January 2015 Please bring this handout with you to the workshop

**Students as Partners and Change Agents in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education**

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This is work in progress and readers are invited to send me their own examples. The references, full set of case studies and bibliography are available on my website (above) under resources.

**Structure of presentation**

A. The nature of students as partners and change agents
B. Conceptual frameworks
C. Case studies I: Students as partners
   1. Learning, teaching and assessment
   2. Subject-based research and inquiry
   3. Scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL)
   4. Curriculum design and pedagogic consultancy
   5. Integrated approaches
D. Case studies II: Students as change agents
   1. Engaging students as pedagogical consultants, ambassadors and evaluators
   2. Engaging students as co-designers of curriculum
   3. Engaging students as teachers and assessors
   4. Engaging students as SoTL practitioners
   5. Engaging students as strategy developers and advisors
E. Action planning

**A. Context and frameworks**

“There is a subtle, but extremely important, difference between an institution that ‘listens’ to students and responds accordingly, and an institution that gives students the opportunity to explore areas that they believe to be significant, to recommend solutions and to bring about the required changes. The concept of ‘listening to the student voice’ – implicitly if not deliberately – supports the perspective of student as ‘consumer’, whereas ‘students as change agents’ explicitly supports a view of the student as ‘active collaborator’ and ‘co-producer’, with the potential for transformation.” (Dunne in Foreword to Dunne and Zandstra, 2011, 4).

"We have spent enough time condemning consumerism in education, and now we need to articulate the alternative. Student engagement is a great concept but it needs to be deployed to radical ends. Students as partners is not just a nice-to-have, I believe it has the potential to help bring about social and educational transformation, as long as we know what we are trying to do and we maintain a critical attitude about the ways the concept is adopted and used. We say we want to celebrate and share best practice; that can no longer mean that which simply works well. Our practice needs to be underpinned by our values. An activity really should make the reality of education closer to our vision before we single it out as “best practice.” (Rachel Wenstone VP HE NUS, 2012)

“My vision for the future is that it should be the norm, not the exception, that students are engaged as co-partners and co-designers in all university and department learning and teaching initiatives, strategies and practices.” (Mick Healey ISSoTL12 keynote on ‘Students as change agents’)

**Fig. 1: Dimensions of students as change agents**

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<td>Student voices</td>
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<td>Students work independently</td>
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<td>Senior students</td>
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**Fig. 2: A theoretical model for students as change agents**

**EMPHASIS ON THE STUDENT VOICE**

**STUDENTS AS EVALUATORS OF THEIR HE EXPERIENCE (THE STUDENT VOICE)**

Students offer feedback, views and opinions and are listened to on an institutional basis, in order to build an evidence-base as a basis for enhancement and change. Decisions for action tend to be taken at subject and/or institutional level.

**STUDENTS AS PARTICIPANTS IN DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES**

Students engage in institutional decision-making, in order to influence enhancement and change. Decisions for action tend to be taken collaboratively with staff and students.

**EMPHASIS ON THE UNIVERSITY AS DRIVER**

**STUDENTS AS PARTNERS, CO-CREATORS AND EXPERTS**

Students are collaborative partners in curriculum provision and professional development, in order to enhance staff and student learning. Decisions for action tend to be taken at subject and/or institutional level.

**STUDENTS AS AGENTS FOR CHANGE**

Students are collaborative partners in pedagogic knowledge acquisition and professional development, with the purpose of bringing about change. Decisions for action tend to be promoted by students and engaged with at subject and/or institutional level.

**EMPHASIS ON STUDENT ENGAGEMENT**

Integrating students into educational change

Source: Dunne and Zandstra (2011, 17)
Fig 3: Students as partners in learning and teaching in higher education: An overview model

Table 1 Partnership principles and values

Drawing on the literature on successful partnership and engaged student learning, core values which underpin successful partnership in learning and teaching are suggested. The relative importance of each of these values may vary in different contexts, and there may be additional values you want to include for your partnerships:

- **authenticity** – all parties have a meaningful rationale for investing in partnership, and are honest about what they can contribute and the parameters of partnership;
- **inclusivity** – partnership embraces the different talents, perspectives and experiences that all parties bring, and there are no barriers (structural or cultural) that prevent potential partners getting involved;
- **reciprocity** – all parties have an interest in, and stand to benefit from working and/or learning in partnership;
- **empowerment** – power is distributed appropriately and all parties are encouraged to constructively challenge ways of working and learning that may reinforce existing inequalities;
- **trust** – all parties take time to get to know each other, engage in open and honest dialogue and are confident they will be treated with respect and fairness;
- **challenge** – all parties are encouraged to constructively critique and challenge practices, structures and approaches that undermine partnership, and are enabled to take risks to develop new ways of working and learning;
- **community** – all parties feel a sense of belonging and are valued fully for the unique contribution they make;
- **responsibility** – all parties share collective responsibility for the aims of the partnership, and individual responsibility for the contribution they make.

