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**Edited by Ming Nie**

**Institute of Learning and Teaching in HE**

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**Students as Partners in Learning and Teaching in the University of Northampton**

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**About this publication**

Since the start of the University of Northampton’s Learning and Teaching Enhancement and Innovation Fund in 2013, a total of 67 projects have been funded. Approximately 144 students have been directly involved in bidding, running and evaluating these projects. The funded projects generated various forms of innovation in learning, teaching and assessment. One form of innovation this publication focuses on is students as partners in learning and teaching.

Bryson (2014) emphasised that the future of student engagement lies in partnership. Healey, Flint and Harrington (2014, p.25) proposed a conceptual model (See Figure 1) for exploring the different ways in which students can be partners in learning and teaching. They argued that the principles and approaches associated with students as partners are pertinent to many aspects of enhancement and innovation in curriculum and pedagogy.



Figure 1: Students as partners in learning and teaching in higher education – an overview model

This publication presents 14 examples of students as partners, developed by academics taking part in the funded projects at the University of Northampton.

Four themes emerged:

* Theme 1: Students as content creators
* Theme 2: Students as facilitators of teaching sessions
* Theme 3: Students as support providers
* Theme 4: Students’ involvement in assessment design and peer review

The 14 examples fit nicely with two areas of Healey et al.’s model (2014), namely student involvement in learning, teaching and assessment, and student engagement in curriculum design and pedagogic consultancy.

The funded projects also identified types of students as partners which fit with the other two areas of the model (Healey et al, 2014), namely student working in subject-based research and inquiry, and student participating in scholarship of teaching and learning. However, these types of students as partners will not be the focus of this publication.

We invite you to explore the examples within this publication. The approaches and lessons learned from the authors are not theirs alone. We are confident that you will recognise within these examples best practice which can be transferable to your context of work. The online version of this publication is available on the ILT website at <https://www.northampton.ac.uk/ilt/research-and-funding/publications/>.



**References**

Bryson, C. (2014). *Understanding and developing student engagement*. London: Routledge.

Healey, M., Flint, A. and Harrington, K. (2014). *Engagement through partnership: students as partners in learning and teaching in higher education*. Higher Education Academy (HEA).

**Theme 1: Students as content creators and Sam Thomas, Learning D** Students as co-producers of teaching content is becoming more prevalent in the HE sector. In the 2018-19 academic year, the Learning Development team at the University of Northampton conducted a project involving 26 first-year media students to produce a series of academic skills videos. This project sought to explore practical ways of working with students to provide multimedia resources that are responsive to students’ needs.

### **Example 1: Students co-produce academic skills videos**

**Karin Johnstone and Sam Thomas, Learning Development Tutors, LLS, and Nathan Dodzo, Senior Lecturer in Journalism and Media, FAST, University of Northampton**

The 26 media students were divided into smaller groups. Each group produced a video based on a study skill determined by the group. The production of the video was supported through a series of workshops in which two Learning Development tutors acted as the professional ‘clients’ for the students. The student producers also learned skills for how to produce an effective academic video through the use of storyboarding and the production of a prototype video, guided by the two Learning Development tutors and the subject tutor.

The project generated four completed student co-produced videos which are available on the University’s Skills Hub (<https://skillshub.northampton.ac.uk/>) for other students and staff to use. The project developed a core set of principles and guidance for developing video content and other online resources in line with student recommendations and preferences which can be used by any subject area.

Feedback from the student producers highlighted that both their subject knowledge (i.e. academic skills) and technical skills (i.e. video production skills) have improved. In this sense, students’ digital literacy and employability skills have been enhanced as a result of the empowerment and active engagement in learning.

Learning development colleagues across other institutions have shown a great deal of interest in the project and have expressed a desire to develop their own student-led collaborations. The authors are currently monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the videos on student learning and will use the result from this evaluation to inform future practice.

Pre-sessional English and Study Skills courses at the University of Northampton are designed to prepare international students for studying at a UK University. Engagement of international students with these pre-sessional courses has been a challenge. A project was set up in the 2017-18 academic year to explore the involvement of alumni as co-creators of curriculum to improve the engagement of pre-sessional students. Narratives from international alumni who recently graduated from the University of Northampton were video-recorded to collect accounts of their current employment, their use of English and examples of critical incidents they encountered whist studying in the UK and at work.

