learning, and assessment? (McKenna et al., 2023; Martin, 2019; Sims, 2023). There are also concerns that in the absence of legal and policy frameworks, ChatGPT-like technologies will throw ethical issues, including academic misconduct, plagiarism, and ghost writing (Gill, 2023; Wingard, 2023).

This exploratory paper draws insights from contemporary publications and grey literature and contributes to the ongoing conversation on the impact of such technologies on teaching and learning in HE. It aims to answer the following four questions. 1. What opportunities does ChatGPT offer educators for a step-change in their pedagogy (AI-enabled learning)? 2. Should we rethink how we assess our students for their learning? 3. How should educators address the use/misuse/abuse of AI algorithm-driven content from the perspectives of validity, trustworthiness, equality, and inclusiveness? And, finally, 4. What skills and cultural shifts might be necessary for educators to embrace the change?

[Click to return to the agenda](#)

Three Rivers Conference 2023 Presentation Abstracts

Title

Exploring student perceptions on blended delivery modes in the post-Covid era

Author(s)

Dr Zhijuan Wu

Accounting and Finance Lecturer, Newcastle University Business School

Abstract

In the post-COVID era, a blended delivery mode has been adopted, including in-person and online options. This study investigates students' views of different delivery modes. The results indicate that in-person delivery is still considered the most effective way of teaching, with asynchronous online delivery ranked second, and synchronous online delivery being the least efficient. Students believed that in-person delivery mode allowed them to be more focused and engaged. On the other hand, those opting for asynchronous online mode felt that it helped them better understand the teaching content as they could learn at their own pace and convenience. In addition, the synchronous online mode not only lacked the advantages of the other two methods but also often resulted in wasted time due to teachers' inability to handle technical and internet problems that arose during the online live teaching. This study has implications for instructors to consider the appropriate teaching mode in the post-Covid era.

[Click to return to the agenda](#)

Three Rivers Conference 2023 Presentation Abstracts

Title

Diversifying the Chemistry Curriculum with Students

Author(s)

J. Litka Milian & Alex Harvey -Reid

Chemistry Department, Durham University

Abstract

The underrepresentation of minority groups is a big concern in academia and especially visible in chemical sciences (Agan, et al. 2022). To change that it is important to create an inclusive and equitable environment for students, so they can be inspired and thrive (Dessent, et al. 2022). Seeing role models that we identify with is especially important for young people who are trying to find their way in the world.

We would like to share our experiences of our journey how to diversify and decolonise the Chemistry curriculum. We will present our findings, the things that we already changed or implemented and talk about our future plans for making our Chemistry curriculum more accessible and diverse to all the students. To succeed, we invited our students from different year groups to help us make our Chemistry curriculum more inclusive and start the change that would encourage more people from different backgrounds to join and enjoy the University. Together we designed and run a survey to gather the opinions from students and staff. We implemented changes in the practical modules following students' feedback. At present, we are working on developing a new lecture course for L1 students about history of Chemistry that will open to all the students at Durham University.

This session will be delivered together with our students that are helping us to make a difference for students' communities and create the best experience during their time at the University.

[Click to return to the agenda](#)

Three Rivers Conference 2023 Presentation Abstracts

Title

Collaborative Curriculum Redesign for Sustainable Education: Challenges and Best Practices

Author(s)

Dr Malgorzata Rabenda Derman & Michelle Black

Learning and Teaching Development Service (LTDS), Academic Services,

Newcastle University

Abstract

This presentation will showcase the impact of collaborative approaches to curriculum redesign, conducted in partnership between academic colleagues and professional services colleagues, with input from students and industry.

This holistic curriculum review followed recommendations from an external panel to incorporate additional contemporary curriculum approaches; a greater emphasis on sustainability throughout the programmes, a reduction in modules, and focus on employability skills.

Collaborative Curriculum Design

The TPACK model (Mishra & Koehler, 2006) was employed, with academic colleagues providing content knowledge, curriculum design advisers and content developers providing pedagogical and technological knowledge. In the process of collaborative design, the dialogic and interactive cooperation is necessary to share knowledge and practices between stakeholders. A readiness to change in methods, beliefs and classroom roles is a prerequisite for the implementation of curriculum changes (Xethakis, 2019).