**Source:** Higher Education Academy (2014, 4)
A. Students as partners in learning, teaching and research

1. Learning, Teaching and Assessment

Case study A: Peer learning strategies for large classes at ANU, Australia
A range of technologies exist that can be used to support peer engagement in large classes. Two approaches to designing and using multiple choice questions are PeerWise (https://peerwise.cs.auckland.ac.nz/) and phone-based audience response systems (e.g. mQlicker http://www.mqlicker.com/). These have been combined in a second year genetics class. PeerWise allows students to design, answer and comment on multiple choice questions anonymously in their own time. Students are given some advice on writing good, scenario-based multiple choice questions and told that the best questions will be used in the final exam. We have found that it is necessary to provide some incentive for students to write questions, such as marks or credit, but many students voluntarily answer the questions for revision. The lecturer uses phone-based response systems to provide in-class multiple choice questions, using the approach of ConcepTesting (Crouch and Mazur 2001). This allows modeling of good multiple choice questions as well as providing real time feedback on misunderstandings that can then be addressed. The main limitation on the latter is designing good questions that probe areas of difficulty. However, PeerWise questions and comments provide good indicators of issues of concern for students and questions from previous years can be used in class. This combination of approaches generates useful resources and overcomes potential student concerns that large classes don’t provide enough opportunities for feedback on their learning. 

Further information: Susan Howitt (susan.howitt@anu.edu.au); Crouch and Mazur (2001)

Case study B: Compulsory community-based learning capstone project at Portland State University, US
During the final year each undergraduate student is required to participate in a ‘senior capstone’, the culmination of the University Studies programme. The senior capstone project is a community-based learning experience that:

a) provides an opportunity for students to apply the expertise they have learned in their major to real issues and problems in the community;

b) enhances students’ ability to work in a team context necessitating collaboration with persons from different fields of specialisation.

Each student works with a team of students and faculty. Each senior capstone must result in some form of summation, closing project, or final product that puts closure to the students’ experience. For example, in a course on Asset Mapping and GIS, students work in partnership with a community organization in need of community-based research.

Further information: capstone.unst.pdx.edu/; University of Gloucestershire (no date); Kerrigan and Carpenter (2013)

Case study C: Broad Vision – an UG module for art-science collaborative research and interdisciplinary learning at the University of Westminster
Every year a group of undergraduate students are recruited from across the university’s arts and science courses to become student researchers on an interdisciplinary learning project. Each project takes as its starting point a set of images, a body of knowledge or a central theme, employed to initiate discussion across disciplinary divides and identify areas of common interest for collaborative research ideas. The material provides a central focus, which can be approached from a range of perspectives, allowing emergent opportunities for the observation of difference and similarity – in terms of diversity of language, interpretation and understanding. Broad Vision has the following features:

- It creates opportunities for students from different disciplines to work together and learn from each other, broadening their perspectives and widening their knowledge bases.
- Students become teachers, researchers and producers through a three-phase educational model. Phase one focuses on disciplinary exchange through peer-teaching, phase two involves small group interdisciplinary research, and phase three engaging audiences through public outputs.
- There is no prescribed curriculum. The projects emerge from the expertise and personal interests of participants (students and staff), framed by a central focus or question.
Participants produce a range of public outputs, enhancing graduate attributes and opportunities for professional learning. These have included publications, exhibitions, workshops and conference presentations.

All phases of the project are highly student-centred and encourage a leveling out of established academic hierarchies between staff and students, and between students at different levels of study. Participating courses to date include photographic arts, biotechnology, illustration, psychology, contemporary media practice, human and medical sciences, clinical photography, biological sciences, multimedia computing, interactive product design, animation, cognitive science, molecular biology and genetics, photography and digital imaging, and physiology and pharmocology.