### **Example 2: Alumni create video resources for pre-sessional courses**

#### **Qian Zhang, Senior Lecturer in Educational Linguistics, FHES, University of Northampton**

In 2017-18, six alumni produced a number of video clips covering five themes: working skills, working styles, communication, difficulties they face and advice they provide to current students. These video resources were used to develop a new pre-sessional course which consisted of 5 sessions, each session focused on one theme. The new course was delivered to 20 pre-sessional students between February and March 2018. The video clips were used to develop group activities in classrooms and individual tasks which students need to complete online, to consolidate learning after the teaching session.

Students in the 2017-18 cohort responded positively to the learning gained from the experiences of the alumni. Engagement with the course greatly improved as students enjoyed listening to alumni’s stories, which helped them establish the link to their own experiences. The alumni were very keen to share their experiences. In this sense, the project demonstrated an example of how to enhance the alumni-staff-student relationship.

### **Example 3: Students produce work-based learning resources**

#### **Julie Jones, Subject Leader in Education, Children and Young People, FHES, University of Northampton**

A key challenge the University of Northampton faces is retention and progression within undergraduate courses. Some programmes have NSS comments which indicate limitations in students engaging with each other. Additionally, there is the need for the University to produce well-rounded graduates who have the necessary employability skills that employers look for.

The Foundation Degree in Learning & Teaching (FDLT) course at the University of Northampton has a retention rate of 98.1%, a completion rate of 100% and 100% progression into employment and/or further study, which is higher than the University average (according to 2015-16 BIMI data). The students' work-based experiences are a key element of the FDLT course. To better support and further embed students’ exploration of work-based experiences within the FDLT programme, a project was set up in the 2017-18 academic year to enable FDLT students to share discussions of their work-based practice and experiences of study on the FDLT, and to consider the value of these discussions. The project explored how this sharing occurs both within the University's systems and within student self-supported systems.

The project resulted in a range of video and audio clips of work-based practice of the FDLT students. These video and audio clips were created with both individual students and groups of students in conversation, where they reflected on their engagement with social media and how it has supported their engagement with the course and community of study. These resources have been embedded into the FDLT programme, to encourage student discussion about social learning and the value of communities of study.

The project resulted in students’ better understanding of work-based learning and employability skills. It has provided us with insight into how students develop self-supportive communities of study and use them to make sense of their learning and their work-based experiences. Outcomes of the project have transferability across the University to other subjects and faculties, informing us of factors enabling students to successfully share work-based experiences and contribute to an in-depth understanding of social learning within pedagogy. Recommendations from this project will guide academics on how to embed work-based practice into the programmes, to enable social learning. The resources offer the potential to be embedded in other similar programmes to improve retention and the quality of student experience.

### **Example 4: Students create online resources of cultural heritage**

#### **Drew Gray, Subject Leader in Humanities, FAST, the University of Northampton and Sabine Coady Schaebitz, Associate Head and Principal Lecturer, School of Arts and Design, Coventry University**

Involving students as active contributors and producers of learning materials is a relatively new approach in HE. The Follow Northampton projects funded in the 2013-14 and 2014-15 academic years, enabled the creation of an interactive website and downloadable Follow Northampton App which allow users and educators to have a virtual tour of Northampton sites of cultural heritage. The Follow Northampton App is downloadable from Apple’s App Store.

Through collaboration with University of Northampton students and staff from a range of disciplines, local school children and members of the local community, Follow Northampton:

* Empowered students as content creators and designers.
* Created online resources (lesson plans, Heritage Trials, Memory Maps) which can be used across a range of subjects including History, Education, Geography and Media Production, and to be used for teaching at local primary and secondary schools.
* Offered a model for interdisciplinary collaboration in teaching and learning for staff and students.

Building on the success of Follow Northampton, another interdisciplinary project was funded in the 2015-16 academic year to empower students from three disciplines to lead a community engagement project with regard to places and memories in Northampton. As part of the community engagement project, students created a digital Memory Map (a 3D representation with graphics, text, videos and audios) as a special learning and teaching tool linking places and individuals in Northampton. The tool has been included in the Follow Northampton App as a teaching resource which can be used within a number of subject areas.

The University of Northampton intends to place itself at the heart of Northampton. These projects empowered local communities to create their own understanding and representation of heritage and supported an initiative which makes a difference to the local community, including those in deprived areas, which is in line with the Changemaker values. In this sense, the projects help promote the University as a leader in innovation and its values.

