

Title: **Student Engagement in Curriculum Design**

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Abstract:

Session Learning Outcomes

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

- Identify levels of student engagement in curriculum design
- Understand the implications of a variety of approaches to student engagement for the students and staff involved
- Identify barriers to student involvement and develop approaches to overcoming barriers within their own institutions

Session Outline

Key issues to be addressed are:

In 2008 the NUS Student Experience report found that only 23% of students felt involved in shaping the content, curriculum or design of their course whilst 57% said that they wanted such involvement (NUS, 2008). This workshop will explore approaches for increasing student involvement in the design and re-design of their courses.

The session will be led by the Student Learning and Teaching Network (SLTN) committee members who have experienced active involvement in curriculum design in a variety of different ways. The Student Learning and Teaching Network is an informal community of students who are actively engaged in learning and teaching projects across the UK. It is coordinated by a committee of volunteers from across the UK who have been working together since March 2006 to offer a variety of activities, events and online communities for students and interested staff.

As a network we have sought to challenge perceptions of students as passive consumers by promoting and empowering students as valid and active members of learning communities. Our members include course reps, peer and staff mentors, students engaged in curriculum design, student interns, student researchers, students involved in designing learning spaces and student union officers all of whom are taking an active role in shaping their education. This session will place at its centre the role of the student in curriculum design and will

provide the space and tools to facilitate discussion around different types and levels of involvement and the implications for students engaged in different ways.

Drawing together the work and experiences of SLTN members this workshop will support participants to consider approaches to student engagement by offering the opportunity for participants to hear from students who are actively involved, engage in some discussion around barriers to engagement and establish some practical approaches to enabling meaningful engagement between students and staff.

Session Activities and Approximate Timings

0 - 20 Using a jigsaw puzzle activity participants will consider a theoretical model of student engagement (Rudd, et al. 2006, p14) in order to identify different levels of engagement from tokenism to empowerment and the implications for the students involved.

20 - 45 Students will provide brief examples of their own engagement at different levels of the model.

45 – 75 Participants will take part in a snakes and ladders activity in small groups (4-5 people) in order to identify potential barriers to student participation (the snakes). Then, drawing on the experiences of the staff and students present approaches to overcoming these barriers in practice will be developed (the ladders).

75 – 90 Participants will feedback their 'snakes' and 'ladders' and some key learning points will be identified

Following the session the 'snakes' and 'ladders' identified will be collated and sent on to session participants.

References

National Union of Students (2008) NUS Student Experience Report 2008 [online].
<http://www.nus.org.uk/PageFiles/4017/NUS%20Student%20Experience%Report.doc> 2008
London NUS [Accessed 8 December 2008]

Rudd, T., Colligan, F. and Naik, R. (2006) "Learner Voice: a handbook from Futurelab". Bristol, Futurelab.