Broad Vision was funded through a University of Westminster Interdisciplinary Pedagogic Research Fund (2010-2013) and a Wellcome Trust People Award (2013-14). In the first year of funding the project team developed a three-phase multi/interdisciplinary educational model, a framework for students to learn from each other, work together, and to produce professional outputs. In 2012, this model was accredited as an optional module for students in their second year of study, with continuation opportunities for other students. An educational research project is embedded within the learning design, observing student engagement with the project and the module. The educational model continues to be tested and developed as the programme evolves and the community of interest expands to involve more students from across the university and beyond.

Further information: [http://broad-vision.info/](http://broad-vision.info/)

### 2. Subject-based Research and Inquiry

**Case study D: Curricula are organised around the concept of student as producer at the University at Lincoln, UK**

‘Student as producer’ is the organising principle for the learning landscapes at the University of Lincoln. In this approach the emphasis is on students producing knowledge in partnership, rather than just consuming it. The focus of student as producer is the undergraduate student, working in collaboration with other students and academics in real research projects, or projects which replicate the process of research in their discipline. Undergraduate students work alongside staff in the design and delivery of their teaching and learning programmes, and in the production of work of academic content and value. Staff and students can apply for development funds to the Undergraduate Research Opportunities Scheme (UROS) and the Fund for Educational Development (FED). Student as producer is making research-engaged teaching an institutional priority. As courses come up for validation staff and students are asked to consider student as producer in terms of the following key features:

- discovery – student as producer;
- technology in teaching – digital scholarship;
- space and spatiality – learning landscapes in higher education;
- assessment – active learners in communities of practice;
- research and evaluation – scholarship of teaching and learning;
- student voice – diversity, difference and dissensus;
- support for research based learning through expert engagement with information resources;
- creating the future – employability, enterprise, postgraduate, beyond employability.

The Student Engagement Strategy at Lincoln requires that students should play an active part in quality enhancement by working together with staff, recognising that students are experts in their student experience.

Further information: studentasproducer.lincoln.ac.uk/; researchengagedblogs.lincoln.ac.uk/; Neary with Winn (2009); Neary (2010; 2011; 2014); Ryan and Tilbury (2013, p. 17)

**Case study E: Mainstreaming undergraduate research and inquiry in largest recruiting courses at Miami University, Ohio, US**

Miami University is moving from a ‘teaching and learning paradigm’ to a ‘discovery paradigm’ supporting the development of students as scholars. The ‘Top 25’ project, begun in 2007, has introduced innovative approaches that move learning away from “too much time telling students what we think they need to know, and not enough time using their curiosity to drive their learning” (Hodge 2006, p. 3). Over a four-year period the Top 25 project
involved the largest recruiting courses being rewritten as inquiry-based courses. By the end 29 courses were involved. Each course was allocated $35,000 to fund curriculum revision. Learning technologists and educationalists supported the teams of faculty involved. Together the courses account for almost a quarter of total credit hours.

“Different courses have adopted different redesign strategies. For example, the Theatre Department refocused their traditional Theatre Appreciation class to center on the creation of theatre. Other classes, e.g., Marketing, used an ‘inverted’ or ‘flipped’ classroom model. In Communication and Calculus classes, the teams created a menu of inquiry exercises from which individual faculty can select. The Psychology team, similar to the Theatre team, refocused their course from the ‘what’ of the discipline to the ‘how’; they also introduced discussion sections led by trained undergraduate leaders” (Shore and Obade 2013, p. 4). Some of the physical spaces are being redesigned to provide flexible furniture to encourage discussion.

“Responses to survey questions show that the Top 25 courses are promoting active, engaged learning. Compared to students in the traditional sections, students in the redesigned sections report:

- more frequently discussing ideas from class with others outside of the classroom;
- spending much more time working with other students on projects during class time;
- spending less time memorizing facts and ideas;
- spending more hours on their course work and working harder than they thought they would to meet faculty expectations.

Top 25 courses also have more emphasis on higher-level thinking skills. Compared to students in the traditional sections, students in the redesigned sections report more frequently:

- supporting their ideas and beliefs with data or evidence;
- making judgments about the value of information, arguments, or methods by examining how others gathered and interpreted data and assessing the soundness of their conclusions;
- synthesizing and organizing ideas, information, or experiences into new, more complex interpretations and relationships;
- working on a project or paper that requires integrating ideas from various sources” (Hodge et al. 2011, p. 32).