The projects offered good practice in engaging and empowering students as active contributors to the learning process, which acts as a catalyst for sustained and future initiatives in which students are involved as partners.

## **Theme 2: Students as facilitators of teaching sessions**

### **Example 5: Hong Kong Summer Camp**

#### **Helen Caldwell and Brenna Farrow, Senior Lecturers in Education, FHES, University of Northampton**

The Hong Kong Summer Camp (HKSC) programme began in 2014 and offers a unique opportunity for University of Northampton students to develop their employability skills through living and working in a different culture for six weeks. In previous years, students were given an induction which included a brief concerning roles and some information about Hong Kong prior to the trip. Students have helped with planning activities but have not been involved in creating the teaching resources.

In the 2017-18 academic year, a project was set up to improve the HKSC provision through enhanced support and increased students’ contributions to the induction programme. Fourteen Year Two students from BA Initial Teacher Training (ITT) and BA Special Educational Needs (SENI) joined the project.

The project has resulted in an improved Induction Programme for HKSC. Three days of comprehensive training was provided for the student volunteers. A handbook for the summer camp was developed to provide students essential things to know about Hong Kong. Student volunteers developed a bank of resources: <https://mypad.northampton.ac.uk/hksc/>, structured using Active Blended Learning (ABL) principles and aimed at children of different cultures. These online resources are made available across three University of Northampton programmes in ITT and SENI.

The project supported the internationalisation of University of Northampton programmes by building relationships with mainstream and special schools in Hong Kong and China. The international approaches to connecting classrooms has gained a higher focus in ITT and SENI teaching at Northampton.

Students have had enhanced employability prospects. They had the experience of providing activities and delivering teaching for students with Special Learning Needs in a school in Hong Kong. Students were also provided with opportunities to discover different career paths, e.g. Teaching English as a Foreign Language abroad or in the UK. Students have reflected upon the impact of their international experiences on their teaching in the UK. The project has broadened their horizons and made them to think about opportunities to teach in an international context. Several students have been offered jobs and one student is now teaching in Hong Kong.

### **Example 6: PhD students deliver sessions to other PhD students**

#### **Cristina Devecchi, Senior Lecturer in Education, FHES, University of Northampton**

University of Northampton policy makes it a requirement for the University and the Faculties to provide PhD students with opportunities to engage with Discipline-Based Development (DBD) and contribute to learning and teaching. Currently, the DBD provided to PhD students includes individual supervision and open seminars available only to attendees. It does not provide a systematic approach to training PhD students to teach, nor does it provide the opportunity for reaching out and including off-site students in India, Cyprus, Ghana, Georgia or other countries.

The FEASST@8 project (funded in 2016-17) and the SuCCEED@8 project (funded in 2017-18) involved a group of PhD students in Education to develop a set of activities and resources which are in alignment with ABL and ready to be used for DBD for all PhD students. The students involved in the two projects were able to use these ABL activities and resources to develop and deliver teaching sessions (online seminars or workshops) to other PhD students to enable peer learning and support. These resources have now been made available to all PhD students across the University.

Drawing from lessons learned in the FEASST@8 project, the SuCCEED@8 project further enhanced the development of peer support through the use of digital technologies, for example:

* Students are now able to review and submit abstracts for conferences via Skype.
* Blackboard Collaborate is now used to support transfer viva.
* Peer support is now provided via social media such as Facebook and Twitter.
* Students are now involved in blog writing.

FEASST@8 and SuCCEED@8 enabled the PhD students to acquire and practise Level 8 key research skills and other transferability skills such as creating teaching content, developing and delivering teaching sessions, and developing their understanding of and capability using digital tools.

Currently the University is employing PhD students as Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) and Associate Lecturers (ALs). Enabling the GTAs and ALs to experience and lead on the development and delivery of blended learning sessions, is part of the professional development needs of these students. The opportunities enabled by the project have also met the professional and emotional needs of off-site students. Social media such as Facebook provide effective support to part-time and off-site PhD students.



FEASST@8 and SuCCEED@8 have had an impact on the University’s Graduate School development programme. Project participants (staff and PhD students) are now working with the Faculty Deans and the Head of Academic Practice to implement the policy to enable further teaching opportunities for PGR students.