Best practice and challenges

The collaborative process led to the creation of three modules focused on sustainability, shared between students of nine programmes, providing an opportunity for interdisciplinary problem-based learning and reflective practice. The presentation will showcase the challenges (e.g., limited availability of academic colleagues; engaging with students; requirements of the industry partners) and best practices learned from this complex project and highlight the importance of collaborative efforts to create innovative curricula (Gast et al., 2017) and prepare students to tackle modern sustainability challenges. We will discuss the effectiveness of the methods used; the audience will be provided with practical tips on effective collaboration between academics and curriculum/technology advisers. We will also use the audience response system to invite participants to share their experiences.

[Click to return to the agenda](#)

Three Rivers Conference 2023 Presentation Abstracts

Title

Using a sustainability focused, co-created engineering assessment as a vehicle for staff development.

Author(s)

Dr Samantha Gooneratne & Dr Mike Knowles

Department of Engineering, Teesside University

Abstract

Sustainable Engineering is a key enabler in the transition to achieving global net-zero. At postgraduate level, the Engineering Department at Teesside University explores this topic via an innovative module delivered to a large (300+) cohort of engineering students from a range of sub-disciplines. This presentation describes how experiences on this module have led to the creation of a unique staff development opportunity that addresses a range of academic practices.

Within the module, new and early career staff support an experienced core team during a Group Learning Activity where students collaborate on a formative assessment that scaffolds the subsequent creation of an individual summative assessment. During this exercise staff facilitate the completion of the formative assessment and discuss the students' unique and self-selected summative assessment topics, which often relate to sustainability issues in their home regions. This dialogic approach improves student engagement and affords staff with greater context when marking. It also offers staff exposure to classroom management techniques, digital tools and assessment and feedback practices, with additional opportunities for discipline-specific knowledge enhancement and peer observation. In this presentation we will reflect on two years of module delivery and propose a formalised in-module staff development plan that can be adapted to other scenarios.

[Click to return to the agenda](#)

Three Rivers Conference 2023 Workshop Abstracts

Workshop A Abstract

Title

MOOC Adventures: Internationalising Higher Education through Student-Partnerships and Flexible Digital Learning.

Author(s)

Iain Keenan

School of Medicine, Newcastle University

Abstract

Our adventure began in 2016, when commencing an international collaboration with Leonard Shapiro, an artist and drawing teacher based at the University of Cape Town (UCT), South Africa. Leonard leads in-person and online anatomy drawing workshops for healthcare professions students and educators to support development of their spatial skills. Leonard and I have developed, implemented, and published our work on several art-based learning approaches to support critical observation and holistic understanding of three-dimensional and spatial concepts in human anatomy. In late 2017, we approached the Newcastle University (NU) Learning and Teaching Development Service (LTDS) with an idea for a massive open online course (MOOC). We aimed to increase the accessibility and reach of our approaches by bringing spatial skills development to global audiences. Through utilising the valuable expertise and technical knowledge of our in-house technology-enhanced learning team (FMS TEL), we have since designed, developed, and produced our Canvas-based course. Our MOOC was piloted in 2021/22 at NU and UCT, with the full course launched in 2022/23. This workshop will describe our >5-year journey of working with Leonard, undergraduate student-partners, FMS-TEL, institutions, and organisations. The pitfalls and successes of our MOOC adventure will be discussed, with a view to providing safer passage for those who follow. During the workshop, participants will engage in examples of MOOC-based learning activities and will discuss and receive feedback on their own ideas for MOOC development. This workshop will be of value to colleagues aiming to deliver asynchronous learning and professional development courses with international reach.

[Click to return to the agenda](#)



Workshop B Abstract

Title

Mobilising an Entrepreneurship Education Community of Practice for the North-East.