Many faculty not involved in the Top 25 project are also adopting similar changes. “Because the redesigned courses are creating new expectations among students they are now arriving in class expecting to be challenged and ready to take more responsibility for their own learning” (Hodge et al. 2011, p. 33). The challenges in maintaining this ‘project’ include reduced financial support because of problems in the national and thus institutional economy, in maintaining the momentum. “The visibility of the Top 25 project and its support at the highest levels of the university have encouraged the development and expansion of programs that support student engagement. For example, the First Year Research Experience (FYRE) program has been established to offer incoming students an opportunity to engage in research and to establish early contact with a faculty mentor” (Hodge et al. 2011, p. 33).

Further information: Hodge (2006); Hodge et al. (2007; 2008; 2011); Taylor et al. (2012); Shore and Obade (2013); www.units.miamioh.edu/celt/engaged_learning/top25/; www.units.muohio.edu/oars/undergrad_research/first_year_research_experience/fyre_info.php

B. Students as partners in quality enhancement

3. Scholarship of Teaching and Learning

Case study F: Students are engaged as partners in shaping and leading their own educational experiences through the 'students as change agents' initiative at the University of Exeter, UK

The key concept is that students themselves take responsibility for bringing about change, based on their own research on aspects of learning and teaching. The approach enables students to be actively engaged with the processes of change, often taking on a leadership role. They are engaged deeply with the institution and their
subject areas, and the focus and direction is, to a greater extent, decided by students. A small amount of funding was originally available from the University’s learning and teaching budget to support this initiative, but it is now embedded and funded within Colleges. There are no payments directly to students. The most important aspect is the focus on research, and building change on evidence-based foundations. Students from across the university have contributed to this initiative, carrying out a series of research projects on their learning and teaching environment, selecting concerns raised through student-staff liaison committees, and providing recommendations and solutions to improve their experience. Students work as apprentice researchers; their research methods include focus groups, informal interviews and questionnaire surveys. Outcomes are presented at an annual student-staff conference, which results in institutional engagement with key research findings. Well over 100 projects have been undertaken since 2008 though, overall, thousands of students have been involved. Student research has driven organisational change, contributed to student engagement in shifts of policy and practice within the University, and supported students’ graduate skills in the areas of research, project management and presentation of outcomes, leadership and understanding organisational development. For example, student projects in the Business School on the benefits students have gained from implementation of technologies in the classroom have contributed significantly to streamed video being now far more widespread, and 7000 voting handsets being distributed to undergraduate and Masters students.

Further information: Kay et al. (2010); Dunne and Zandstra (2011); Sandover et al. (2012a); Kay et al. (2012); Dunne and Owen (2013a)

Case study G: Students undertake educational development projects as academic partners with staff at Birmingham City University, UK

Launched in 2009, this partnership between Birmingham City University and Birmingham City Students’ Union aims to integrate students into the teaching and pedagogic research communities of the University to enhance the learning experience. Staff and students are invited to propose educational development projects in which students can work in an academic employment setting in a paid post at the University, on a more equal footing with their staff partner. Students negotiate their own roles with staff and are paid for up to 100 hours of work. Each project is designed to develop a specific aspect of learning and teaching practice. Typically, these may result in new learning resources, developments in curriculum design or the evaluation of innovations and changes that have already been made. It is key to the scheme that students are employed as partners not assistants, co-creators not passive recipients of the learning experience. Some projects are initiated and led by students. The Students as Academic Partners (SAP) scheme is part of a wider University initiative to create a greater sense of learning community at the University in which students and staff view it as the norm, not the exception, that they are engaged in academic discussion about the nature of their courses and the way they are taught. In the first year, 23 projects involving 35 students were funded across the University in all subject areas; this increased to 47 projects and 120 students the following year; and over 200 students engaged in 65 projects in 2012.

Further information: Birmingham City Students’ Union (2010); Brand et al. (2013); Nygaard et al. (2013); www2.bcu.ac.uk/celt/forming-learning-partnerships/sap

Case study H: 3M National Student Fellowships, Canada

For many years, 3M Canada has funded scholarships and awards for undergraduates in universities and college across Canada and in 2011, 3M added a student fellowship using the long-standing 3M National Teaching Fellowship for university professors as a model. The 3M National Student Fellowship honours up to ten students who have demonstrated outstanding leadership in their lives and at their college or university. These students embrace a vision of quality education that enhances their academic experience and beyond. Each cohort member:

- receives an award of $5,000 to be spent at their discretion;
- joins the others at the June STLHE conference where they will also participate in a 3M National Student Fellowship retreat;
- receives a contribution toward the cost of conference travel and accommodations;
- develops a cross-Canadian collaborative project to enhance teaching and learning at the post-secondary level.