A more detailed account of what the two projects have achieved can be found in the publication given below:

Devecchi, C. (2019). Working with PhD students to build their transferability and researcher skills in the FEASST@8 and SuCCEED@8 projects. *New Directions for Adult & Continuing Education*, Issue 163: 133-145.

### **Example 7: Students work in creative partnership with a local primary school**

#### **Lisa Smallwood, Senior Lecturer in Education, FHES, University of Northampton**

A key challenge that the University faces is offering Education students opportunities to gain meaningful work-based learning experiences with primary school children through the application of taught techniques and approaches.

In the 2016-17 academic year, a pilot project was set up to involve 25 Level 6 BA Childhood and Youth students, who are enrolled on the module EDUM3029 Creative and Therapeutic Approaches to Working in Children’s Services, to work collaboratively with a local school to design and deliver creative arts activities. These students worked in partnership with a class of 25 Year 2 (6-7 years old) pupils from a local primary school in Northampton, over three visits across a period of four months. As part of the assessment for the module, students are required to work with a child, facilitating a creative arts-based activity and reflect on their work-based experience. Students received formative feedback on their performance during the project from both the tutors and peers.

The proposed approach to work-based practice takes learning out of the classroom and into the community, offering students the opportunity to have a real impact on groups and individuals through life experience. Developing creative arts skills for teachers and TAs working in primary schools is of particular value, considering the dramatic decline in creative arts provision in primary schools in the UK. Students taking part in the pilot project were offered the opportunity to develop additional work-based skills which they would not have gained in the existing work-based learning programmes. The structure and close monitoring of this project by tutors offered students a safe forum to gain this essential and unique experience. The project has resulted in increased levels of confidence and enhanced employability prospects for the students.

The success of the project has led to this pedagogic approach implemented permanently on the EDUM3029 (now became EDUM3036) module. An adapted model has been embedded in the SEN3003 module in 2017-18. This work-based learning approach offers further transferability for implementation in different subject areas within the Faculty of Health, Education and Society (FHES), including Early Years and Teacher Training. In discussion with colleagues in the Faculty of Arts, Science and Technology (FAST), it has also been identified that there are possibilities for application in modules such as Drama, Acting and Art and Design.

## **Theme 3: Students as support providers**

### **Example 8: A peer-assisted learning approach to mentoring**

#### **Lisa Smallwood, Senior Lecturer in Education, FHES, University of Northampton**

Peer-assisted learning in higher education generally involves students from the year above offering support to their peers in the year below. Peer-to-peer mentoring has been part of the student experience on the BA Childhood and Youth programme at the University of Northampton for several years. Despite a handful of positive one-to-one mentoring relationships being formed, the scheme is due a redesign to enrich the student experience offered through participation.

In the 2018-19 academic year, a pilot project was conducted involving a group of Level 5 and Level 4 BA Childhood and Youth students as mentors and mentees. Three Level 5 students worked as mentors to develop and deliver four timetabled study skills sessions to a group of Level 4 students across the year. The student mentors also worked with their mentees outside the organised sessions. Training to develop the student mentors’ skills was provided through a mentor training workshop facilitated by the University’s Changemaker Hub and Learning Development. The student mentors were supported in the development of materials by the tutor leading the scheme. All the study skills sessions developed by the student mentors were taught in partnership with an academic, to ensure adequate support is provided.

Feedback from both the student mentors and mentees indicated benefits for their learning, including the developed new skills which improved their academic performance, increased confidence and improved communication skills. Mentors were able to include their experience in their CVs and demonstrate evidence of required skills for employability. Participation of students was identified as the most critical aspect of the project. Both mentors and mentees felt disappointed with the lack of engagement from both Level 4 and Level 5 students.

The project demonstrates an example of bringing together mentoring, Personal Tutor, and peer-assisted learning into learner support, offering insights to the review of the University’s Integrated Learner Support Model. The author developed a mentor welcome pack based on the results of the project, which contains essential information related to best practice in the role of mentor, to safeguard all student participants. This mentor pack will be valuable to all University of Northampton academics who work as PTs or mentors to students.

The project continued into a second year of delivery in the academic year 2019-20, with several changes made based on the evaluation completed as part of the pilot project. These changes include:

* a student developed and led virtual space where mentors and mentees can interact online
* the scheduling of the peer assisted learning sessions into taught sessions to improve engagement
* the implementation of entirely mentor led sessions without tutor input.

