

**Title:** HE/school curriculum partnerships for transition

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### **Abstract:**

#### **Session Learning Outcomes**

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

- Discuss the benefits of action research as a curriculum development tool,
- Better understand how Student Voice activities can be used to engage pupils in the curriculum,
- Reflect on the benefits to HE/school intuitions in working together on curriculum design

#### **Session Outline**

Key issues to be addressed are:

In 2004 HEFCE identified Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects as strategically important and vulnerable as a result of this the HE sector has worked to engage with schools, enhance curricula, support graduates and develop the workforce (HESTEM). Bradford University is keen to adopt an institutional wide approach to promoting STEM with its Building STEM at Bradford Project, which is developing a new centre for schools and is engaged in curriculum development activities to enhance the attainment and aspirations of school pupils.

The aim is to discuss how action research can be used for curriculum development as it supplies a clear method of evaluation. An approach which the LSIS STEM Programme, the IOP and NCETM amongst others have adopted (LSIS, Daly & NCETM).

There are strong parallels between the structure of action research projects and the process required to hear the Student voice (Campbell). The use of the student voice has benefits beyond the collection of information to help better inform curriculum development, reasons for taking part in student voice activities include the development of teaching staff, increasing engagement, improved pupil understanding of teachers and improved relationships between those involved (Millus). Bland supplies a model for how action Participatory research can be used to help engage the student voice and uncover the issues involved (Bland). A similar approach has been successfully adopted in other institutional wide project at the University of Bradford with the benefit of increasing the validity of data collected as Students involved in a peer lead discussion where more likely to express their views freely when actively involved as researchers (Comerford-Boyes).

This paper will discuss the issues and benefits to both schools and Higher Education institutions in taking part in such activities and how they can aid transition.

## Session Activities and Approximate Timings

Introduction to work at Bradford University and the use of Action research and student voice activities this will cover work undertaken in the current STEM projects and the framework used.

This will be followed by a discussion activity using examples from the project showing how the framework can be used to integrate evaluation can be integrated into curriculum development by using student voice and action research methods.

The session will conclude by looking at some case studies of current action research projects happening as part of the Building STEM at Bradford project and the benefits discussed.

Come to this session if you want to know

- What are the advantages to HE institutions in understanding the curriculum in schools
- Why help to develop the curriculum in schools
- How to find out what students think of HE before they get here.

## References

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