

HEA Surveys Conference, 13 July 2016 Programme (Subject to Change)



Parallel sessions 1

Enhancing excellence

Chair: Abbi Flint

Paper 1: *The Structure of Student Experience and the Peril of Panels*

Adrian Simpson, Durham University

University student experience league table rankings presuppose that there is a single, dimension along which institutions can be ordered. Many, such as the Times Higher Student Experience Survey, are derived from a simple linear combination of the average of student responses to a sequence of questions. This session uses the Student Experience Survey to highlight problems with the assumption of uni-dimensionality and further uncovers an issue which suggests that the use of a student panel to gather the data, coupled with the lack of regard for structure is likely to have led to a distorted image of the relative quality of the student experience in different institutions.

Paper 2: *From Indicators to Interventions, an Enhancement Journey to Excellence*

Anthony Aylmer and David Forde, Coventry University College

The purpose of the session is to discuss the approach taken to data collection, analysis and enhancement at Coventry University College (CUC), which is precipitated by the somewhat unique curriculum model that operates at the institution.

In doing so, the specific objectives of the presentation include the following:

1. Demonstrate how robust and frequent data analysis can facilitate significant and measurable improvements in academic performance
2. To outline the 'enhancement journey' that is underpinned by analysis of a variety of different data types that complement our specific curriculum model and staff profile.
3. Highlight the importance of a common dashboard in terms of visualising performance holistically and supporting academic engagement in data.

Paper 3: *Enhancement vs Performance Management*

Helen Purchase, University of Glasgow

Gathering data from students about their educational experiences is crucial to enhancement –student feedback enables courses to be improved year-on-year. A metrics-driven survey approach can encourage a perspective of 'performance management' rather than 'course enhancement', especially if student feedback data is centrally stored and analysed.

Taking our lead from the Scottish Quality Enhancement Framework, which values an enhancement-focused approach over a culture of quality assurance and audit, the University of Glasgow's new Course Evaluation Policy is deliberately designed for course enhancement. While it incorporates aspects that allow for students to provide feedback on individual members of staff, the principles of

the policy were formulated with the primary purposes of encouraging staff to reflect on and improve the quality of course provision.

In doing this, we have created a policy that can be used consistently across the University, while still permitting flexibility that respects a wide diversity of academic concerns.

Transforming teaching

Chair: Gosia Turner

Paper 1: *Development of the Instant Teaching Effectiveness Analytics Model (ITEAM)*

James Leinster, Nottingham Trent University

In 'Creating the University of the Future' as outlined in the strategy plan of Nottingham Trent University, which highlights the opportunities for colleagues to engage in development, innovation and recognition of their academic practice, student evaluation of teaching is a foundation on which this vision is built on. Student Evaluation of Teaching (SET) serves three purposes: (a) improving teaching quality, (b) providing input for performance reviews, and (c) providing evidence for institutional accountability (Kember, Leung and Kwan, 2002). The aim of this presentation is to introduce colleagues to the rubric tool which is currently under development in Nottingham Business School which focuses on improving teaching quality. The project being discussed is the development of the Instant Teaching Effectiveness Analytics Model (ITEAM). In the session we will consider the following: how the tool has been developed with the help of students and staff, and some early feedback on its use, and lessons learnt so far.

Paper 2: *How in-class electronic collection of student evaluations is providing lecturers and managers with better information for the development of teaching*

Nuala Byrne, University of Nottingham

The aim of this presentation is to illustrate how a newly introduced in-class electronic system for collection of student evaluation data is providing better information for teachers and managers to help develop teaching practice.

In this session I will

- Explain how this system works
- Discuss the rationale for introducing a new system
- Present data on number of surveys carried out and response rates
- Illustrate the enhanced data available to individual teachers and the institution
- Discuss the issues faced in introducing the new system
- Outline plans for future development

Paper 3: *Maximising the teaching and learning opportunities for higher education students at risk – a learning analytics case study within the sciences*

Simon Bedford, University of Wollongong

Analytics is not a new area of endeavour with many industries and other professions being well ahead of the education sector in the uptake of advanced analytics methods and tools (Abdous, He, & Yen, 2012; Dziuban, Moskal, Cavanagh, & Watts, 2012). Wagner and Ice (2012) describe higher education as being on the early side of the analytics adoption curve when compared to retail, telecommunications, financial services and manufacturing. Analytics is often used in higher education institutions to identify and also predict individual students who may be 'at risk' (Fritz, 2011). The

+44 (0)1904 717500 enquiries@heacademy.ac.uk
Innovation Way, York Science Park, Heslington, York, YO10 5BR
Twitter: @HEAcademy www.heacademy.ac.uk

primary aim of this research study was the deployment of information technologies that provide learning analytic data on students enrolled in large science first year subjects. These data have shown valuable learning progression and experience information to academics, part-time teaching staff and professional staff on students' engagement, motivation and progression in real time so that suitable interventions can be made on students at risk of failing subjects. The success or otherwise of meeting these objectives will be the focus of this presentation.