A mentor from year 2018-19 has also taken on the role of lead mentor, and with her input, the student mentors now offer support in the following areas: academic skills, well-being, social learning, and reflecting the needs of students in their first year of study. The project team hopes to complete another evaluation of the impact of these changes at the end of the 2019-20 academic year.

Research Methodology and Statistics are a compulsory aspect of any Psychology degree programme. Within Psychology, many students reportedly experience statistics anxiety. For many students, statistics is a challenging aspect within their curriculum and many are likely to develop severe anxiety, related to statistics. This anxiety is not conducive of learning and has shown a negative association with achievement.

### **Example 9: STATS mentors**

#### **Roz Collings, Principal Lecturer in Psychology, University of Wolverhampton and Kimberley Hill, Senior Lecturer in Psychology, FHES, University of Northampton**

Peer mentoring has become increasingly popular within higher education. Research has highlighted the benefits to both mentees and mentors in terms of academic achievement and psychosocial improvement. The Stats Mentor (<https://mypad.northampton.ac.uk/statsmentor/>) projects funded in the 2016-17 and 2017-18 academic years, aim to utilise a peer mentoring scheme to enhance students’ engagement and learning of research methods and statistics.

Six Psychology students from the 2016-17 academic year and nine students from the 2017-18 academic year (Year 2 and 3 students) were trained and employed to become Stats Mentors to Year 1 and 2 students respectively, supporting their learning in Statistics and Research Methodology. These student mentors worked with their mentees outside of class time on a one-to-one basis.

The Stats Mentor projects have resulted in enhanced curiosity and confidence, reduced statistics anxiety amongst student mentees and developed transferable and employability skills of the student mentors.

The Psychology subject area has a long history of students working with staff as partners within the learning process. The Stats Mentors scheme is one example which has been running for many years within Psychology, with success. Another example of students as partners is, for many years, Psychology students have enthused local school children as STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) Champions by developing and running a range of exciting Psychology-based activities.

### **Example 10: Digital Leaders**

#### **Helen Caldwell, Senior Lecturer in Education, FHES, University of Northampton**

Digital Leaders are those who are competent and comfortable in the use of technology and who can help others, such as peers and teachers, to make effective use of technology. A national Digital Leader Network has been supporting technology use in schools in the UK for several years (<http://www.digitalleadernetwork.co.uk>). During 2013-15, staff in Education piloted one of the first Digital Leader programmes in UK HE, with volunteers drawn from across the student population. These students engaged in a range of activities, including events such as TeachMeets, paired with pupil Digital Leaders in local schools. The pilot proved that the University and local schools benefited from the Digital Leaders’ input, and the Digital Leaders themselves learnt transferable skills such as intercultural awareness and digital literacy, which further enhanced their employability.

Building on the success of the pilot, in the 2015-16 academic year, staff in Education recruited and trained 20 volunteer Digital Leaders, drawn from the student population. These Digital Leaders were deployed to support the key technology initiatives across the University. As part of their training the student volunteers were linked with Digital Leaders from a number of European countries to share ideas and learn from each other. A number of Digital Leaders were invited to participate in a face to face sharing event with their peers in Europe.

Six technology initiatives in the form of Digital Playdates took place in 2015-16 across the University and with local schools, supported by the 20 student Digital Leaders. Playdates were based around a range of themes, including digital creativity, physical computing, computer science, digital media, mobile learning and filmmaking. Digital Playdates are hands-on professional learning events with the opportunity to explore, collaborate and play (<https://sites.google.com/site/playdatechicago13/home>). Participants explore digital tools in themed rooms, alongside those with similar interests and with the aim of trying something new. A Playdate involves playful and self-directed learning. Digital Leader facilitators are there to learn alongside others and to support the learning.

The project resulted in enhanced student satisfaction and employability of the digital leaders and enhanced digital confidence and skills of staff who participated in the Playdates. The project also provided support for local schools which further builds the University’s reputation and strengthens the link with the local community.

The Playdate model has been a success for a wide range of stakeholders. The Digital Leaders’ involvement in Digital Playdates has introduced a new approach to developing digital literacy of the students and staff of the University.

The digital leaders initiative has evolved into student digital leaders participating in eTwinning in Initial Teacher Training projects in 2016-17 and two Erasmus+ projects on Digital Learning Across Boundaries (DLAB 1 and 2) in 2016-19 and 2019-22 with partner schools and universities in Belgium, Spain, Norway and Denmark. These projects have won eTwinning prizes in Denmark and Norway. More details of these projects can be found here: <https://mypad.northampton.ac.uk/digitalleaders/> and here: <http://dlaberasmus.eu>.