Further information: www.stlhe.ca/awards/3m-national-student-fellowship/
4. Curriculum Design and Pedagogic Consultancy

Case study I: Students act as pedagogical consultants at Bryn Mawr College, Pennsylvania, US
Most models of professional development assume that faculty learning is the purview of faculty colleagues or teaching and learning centre staff. A programme, called Students as Learners and Teachers (SaLT), at Bryn Mawr College challenges that assumption by inviting undergraduate students to serve as pedagogical consultants to faculty members. Between 2006 and 2014, 175 faculty participants and 105 student consultants have participated in 250 partnerships. Feedback from participants suggests that this approach affords faculty and students an unusual opportunity to co-construct a more informed model of faculty development, deepens the learning experiences of both faculty and students, and recasts the responsibility for those learning experiences as one that is shared by faculty and students. Students are not enrolled in the courses for which they serve as consultants. Each student consultant has the following responsibilities: meet with the faculty member to establish why each is involved and what hopes both have for the collaboration, and to plan the semester’s focus and meetings; visit one class session each week; take detailed observation notes on the pedagogical challenge(s) the faculty member has identified; survey or interview students in the class (if the faculty member wishes), either for mid-course feedback or at another point in the semester; meet weekly with the faculty member to discuss observation notes and other feedback and implications; participate in weekly meetings with one another and with the coordinator of SaLT; and visit one or more faculty seminars five times over the course of the semester. For full-semester partnerships, student consultants work approximately five hours per week and receive a stipend of $500.

Further information: Cook-Sather (2011; 2013); Cook-Sather et al. (2014); www.brynmawr.edu/tli/

Case study J: Students act as co-creators of course design at Elon University, North Carolina, US
Since 2005, faculty, students, and academic development staff at Elon University have experimented with a variety of approaches to partnering in ‘course design teams’ (CDT) that co-create, or re-create, a course syllabus. Each team’s process varies, but typically a CDT includes one or two faculty, between two and six undergraduate students, and one academic developer. Faculty members initiate the redesign process, inviting the students and developer to co-construct a team. Students usually apply to participate in a CDT, motivated by a desire to contribute to a course they have taken or that is important to the curriculum in their disciplinary home. Once the CDT is assembled, the CDT uses a ‘backward design’ approach, first developing course goals and then building pedagogical strategies and learning assessments on the foundation of those goals. Time is the most important element in the success of a CDT. Successful teams usually meet weekly for two or three months, providing ample opportunities to both accomplish the CDT’s practical purpose of redesigning the course and, perhaps more importantly, to develop a true partnership that welcomes student voices. Students often doubt that they will be taken seriously in the process, and they also need time to develop the language and the confidence to express pedagogical ideas clearly. Many CDTs experience a liminal moment when everyone present recognizes that a fundamental boundary has been crossed, either by a faculty member ceding significant authority for the course design or by students claiming power in the process.

Further information: Bovill, Cook-Sather and Felten (2011); Delpish et al. (2010); Mihans, Long and Felten (2008)

5. Integrated approaches

Case study K: Integrating research-based education with students as change agents at University College London, UK
“At University College London, our top strategic priority for the next 20 years is to close the divide between teaching and research. We want to integrate research into every stage of an undergraduate degree, moving from research-led to research-based teaching”

Michael Arthur, president and provost of University College London, 30 April 2014: 22

UCL are developing a ‘Connected Curriculum’ initiative, as the means by which in five years all undergraduate programmes of study will have a profile of ‘research-based’ characteristics. Research-based education is the focus of
C. Engaging students as change agents: Other selected case studies

The following case studies of students as change agents further illustrate students as partners in quality enhancement. They are classified under five headings and many could fit under more than one heading. They are a selection of a much larger set on my website.