Measuring the student experience

Chair: Joan O'Mahony

Paper 1: *Using micro-measurements to track student experience*

Matthew Watson and Helen Driscoll, University of Sunderland

In this session we will introduce a novel way of measuring student experience using micro-measurements. Micro-measurements provide a systematic understanding of how day-to-day events affect the student experience and how it changes across the course of the academic year. The results showed that student satisfaction and stress are closely and reliably related across stages of a programme and time of year. They also showed that satisfaction improves when events that mark progress through the programme occur. This knowledge enabled responsiveness to student needs and enabled interventions to address issues as they arose. Micro-measurements provide a valuable formal and systematic addition to the current use of end of module and programme evaluations that enable us to understand student experience in a more nuanced manner.

Paper 2: *Harnessing student engagement with UKES data: findings from the institutional project*

Elena Zaitseva and Ben Stacey, Liverpool John Moores University

The presentation will explore findings from the HEA's Strategic Excellence Initiative project undertaken at Liverpool John Moores University. The project aims at better understanding of student engagement data collected by the UK Engagement Survey (UKES) and how it could be used in curriculum development and enhancement. The relationship between engagement data and other indicators of student success – such as retention, performance and satisfaction, will be presented. Findings from in-depth discussions with staff and students from three subject areas will also be shared - indicating that engagement data are inherently more complex than satisfaction data, and disciplinary differences as well as level of study directly influence student learning approaches and how they respond to the UKES questions. Implication of the findings for a wider institutional adoption of the survey and incorporation of its metrics into the quality assurance and enhancement processes will be discussed.

Workshop 1: *Chalk and Cheese: Can the NSS and UKES be used together to enhance the student experience?*

Nathaniel Pickering and Alan Donnelly, Sheffield Hallam University

This session will explore the relationship between the UK Engagement Survey (UKES) and the National Student Survey (NSS) and demonstrate how the UKES can be used to improve student satisfaction. Analysis of undergraduates' responses to the UKES and NSS at a Post-92 Institution has shown that there is a significant relationship between levels of engagement and student satisfaction. During this interactive session we aim to show how university staff can maximise this relationship between the two surveys by using UKES not only as a way to measure student engagement but also

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as a reflective tool for staff about their teaching practices. This could help staff to identify key areas for development for both themselves and students; the focus on student engagement moves away from the proxy measures of the NSS while still increasing student satisfaction which is crucial to many institutions.

Student outcomes

Chair: Jason Leman

Paper 1: *Detecting Uncertainty, Predicting Outcome*

Lalage Sander, Cardiff Metropolitan University

This paper describes two studies designed to assess the efficacy of two psychometric tests administered at the beginning of the academic year to predict end of year outcome. Given the critical role of retention across the sector, there are clear advantages in identifying those students who may later struggle to pass the year at the first attempt. If such students can be identified before they begin to disengage from their programmes then resources could be targeted to retrieve the situation at an early stage. Of the two measures reported here, Academic Behavioural Confidence Scale and the Performance Expectation Ladder appeared to distinguish between those who would pass the year at the first attempt from those who would not. In one study, there was also evidence of the way in which these measures can be used to measure disengagement over time.

Workshop 1: *Potential.ly a Graduate – a survey for student self-awareness and action*

Luke Millard, Birmingham City University and Norbert Morawetz, Potential.ly

The Graduate+ programme is a new high profile initiative at Birmingham City University to engage students in taking responsibility for the development of their employability skills. A key element of the programme that addresses students across diverse disciplines is the highly engaging 'potential.ly' questionnaire which assesses students' personal preferences across 23 traits. The results of the questionnaire drive a range of practical interventions and student outcomes, and are also used to help those students become more self-aware and successful.

This interactive session will outline the initial challenge, development of the solution, and how experiences and the need to bring diverse stakeholders together shapes future development of the system. It will show how questionnaire insights can be used to measure students' self-awareness of their attributes and motivation. This has the opportunity of informing the provision of learning resources on university-wide level to meet the identified needs. In addition to institutional learning, the presenters will also share best practice and lessons learned of user experience design for online questionnaires.