Author(s)

Professor Robert Newbery

Entrepreneurship and Innovation, Northumbria University

Graham Baty & Victoria Mountford-Brown, Northumbria University

Rachel Bickerdike, Durham University

Steven Dougan, Teesside University

Laura Foster, Sunderland University

Lucy Hatt & James Cunningham, Newcastle University

Abstract

'A community of practice is a group of people who perform similar functions and share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly.' Wenger-Trayner (2015).

Following a recent Enterprise Educators UK (EEUK) workshop on developing Enterprise Education (EE) Communities of Practice (CoP), this workshop will initiate an interactive discussion around the EE learning communities that exist in each of the 5 North-East Universities.

The 50-minute workshop will be structured with an initial presentation on the benefits of establishing a CoP. This will then be illustrated by an example from the region. This will contextualise the primary purpose of the workshop which is to identify how to engage, enable and grow an EE CoP that benefits stakeholders across the region.

Discussion will take place across tables that include a mix of academics, professional services, students and alumni from Durham, Newcastle, Northumbria, Sunderland, and Teesside Universities, during which we will aim to share, how we engage our stakeholders; share innovatory practice; and plan how we can collaborate as a regional EE CoP.

[Click to return to the agenda](#)



Workshop C Abstract

Title

Theatre in the Round: Exploring the use of 360 video to support critical interpretation of drama.

Author(s)

Alistair Brown, James Youdale & Mark Childs

Department of English Studies, Durham University

Abstract

This workshop emerges from the Theatre in the Round project at Durham University. We seek to develop a more complete and nuanced understanding of how 360 video, when experienced through virtual reality (VR) technology, might support literature students to understand the impact of stage directions and directorial and actorial decisions in drama.

Students come to plays with a range of prior experiences: some will have been actors in performances or have been able to attend theatre, while others will at most have watched plays on screen. By using VR technology to place students equally as characters 'in' a performance of a scene, this project hopes to enable all students to experience theatre in an immersive performance context.

After an overview of the project, this workshop will invite participants to view (on YouTube) a series of 360 videos of extracts from plays (Hamlet and Top Girls) produced by students at Durham University. Each has been shot from three perspectives: that of a third-person observer, and from the point of view of the characters.

Attendees will discuss whether they observed differences in the scenes in each, and how they use the affordances of virtual reality to inhabit the characters and make choices about performance in relation to a theatrical space and direction of gaze.

The presenters will outline the initial findings from our perspective. We will describe the technical challenges encountered when recording 360, with a view to supporting colleagues who are considering similar approaches and employing them with learners. We will then identify feedback from student focus groups, which has indicated some of the ways in which such video provokes interpretations of plays as performers, as learners and as audiences.

More importantly, we hope to use this workshop to build prospective collaborations with 3 Rivers colleagues working on the use of 360 video, virtual reality, or drama with a view to future projects.

[Click to return to the agenda](#)



Three Rivers Conference 2023 Lightning Talks Abstracts

Theme: Student Retention and Success

Title

This Flipping Assessment: Evaluation of 'Shut up and Write' in a part-time postgraduate programme.

Author(s)

Mark Widdowfield

Healthcare, Sunderland University

Abstract

This presentation will provide an evaluation of 'Shut-up and Write' sessions within a part-time, taught, postgraduate programme to aid in the completion of their assessment for a single module. Part-time learners often feel marginalised or side-lined by the way in which traditional academic study is organised (Butcher, 2015). These traditional delivery strategies are undertaken within a defined spatial and temporal area (Race, 2020). Whilst full-time students studying in this mode have traditionally had time to dedicate to undertaking an assessment, part-time students often have other commitments such as full-time work (Delaney and Brown, 2020) that may hinder their engagement.

Students were prepared for the 'Shut up and Write' sessions using micro-lectures and a pre-session questionnaire. The micro-lectures consisted of an overview of 'Shut up and Write' and an introduction to the Pomodoro Technique, as well as some materials around academic and reflective writing. The 'Shut-up and Write' sessions were then delivered over a 3-hour session and evaluated post-session. The evaluation draws on 4th generation evaluation, whereby the evaluation is seen as a co-production between those evaluating and the evaluators (Darwin, 2012). There are three strands to the evaluation: efficacy, process, and knowledge, the results of which will be presented. The session evaluated positively with students identifying the usefulness of the session from a time element, and from a reflective perspective. These sessions are now built into the programme at the request of the students.