## **Theme 4: Students’ involvement in assessment design and peer review**

### **Example 11: Peer scores to group assignment**

#### **Suraj Ajit, Senior Lecturer in Computing, FAST, University of Northampton**

Ensuring the fairness and consistency of the marking method for assessing group work can be a challenge. In the 2018-19 academic year, a project was set up to investigate and address issues associated with the assessment of group work. The project developed a GPM (Group Project Marking) tool to calculate individual students’ grades based on student- and tutor-generated scores.

##### The GPM tool was deployed in a Level 4 Software Engineering 1 module and a Level 5 Network Engineering module. The Software Engineering 1 module consists of 180 students and has to produce a group report. The Network Engineering module consists of 20 students and has to deliver a group project. In both modules, students were divided into small groups to work collaboratively towards their group assessment.

The grading process using the GPM tool in the two modules is outlined as follows:

1. The group assignment is marked by the tutor using the rubric on NILE, and a group grade is allocated.

##### After the submission of the group assignment, a peer scoring system is set up on NILE, where each student can rate the contribution of other members within their group.

##### When doing the peer scoring, students are asked to enter a value of 0 to 5 for each member. 0 indicates little to none contribution and 5 indicates significant contribution to the final piece of work. The corresponding percentage weightings which are used to calculate the final grade for the student are shown below:

##### 0 = 5%; 1 = 25%; 2 = 45%; 3 = 55%; 4 = 75%; 5 = 95%

##### The group information, group grade given by the tutor and peer scores are imported into the GPM tool to calculate the final grade for the individual student.

Feedback from the staff and students who participated in the project indicated that they are happy with this new approach. Staff previously calculated students’ grades using spreadsheets and found it tedious, time consuming and error-prone. The GPM tool eliminates these issues and enables the final grade to be calculated by appropriately combining both the grade given by the tutor and the scores given by the peers. The students found the group work assessment model fair and easy to use. The results of the project offer the potential to change practice and inform institutional policy and strategy on assessment of group work.

The author has won another bid funded by the University’s Learning and Teaching Enhancement and Innovation Fund 2019-20, which allows the author to develop an improved version of the GPM tool for deployment in additional modules within the Faculty of Arts, Science and Technology (FAST). The newer version of the tool will develop new features and improve existing functionalities based on staff and students’ feedback from 2018-19. It is expected that the newer version of GPM will be more robust, flexible and intuitive to use.

Student experience is central to teaching and learning and to maintain student engagement on modules is a priority, as research and anecdotal evidence suggests that students who attend and engage perform better. In the UK HE, there has been discussions around how to engage students more actively in the assessment process. In the 2015-16 academic year, a project was set up to evaluate the impact of using an assessment method that empowers students and involves them as partners in the design of an assessment within the Discrimination Law module.

### **Example 12: Students’ involvement in assessment design**

#### **Melanie Crofts, Senior Lecturer in Law, De Montfort University**

The students on the Discrimination Law module were divided into self-selecting groups and given a task to complete in Term 2 of the 2015-16 academic year, which is based on an experiential learning model. The task links in to the final pieces of assessment. The role of the students in the design of the assessment is fourfold:

1. Students are able to choose their own essay question for the 2,000-word assignment based on what has been covered in the workshops in Term 1.
2. Students are able to choose their own group members, focus and approach to the task which has been set for the Group Project.
3. Students identify areas where they need more information to help them complete their assessments. The tutor uses students’ input to guide the teaching and activities in Term 2.
4. Students have the opportunity to feed back and reflect on the operation of the Group Project via the 1,000-word reflective exercise.

The project generated positive experiences for the students both in terms of assessment design and autonomy. Students felt that the increased involvement in the learning, teaching and assessment processes enhanced their experience of the module. It gave them a sense of greater ownership of their work and involvement in the design of the module impacted upon their engagement and perception of the work as ‘theirs’. It gave them a degree of autonomy and the students enjoyed being able to direct their learning. The project therefore shifted the power dynamics in the module, which empowered the students and involved them more fully in the learning and teaching process.

The author now works at De Montfort University, and has incorporated a similar approach in her current teaching. In the Gender and Law module, students have been given much more autonomy over their essay questions and presentations. This approach has been used in combination with other strategies to democratise the classroom.