1. Engaging students as pedagogical consultants, ambassadors and evaluators

1.3 Students are engaged as pedagogical consultants at the University of Lincoln, UK

The Students Consulting on Teaching (SCOT) project involved students and teachers working in partnership and taking shared responsibility in the enhancement of democratic pedagogies. Six student pedagogic consultants and a student co-ordinator were employed on an hourly basis, offering a student perspective on specific episodes of teaching and learning. By re-imagining the student–teacher nexus, challenging the power imbalance and moving ‘from traditional accountability to shared responsibility’ (Cook-Sather 2009: 231), it becomes possible to perceive a different way of working, one that genuinely enables student-driven quality, participation and democratic professional practice. The students undertook an explicit and mandatory short training programme. The activities in the scheme were designed to be teacher driven, with the interaction between the teacher and the student consultant remaining completely confidential. The feedback that teachers received was from an impartial student perspective as the student consultants were not, and had not been, members of that course. Ten staff participated and sometimes requested more than one consultation, resulting in over 15 consultations in a six month period. All of the team of student consultants were involved in undertaking consultancy tasks with teachers across the whole of the school.

1.4 Students co-led a research project on inclusive practice and ran an appreciative inquiry faculty development session at University of Worcester, UK

A team of three academics and three students led a collaborative project using appreciative inquiry (AI) on what constitutes good inclusive practice in the Institute of Education (University of Worcester). The students collected data on the positive things about the experiences of the Institute from both year cohorts and disabled students, analysed it and presented it at a staff development day. The impact on staff has been particularly powerful because
students collected and presented the findings and because AI is a strengths-based approach. Feedback from staff was overwhelmingly positive. For example, they reported AI was a motivator to further develop their strengths and to develop an appreciative tone in meetings. Experience over several projects at Worcester using AI is that there is particular power in hearing students report participatory research which conveys appreciation of work undertaken by academic staff. So far this seems to be a win, win, win situation; with students gaining from their experiences of researching and presenting their findings, educational developers achieving greater staff engagement, and, academic staff feeling empowered to drive their practice forward.

Further information: Chapman (2011); Snell et al. (2012)

1.7 Students act as Ambassadors for Learning & Teaching (SALT) at University of Sheffield, UK
The Student Ambassadors for Learning & Teaching (SALT) scheme aims to influence, improve and develop how students learn and how they are taught at a departmental, faculty and university level. Information, resources and ideas are shared amongst faculty teams creating an institutional overview of Learning & Teaching development which can have a university-wide impact. One SALT is appointed from every academic department each year. They work in Faculty- or institutional-level teams on projects which address high priority learning and teaching issues. The themes of their projects are determined by the University’s Learning and Teaching Strategy, but it is up to the students to decide how they want to address the topic. This means that, as a team, they design, plan, organise and deliver their own projects, with support and guidance from academic and professional services staff along the way. The students are paid for 50-80 hrs work during the academic year.

Examples of past projects include:
- An academic peer mentoring scheme for dual honours students in Arts & Humanities;
- An inter-professional learning event for students in the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry & Health to promote multi-disciplinary working;
- An academic transitions website for Engineering students with hints, tips and guides for before they come to university, while they’re studying and preparing for after;
- A staff-student symposium for Social Sciences, where students and staff came together to debate issues such as employability and share learning & teaching good practice;
- Peer-to-peer advice sessions for Science students, giving information on module choice, research placements and post-graduate study.

Further information: www.sheffield.ac.uk/lets/student/salt

1.10 Students work with staff as ePioneers at Oxford Brookes, UK
Institutional Student ePioneer Partnerships (InStePP) seeks to create and institutionally embed a variety of active partnerships with students and, in so doing, develop, implement and exemplify:
- institutional approaches to partnerships as an integral part of digital literacy development in the curriculum and in employability policy and practice;
- digital literacies contextualised for disciplines and for career development; and
- student roles and activities which support the development of staff digital literacies.

It is part of an institutional strategic commitment to engage with students as agents of change in learning and teaching activities to develop and enhance personal and leadership attributes for employability.

The project aims to establish the role of ‘e-pioneer’: partnerships at institutional and curriculum levels, in which students share their digital skills, practices, ideas and expectations with staff at the crucial points at which decisions are made which influence the learning experience. e-Pioneers are supported in working towards professional recognition and/or academic credit for their work. Student staff partnerships help to contextualise digital literacies for the disciplines and to turn these into developmental tasks within course designs, thereby enhancing the digital literacies of both groups.