[Click to return to the agenda](#)

Three Rivers Conference 2023 Lightning Talks Abstracts

Theme: Student Retention and Success

Title

One size does not fit all types of students - lessons from a Solicitor Apprenticeship Programme

Author(s)

Dr Victoria Roper

Northumbria Law School

Abstract

Solicitor apprenticeships are a relatively new route into the profession and Northumbria launched its six-year programme in 2017. Solicitor apprentices spend most of their week in the workplace utilising and developing their knowledge and skills, and one day a week "off the job" undertaking academic study. As the first cohort of our students prepare to enter the final year of their studies, this paper will reflect on how university teaching and learning needs to be adapted to best support apprentices who are different in a number of ways to a typical undergraduate full-time student.

[Click to return to the agenda](#)

Three Rivers Conference 2023 Lightning Talks Abstracts

Theme: Student Retention and Success, Flexible & Digital Learning

Title

Student publishing as a learning tool.

Author(s)

Leah Maughan & Rachel Branson

Northumbria University Library, Scholarly Communications Team, Student Library and Academic Services.

Abstract

Students attain numerous benefits from involvement in academic publishing. Improving scholarship through experiential learning, increasing knowledge about the publishing process, and giving the opportunity to share work and ideas with a wide audience. At Northumbria we are exploring ways to provide students with an authentic learning experience through involvement in publishing as authors, reviewers and editors. The library is developing Open Educational Resources on publishing and open research which can be used to improve student's knowledge. We are also exploring the use of the Northumbria Journals system, to provide publishing opportunities for modules at undergraduate and postgraduate level, enabling students to learn through experience of the publishing process.

In this session the library team will outline the ways in which Library supported publishing is being trialled as a digital learning tool at Northumbria University. We will demonstrate emerging flexible learning tools being developed in partnership with academic staff, students and support staff, with which we intend to pilot key initiatives both inside and outside of the curriculum.

The session will also explain how the project creates opportunities to embed essential information literacies and open research practices earlier in the curriculum, for students at all levels.

[Click to return to the agenda](#)



Three Rivers Conference 2023 Lightning Talks Abstracts

Theme: Student engagement through partnership

Title

Student-generated videos to promote active learning in Practical Chemistry Courses.

Author(s)

Dr Cristina Navarro Reguero

School of Natural and Environmental Sciences, Newcastle University.

Abstract

The use of videos in chemistry education has supported different aspects of learning and teaching chemistry over the years. These include the benefit of these resources in preparing students for laboratory work. The value of student-generated videos has been reported less frequently but there is an appropriate pedagogical rationale for their inclusion in the chemistry curriculum.

Students generate relationships between the new pieces of knowledge and what they already know. This requires active construction and enables students to use tangible imagery and narratives to elicit their understandings. The approach helps develop transferable skills including digital literacy and also improves emotional interaction with teaching and learning activities.

We wanted to exploit these benefits and produce authentic learning opportunities for our students. Therefore, we decided to support students to design, make and disseminate effective videos for our chemistry laboratory modules to ensure students can work safe in the lab and learn basic techniques properly while inspiring and engaging with them through this student-centred learning activity. Students were the ones designing and making the videos, under staff supervision, and they helped create pre-lab quizzes. We finally evaluated the impact of these resources which were all very well-received by the student cohort.

The project entailed a multimodal approach which considers communication beyond language. This has been reported to have consequent advantages to improve curriculum accessibility and could benefit students with disabilities, non-native speakers or some others who also experience extra barriers in higher education.

