SEDA Autumn Conference 2024

Session Title: Learning Design Assistants: Impact on Curriculum, Employability, and Inclusion

Session Type: Practice Papers (20 minutes)

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Session Summary: This session will share the practices and evaluate the impact of an initiative to embed student voice within curriculum design processes. It will explain how a new paid professional post, the 'Learning Design Assistant', has been developed to give students a mechanism for directly influencing programme development. Presenters will share evidence of the positive impact this has had on our curricula and the graduate outcomes of the student Learning Design Assistants.

Session Outline: As part of a broader institutional strategy to integrate student voice (Blau and Shamir-Inbal, 2018) into curriculum development and enhance graduate outcomes, an initiative was developed, piloted, and evaluated to embed student stakeholders in the formal learning design process.

This session will explore the practices and impact of this initiative, highlighting the creation of the 'Learning Design Assistant' role, which offers students a paid, professional opportunity to participate in curriculum design. It will expand on the concept of co-creation (Ryan and Tilbury, 2013), which advocates for increased learner participation, and investigate how learning design assistants played the roles of 'consultant' by presenting valuable ideas on learning and teaching and' representative' by contributing their student voice to choices in the university's formal learning design context. (Bovill et al. 2016).

The learning design assistants will present examples of their activities and demonstrate the tangible positive contributions to the teaching and learning materials. Additionally, the positive effects of this initiative on curriculum design and the employability and graduate outcomes achieved by the Learning Design Assistants will be discussed.

We will address the matter of inclusion and accessibility in contemporary higher education. We will specifically address how incorporating student voices before module delivery allows

institutions and academics to identify and amend potentially exclusionary aspects of their curricula preemptively, creating content that centres on the diverse needs of all students. Through these insights, we will present a compelling case for involving students in curriculum development and learning design processes. We will highlight the broad positive impact on the students involved, their peers, and the academic professionals they collaborate with.

References: Blau, I., & Shamir-Inbal, T. (2018). Digital technologies for promoting "student voice" and co-creating learning experience in an academic course. Instructional Science, 46, 315-336. https://doi.org/10.1007/S11251-017-9436-Y.

Bovill, C., Cook-Sather, A., Felten, P., Millard, L., & Moore-Cherry, N. (2016). Addressing potential challenges in co-creating learning and teaching: overcoming resistance, navigating institutional norms and ensuring inclusivity in student-staff partnerships. Higher Education, 71(2), 195–208.

Ryan, A., & Tilbury, D. (2013). Flexible pedagogies: new pedagogical ideas. York: Higher Education Academy.