Peer assessment is often promoted as a means of improving student engagement in higher education, yet its use in nurse education in the UK has been limited. 50% of student nurse learning is designed to take place in practice, yet there are few examples of the use of peer assessment in practice. It is therefore useful to test the feasibility of using peer assessment in the practice setting in nursing education.

**Example 13: Peer assessment for nursing students in placement**

#### **John Turnbull, Senior Lecturer in Nursing, University of Northampton**

Given this background, a project was set up in the 2015-16 academic year to trial peer assessment in the form of formative assessment, for the Year 2 learning disability nursing cohort. There were 26 students in the cohort but, for convenience, 8 of them were selected to take part in the trial. The placement chosen for the implementation of the peer assessment was an 11-week placement which took place between March and May 2016. Each student visited another student’s placement for one day during week 4 in order to carry out their peer assessment. The peer assessment was designed to focus around a particular ‘event’ led by the student, such as a meeting, handover, admission of a service user or the care of one service user throughout the day. Preparation of students took place under simulated conditions in a classroom using peer observation and video, to practice delivering feedback. Mentors were invited to participate in the co-design and implementation of this peer assessment. Their role was to undertake the assessment simultaneously with the student assessor and provide feedback to the student assessor as well as to the student being assessed.

The trail resulted in improved student engagement with the placement and their attitude towards professional re-validation. The students were able to develop skills in giving and receiving feedback to peers which further enhanced their employability skills. The success of the pilot has resulted in peer assessment being fully embedded in the learning disability nursing curriculum.

Peer assessment has been used in HE for a long time. However, there have been few cases of peer assessment use at the University of Northampton. In the 2018-19 academic year, peer assessment was fully integrated into EDUM129, ‘Designing for the 21st Century Learning’ module as a summative component. EDUM129 is a 30-credit Level 7 module, and the majority of the students are members of staff from across faculties and disciplines at the University. There were 14 students on the module in the 2018-19 cohort.

### **Example 14: Peer review in a Learning Design module**

#### **Ming Nie, Lecturer in Learning and Teaching in HE, ILT, University of Northampton**

The module contains two assessments:

1. OR1: A video based on a structured conversation or mini-presentation, discussing the design of a module.
2. AS1: A 3,000-word written assignment in two parts. Both parts are summative:
   1. Part 1: A 2,000-word individual essay based on assessment design.
   2. Part 2: A 1,000- word peer review and feedback to an essay produced by another student.

In 2018-19, the author participated in the University’s Digital Exams pilot in which AS1 was implemented using WISEflow (<https://europe.wiseflow.net/>). The workflow in WISEflow to handle AS1 is described as follows:

1. The student completes Part 1 of AS1 and submits it to a submission portal in WISEflow.
2. Once the deadline for Part 1 of AS1 has passed, the student will be automatically and randomly allocated a paper produced by another student (anonymously) by WISEflow.
3. The student reviews the work that has been assigned to him/her and provides critical and constructive feedback against the Learning Outcomes which are assessed in AS1.
4. The student submits Part 2 of AS1 (peer review) to another submission portal in WISEflow.
5. Part 1 and Part 2 are marked by the tutor. The student will receive separate marks for both Part 1 and Part 2 of AS1, and an overall grade for AS1 in WISEflow. The student will also receive feedback from the tutor to both Part 1 and Part 2 of their AS1, and feedback from a peer (anonymously) to their Part 1 from WISEflow.

Prior to AS1 submission, a formative assessment in the form of an e-tivity was used to help students practise peer review. In this e-tivity, students were asked to produce a 500-word written piece towards Part 1 of AS1 and share it on the NILE discussion board. Students were then asked to provide feedback and comments to the work of at least another student in the same discussion board.

A research project is currently undertaken by the author to evaluate the impact of peer assessment on student learning. The evaluation seeks to examine the extent to which the module LOs have been met, and insights into further development and improvement of its use in the future. The result of the research will provide insight into what worked well and what didn’t work from the students’ perspectives, which will inform the adoption of peer assessment in other subjects and disciplines within the University of Northampton.

Preliminary results have shown that peer assessment made a positive impact on student learning. The module leader will continue using peer assessment within the EDUM129 module, and Blackboard Ultra will be trialled to handle peer assessment when the module runs in the 2019-20 academic year.

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