[Click to return to the agenda](#)



Three Rivers Conference 2023 Lightning Talks Abstracts

Theme: Student engagement through partnership

Title

Balancing the technical profile of university students and graduates with educational initiatives and projects

Author(s)

Aleksey Kozikov & Anna Tiuniakova

School of Mathematics, Statistics and Physics, Newcastle University

Abstract

We plan to explore the potential of educational initiatives and projects that can offer ample job opportunities for graduates of British Universities. The focus will be on students mastering STEM subjects. We will consider students' needs and wants to reduce the existing imbalance in higher education, which is currently predominantly oriented towards the development of scientific careers. This orientation is at odds with the actual choice of graduates. Many of them initially plan to build their future careers in the industry or choose this alternative after graduation due to their inability to withstand the enormous competition in academia. This orientation also contradicts the actual needs of universities and other research organisations interested in a small number of the most academically high-potential graduates. Many students and graduates would like to acquire knowledge and skills that can balance the technical profile of their higher education. This will help them to build careers as hired managers in companies or be entrepreneurs. Universities should be attentive to such requests, inform their students timely and sufficiently, and participate in the implementation of specific assistance programs in accordance with their resources and capabilities.

[Click to return to the agenda](#)

Three Rivers Conference 2023 Lightning Talks Abstracts

Theme: Internationalising HE

Title

Working with student ambassadors to amplify black voices in Northumbria University library

Author(s)

Dr Bidy Casselden

Department of Computer and Information Sciences, Northumbria University.

Lorna Hibbert

Collections Librarian, Northumbria University Library

Abstract

As part of an internally funded APP bid (Access and Participation Plan), six black students were recruited from across the University to work as ambassadors in partnership with library staff and academics on a variety of small-scale projects helping to amplify black voices in the library. This project still ongoing, aims to better understand the barriers that exist for black students' use of the library and identify ways to make services more accessible to meet their needs. Students have been working with staff examining reading list diversity and providing their own unique perspective of library collections, understanding black student requirements, enhancing library represented reading collections, and creating innovative materials and podcasts for library users. This lightening talk briefly shares the collaborative approach adopted and considers some of the initial outcomes that have resulted – we will also consider how the student ambassadors and staff have benefitted from this experience in order to share good practice for this type of partnership working between the library, academic departments and black students.

[Click to return to the agenda](#)

Three Rivers Conference 2023 Lightning Talks Abstracts

Theme: Internationalising HE

Title

Internationalising and decolonising the curriculum: an example from criminology

Author(s)

Caroline Burns & Paula Rosa

Department of Social Sciences, Northumbria University

Abstract

The main topic of this talk is the internationalisation and decolonisation of the curriculum. Our approach is influenced by Internationalisation at Home (Beelen and Jones, 2015) and decolonisation of the Criminology curriculum (Stockdale and Sweeney, 2022) as well as post-colonial theorists, as we avoid 'exoticising' the cultural other (Said, 1979) or falling back on national stereotypes (Holliday, 2020). We also draw from key Latin American and African scholars in the Global South on the theme of decolonisation of Criminology and knowledge in general (Zaffaroni, 2021; del Olmo, 1999; Mbembe, 2016). As an example of this attempt to decolonise, we use a seminar developed for Level 5 undergraduate students in the Professional Policing BSc, which aimed to compare policing models in the UK and Brazil through a critical discussion of two extracts, one on policing by consent and another from a paper about research carried out in Rio de Janeiro, and related tasks. The intended learning outcome was for students to develop deeper understanding of how institutions – here, the police force –, are established and have evolved within specific social, cultural and historical contexts, and that students recognise legacy of slavery and empire in shaping institutions and people's perceptions of them. The seminar prompts the students to reflect on geopolitical power relations, and the impact of systemic racism, poverty and violence on societies, and they benefit by enhancing critical skills, enhancing their knowledge beyond Eurocentric perspectives, and employability with the potential to take action to support social and epistemic justice.