Paper 2: *They liked it, but did they learn anything? Challenges of measuring student outcomes associated with innovations in anatomy teaching*

Ian Johnson, University of Adelaide

New approaches to teaching are usually reported as having been well-received by students. However, the extent to which they promote student learning outcomes is often unclear, despite the latter often being the driver of the former. This session will review the author's experience of four changes to the delivery of anatomy teaching at undergraduate level that were well-received by students, but generally made no significant difference to learning outcomes. These findings will be used to highlight the challenges of designing studies to measure changes in learning outcomes

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associated with teaching innovations. *Acknowledgement:* Adelaide Education Academy Learning and Teaching Advancement Grant

Parallel sessions 2

Enhancing excellence

Chair: Abbi Flint

Paper 1: *Working in Partnership (WiP): Using students as change processors and active participants in course development decision making on a primary initial teacher education programme*

Rachel Barrell, University of Worcester and Colin Howard

Students have a prominent voice in the governance of the Primary Teaching Training course at the University of Worcester through an initiative that has changed the climate of student involvement and raised satisfaction ratings to a record level. This presentation will challenge thinking around student engagement through a management and leadership model based on critical reflection of survey data across core areas. Collaborative discussions will be explored and participants will have the opportunity to reflect on the outcomes of the session, linked to their own Institutions. Participants will be encouraged to take away specific actions that they could discuss with their students on their courses.

Paper 2: *Students as partners in the process of evaluating modules at a top-performing UK University*

Amanda Reece, Christine Broughan & Lindsay Dickson, Coventry University

The session will explore the benefits to the University and students of partnering with current students to gather and report on module evaluations. We will explain the process used at Coventry University to employ students as part of the module evaluation process, and explore the benefits to both the University and the student in doing this. These will include employability skills as well as sector-specific learning, fitted around a student's studies. We will also discuss process issues found (such as with HR and retention of student expertise) and how they have been overcome.

Transforming teaching

Chair: Gosia Turner

Paper 1: *Design and delivery of a new strategy to augment the teaching and learning experience of Postgraduate Researchers at Cardiff University's School of Medicine*

Anwen Williams, Cardiff University

With limited budgets and the need for cost-effective solutions, Higher Education Institutions must ensure that the resources invested in training are targeted at areas where a positive return on the investment is apparent. The Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) 2013 and two internal PGRs surveys (2012 and 2014) were used to audit Postgraduate researcher teaching/training activity across the School of Medicine. They highlighted areas of strengths (supervision, research environment) and weaknesses (protracted timeframe for resolution of student/supervisor issues, poor quality of written work, prolonged writing-up period, expectation for repeated extensions). Our aim was to use the survey results to inform discussions and decisions about improvements to teaching and training provision for PGRs. Here we describe the multifaceted approach developed and implemented by the PGR team and quantify the impact of strategy upon the learning environment for PGR students by revisiting student satisfaction scores for the School in PRES 2015.

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Paper 2: *Doctoral Researchers' Well-being: Integrating Support, Improving the Student Experience*
Caroline Hargreaves, Imperial College

Well-being is a key indicator of social progress and is used internationally for policy formation and economic development. This presentation discusses the use of a well-being survey at a research intensive university to explore doctoral researchers' experience, in order to inform practice and enhance well-being. We highlight some of the findings and recommendations from our study.

The survey was first carried out in 2009 and was repeated to evaluate changes. Well-being overall at the institution is satisfactory, however, the impact of the top 10 most important and bothersome questions has become greater and differences were found according to stage of the doctorate and gender.

We propose that our findings add depth to information gained from national surveys such as PRES and recommend incorporation of some of the well-being questions to national surveys. Doctoral researchers are strategic players in the knowledge and innovation led economy and their well-being deserves greater attention.

Measuring the student experience

Chair: Sam Burgum

Paper 1: *What Makes for Excellent Teaching? Investigating the role of students' and academics' expectations*

Doug Ingram & Peter Watts, University of Nottingham

A key tool for transforming teaching is student feedback. However, the standard surveys often provide extensive amounts of quantitative data where the direct link to what is needed to improve teaching is not always clear. These surveys may also foster an 'outside in' consumer model where we prioritise providing exactly what our students want from us, or at least what we perceive they want from us. In this session we will discuss our ongoing research which seeks to gain a clearer perspective on what both students and academics think makes for excellent teaching. This research involves asking: 1) what students think excellent teaching involves; 2) what students think academics think excellent teaching involves; 3) what academics think excellent teaching involves; and 4) what academics think students think excellent teaching involves.

Paper 2: *Bias in Student Evaluations of Teaching: What's the evidence?*

Tanya Osborne, University of Loughborough and Lancaster University

There have been many stories in the press recently about studies that show that student feedback is biased against female lecturers. Does the wider evidence base agree? Are there other groups who experience bias in student feedback? What can we do to minimize the impact of bias when we interpret students' feedback? This session looks at recent evidence in studies of student feedback, and makes some practical recommendations about how to ensure that the systems are fair.

