

**Title:**                   **Strong voices: Students engaging in L&T development to research home-international student interactions**

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### **Session Learning Outcomes**

By the end of this session, delegates will be able to:

The session will explore the benefits of working with students on research projects and present a model for engaging students in learning and teaching development. In addition, it will provide preliminary findings of a student-led research project at the University of Sheffield to improve integration and interaction between international and home students. It will feature practical tips from the research project that those attending can take away, as well as highlight the benefits of involving students in learning and teaching.

### **Session Outline**

Key issues to be addressed are:

The University of Sheffield has put significant energy into benefiting from its international campus community through institution-wide initiatives and through direct work with academic departments and faculties in areas such as internationalisation of the curriculum. Despite its diverse student body, student satisfaction with interaction between home and international students remains a challenge – a problem not unique to Sheffield.

Student engagement in the learning and teaching environment comes in many forms including course representatives or union councillors. The University of Sheffield was one of the first universities to create a network of Student Ambassadors for Learning and Teaching (SALTs). In an effort to gain a student perspective, the University developed a research project in partnership with SALTs to look at interaction between home and international students in the learning and teaching environment. Students were inspired by approaches advocated in the Australian Learning and Teaching Council's 'Finding Common Ground' (Arkoudis et al, 2010) as well as 'Connections – developing a Global Outlook' (Killick, 2012), which move efforts in internationalisation of learning and teaching into more pedagogically and educationally-valid areas rather than add-on approaches.

The SALTs' project responded to a lack of information on classroom practices in the wider context of a University project looking at the internationalisation of learning and teaching environment. This paper will look at the project and its potential.

This interactive session will highlight preliminary findings of the project, offering recommendations for change from the student point of view. It will further explore the value of student engagement in learning and teaching developments.

Participants will benefit from an exploration of the advantages of involving students in learning and teaching as well as learning from the practical tips from the research project that those attending can take away.

Key issues to be addressed are:

- How to effectively engage students in Learning and Teaching development
  - Benefits of student involvement
  - Student views of interaction in the classroom environment
  - Top tips for increased interaction
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- How will colleagues benefit from this?

Through discussion, participants will benefit by learning more about the advantages of engaging students in learning and teaching developments, the implications of the results of the research both at the institutional level, as well as implications for their own practice. They will learn from a sharing of approaches. Participants will also benefit from learning about preliminary recommendations for improving integration and interaction, including practical tips that those attending can take away.

### **Session Activities and Approximate Timings**

Introduction - 5 minutes

Overview of Student Ambassadors for Learning and Teaching and its development- 5 minutes

Presentation of research project: aims, outcomes, challenges – 15 minutes

Discussion: 20 minutes

Participants will be divided into groups for 10 minutes to answer questions outlined below. They will report back to group.

Key questions:

How have you involved students in your learning and teaching processes?

What are the key components of success in engaging students in L&T development?

Reflecting on the project discussed, how might we move forward to make improvements?

### **References**

ARKOUDIS, S. ET AL. (2010). *Finding common ground: enhancing interaction between domestic and international students*. New South Wales, Australia: Australian Learning and Teaching Council

KILLICK, D. (2012). *Connections – developing a global outlook: bringing together diverse students through the learning experience*. [Online]. Available from: [http://repository.intralibrary.leedsmet.ac.uk/IntraLibrary?command=open-preview&learning\\_object\\_key=i5768n417906t](http://repository.intralibrary.leedsmet.ac.uk/IntraLibrary?command=open-preview&learning_object_key=i5768n417906t)

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