[Click to return to the agenda](#)

Three Rivers Conference 2023 Lightning Talks Abstracts

Theme: Place: engagement with our region

Title

Promoting a sense of 'place' in placement-based learning

Author(s)

Dr Susan Bock

Department of Sport and Exercise Sciences, Durham University

Abstract

The Department of Sport and Exercise Sciences hosts a final year placement module, linking students with external professional partners from Durham City and the wider county. The module is pivotal to our students' personal and professional development, increasing their readiness for graduate employment (Okolie, 2022). Data from student placement portfolios highlight the potential for wider experiential learning gains, stemming from interactions with people and communities. Importantly, for many of our students, the placement provides a vital insight into our region, its people, and its geographical space. Students originating from the region report valuing the creation of beneficial networking opportunities and the facilitation of a local workplace experience, with many of them securing future employment opportunities. For these students, there is potentially a 'shared sense of place' with our professional partners, based on their residential locality (Getz & Lev-Ari, 2017). Placement students originating from outside the region gain far-reaching insights and learning about their sense of place. Log entries point to the need to better understand and appreciate the role of the organisation within the community, and the challenges faced by the people who access their provision. For these students, their evolving sense of place impacts the success of the placement. All students gain an enhanced awareness of the combined effect of varied and diverse user groups, political and government influence, social and economic landscape, and urban and rural geography on the local provision of sport and exercise for health. This powerful learning experience cannot be provided in the in-house curriculum.

[Click to return to the agenda](#)

Three Rivers Conference 2023 Lightning Talks Abstracts

Theme: Flexible and digital learning

Title

Virtual Reality for Improving Self-Efficacy of Learners in Design Reviews

Author(s)

Seyed Reza Razavi Alavi

Mechanical and Construction Engineering, Northumbria University.

Abstract

An effective design review is critical to successfully delivering a construction project. Traditionally, design reviews are conducted by reviewing the project by reading multiple drawings. The inherent demands of reading project drawings are especially challenging for entry-level built environment learners who often still need professional experience and may need more skills to understand technical representations fully. Previous research showed how advanced and interactive visualization technologies, such as head-mounted display systems, could support learners and industry professionals in performing design reviews. Previous research has focused on evaluating the impacts of such technology on the learners' design review thinking skills. However, such research has yet to assess its impacts on their self-efficacy in engaging in design review thinking skills. Self-efficacy can be defined as one's perception of their ability to perform a task, such as problem-solving and evaluation. Therefore, to understand how such technologies can support learners in increasing their self-efficacy in performing design reviews, the researchers hosted a pilot study to evaluate immersive virtual reality design reviews' impacts. Based on the results of this pilot study, the implementation of immersive virtual reality has the potential to positively impact first year-built environment learners' self-efficacy in performing design reviews.

[Click to return to the agenda](#)

Three Rivers Conference 2023 Lightning Talks Abstracts

Theme: Flexible and digital learning

Title

Teaching and learning through ongoing research: Bridging the gap with the unknown in linguistics

Author(s)

Gabriel Martinez Vera

Linguistics, Semantics/Pragmatics, Newcastle University.

Abstract

This lightning talks discusses the use of corpora/datasets in an understudied language, Cuzco Quechua, in the classroom. Cuzco Quechua data that were collected in interviews were shared with students. The corpus is in an initial stage, with only transcriptions and free translations being available at the moment. The purpose was to familiarise students with data from a foreign language, so that they develop tools to face challenging datasets that are often encountered while doing linguistics. The challenges come from different sources, such as the lack of knowledge of the target language, and the lack of resources in the target language. This is quite common in linguistics: many languages remain un(der)studied to date and linguists may have very little knowledge about them. In addition to discussing well-known tools with students as to how to face these challenges (e.g., ethical considerations when working with users of understudied languages, grammatical analysis), there were novel aspects in the discussion: the study of semantics and pragmatics in the datasets were brought to the foreground; in addition, the datasets themselves were also rather innovative, since the data documented practices to face the COVID pandemic in Cuzco Quechua, which had not been done up to this point. In doing so, it was brought to the foreground how linguistic knowledge may have an impact making accessible contents that are otherwise unavailable to the language users of this language, thus enriching our students' view as to how linguistics may be implemented in different and creative ways.

[Click to return to the agenda](#)