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Student outcomes

Chair: Jason Leman

Paper 1: *Maximising Motivation: Enhancing student engagement through survey data*

Louise Douse, University of Bedfordshire

This paper aims to share how data from a combination of motivation based surveys can be used to provide a better understanding of the difficulties which Level 4 students in Performing Arts face with regard to engagement with and completion of “theory” related assessments. This will enable staff to develop a clear understanding of the transition needs of Level 4 students from a diverse range of FE learning backgrounds.

The project aims are to assess student levels of motivation and engagement. By assessing the students’ motivations for coming to university the survey informs the design of an online learning environment which aims to enable students to develop their skills in a variety of ways. In particular, it aims to help students understand the ways in which short terms goals (i.e. assessment) link to long term motivations (career) so they better understand how theory underpins their entire learning journey.

Workshop 1: *Exploring the relationship between pharmacy student’s learning beliefs and engagement in teaching and learning – how we can we support this?*

Sarah Willis and Harsha Parmar, The University of Manchester

The aim of this session is to understand how evaluation of learning styles and student engagement surveys can be used to explore learning beliefs that may underpin student engagement; and consider student support mechanisms to increase engagement in teaching, learning and assessment activities.

Objectives include:

- Identify focal areas within your course that require further evaluation in relation to engagement in teaching, learning and assessment
- Identify and critique potential activities that could be used to increase engagement in teaching, learning and assessment activities
- Discuss methods for measuring the impact of a bridging intervention that you may choose to use to address student engagement in teaching, learning and assessment within your course

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Parallel session 3

Enhancing excellence

Chair: Abbi Flint

Paper: *Student Engagement with surveys: a strategic approach*

Jo Caulfield and Tracey Lloyd, Bangor University

In recent years, Bangor University has developed a strategic approach to student engagement, grounded in clear partnership values. As such we have created a transparent culture of staff and student partnership working. This extends to our surveys work, where we don't simply gather information on our students' opinions, we actively involve them in decision-making arising from this data. This session will uncover our strategic approach to student engagement in surveys, and present a specific example from one of our academic disciplines: how using a pre-entry survey can help to engage students right at the beginning of their academic journey, in fact before they arrive at the university. We also present information on how this survey is used as an induction task in Welcome Week.

Transforming teaching

Chair: Sam Burgum

Workshop: *The Teaching Excellence Framework: control and freedom in 21st century HE*

Christine Broughan, Caroline Wilson, Sandeep Gakhal and Suzy Kerr Petic, Coventry University

The UK government's proposal to implement a 'teaching excellence framework' (TEF) has re-ignited the debate regarding the purpose and scope of university teaching. This workshop will explore the notion of teaching excellence from a variety of voices whose views will shape how teaching is measured and valued in Higher Education. The workshop is timely as those in the sector seek to understand the ontological and epistemological notions underpinning its teaching.

Excellence, as we shall see, means many things to different people. This workshop offers a unique contribution by placing these subject positions side by side and guiding the participants to understand the complex terrain from which the TEF is foregrounded. Thornton (2014) confirms the need for alignment of strategic aims of universities and teacher practice in order for any real differences to be observed and, as such, the workshop explores issues at the macro, meso and micro level.

Measuring the student experience

Chair: Joan O'Mahony

Paper: *How do you make sense of 40,000+ free text comments?*

Rod Cullen, Manchester Metropolitan University

Manchester Metropolitan University has run an Internal Student Survey bi-annually since 2011. It normally results in 9-10,000 students sharing 40,000+ comments in response to two open free text questions: "The best thing about my course/unit is:" and "Things I would most like improved on my course/unit are:".

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Such large data sets can be overwhelming. In this presentation, we share two examples where we have used keyword filtering to extract and subsequently thematically analysed subsets of comments to make sense of specific aspects of students' experience across the institution.

Example 1 examines 4000+ comments in 2011, and again in 2014, relating to student experience of assessment and feedback.

Example 2 examines 2000+ comments in 2014, and again in 2015, relating to student experiences of technology-enhanced learning (TEL).

In both cases, we explore emergent themes and use of our findings to inform on-going enhancement and related staff development activities at institutional level.

Student outcomes

Chair: Jonathan Neves

Paper: *An institutional approach to identifying current student's 'Career Readiness'*
Joanne Ives, Liverpool John Moores University.

This session aims to share the background and LJMU case study of the introduction in 2014 of a university wide annual 'Career Readiness' survey.

It will also discuss and illustrate how the survey data has already been used institutionally and at academic programme level to provide insight into current student career decision making and is helping to monitor and evaluate student employability support and identify future developments and curriculum enhancement interventions.

The session will discuss the institutional approach taken to establish the survey and challenges faced as well as the lessons learnt so far and also look at some of the data sets.

Following the introduction of the survey LJMU was invited to join the 3 year HEFCE Learning Gain project on Careers Registration.