Further information: https://wiki.brookes.ac.uk/display/instepp/Home; http://www.jisc.ac.uk/whatwedo/programmes/elearning/developingdigitalliteracies/InStePP.aspx
2. Engaging students as co-designers of curriculum

2.3 Students are full members of department curriculum teams in national initiative in the UK
In 2009 the Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences (GEES) Subject Centre piloted a year-long initiative to support four GEES departments plan changes to their curricula. All but one team had one or two student members. The main feature was a 48 hour retreat where teams were supported by discipline-based experts in educational development. Roughly half the time was spent working on their own projects, while the other half was spent working with other teams and in plenary activities encouraging divergent and creative thinking and prioritizing of ideas. Teams that comprise a ‘diagonal slice’ across departments, with faculty, at different levels of seniority and functions, and students, can be very effective in breaking down status and level differences that can impede change. Students are key, providing creativity and new perspectives, and are less bound by departmental contexts. The groups were full of praise of the important contribution they made to their team’s thinking:

“It was essential to our thinking. Having the students with us has been immensely helpful, and frankly they have played as full a part as any other team member and have been just amazing.”

The approach was based on the ‘change academies’ which have been run for several years by the HE Academy where they support institutional teams developing teaching and learning initiatives. Some institutions have run internal academies where departmental teams work on related topics.

Further information: Healey et al., (2010; 2013); Flint and Oakley (2009)
http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/detail/change/change_academy

2.6 Students are engaged in co-design of assessments at University of Derby, UK
Following guidance on basic assessment principles, students on a public sector management module at Masters level with 20 participants, largely middle managers, were asked to create, negotiate and agree the module assessment brief and to tailor the standard university marking criteria. They voted on whether they wanted group or individual assessment. They were also involved in some peer-marking and giving feedback to each other. An action research project explored the responses to the intervention, from students and teachers’ perspectives. Findings were thematically analysed and ‘member checked’ with student focus groups. Most of the participants were in favour of being empowered to be involved in choice of the topic for assessment, which appropriately was ‘choice and voice’. The negotiation took about 4 hrs, about 10% of the module, but as the process was closely related to the topic the students were experiencing aspects of the process first hand. This case study illustrates that engaging students in assessment design, increases the level of understanding of assessment principles and processes, and raise their motivation and results. One of the students subsequently won £750K of Arts Council funding using models learned from the programme.

Further information: Dexter and Prince (2007a, b, c); Dexter (2012)

2.11 The role of students in the Digital Literacies (DL) in transition project at Greenwich University, UK
The aim of the Digital Literacies in Transition project is to develop a holistic model of curriculum development that strategically embeds digital literacy attributes at key points of transition within a diverse student population to enhance their life chances as graduates. To achieve this we are using a cross-institution interdisciplinary, student-led research group; termed IRG. These are funded studentships, piloted in year one and expanded in year two. Students involved in the IRG will act as both ‘young researchers’ and also agents of change, by engaging with core stakeholders (including employers, alumni, students, students’ union and staff) through a process that will enhance their own digital practice and ripple outwards back towards their schools and forwards into adding value for employers. Furthermore, this group will work with the data collected and networks formed to develop Open Educational Resources (OERs) to support both staff and students in digital literacy development. A student intern, drawing from his own experience and currency as a recent graduate, supports this group. As students move through their degree and start to develop their professional identity we need to support the digital tools and attributes to prepare them for life beyond university. To achieve this we are developing student-owned eMagazines that will act as a ‘hub’ for bring together professional, academic and discipline based activities whilst developing an online community. Through an ethos of shared ownership, whereby each eMagazine has a student editorial team supported by an academic mentor, we hope to expose students and staff to emerging and understanding approaches to DL development, contextualised to their discipline as well as traversing discipline boundaries.

Further information: http://www.DLinHE.com
2.13 Engaging students through empowering them to co-create the curriculum at University of Newcastle, UK

Undergraduates studying multiple subjects face particular challenges to establishing a student identity and a sense of belonging. Combined Honours at Newcastle University had the lowest rate of student satisfaction in the University in 2008. To address this issue a holistic approach to student engagement was taken initially by asking the students what their issues were and what they suggested the solutions were in solving these issues. A key issue was the inability of many Combined Honours students to do a dissertation or a project combining their subjects, as the subjects they studied did not allow this. In response an Independent Studies module was co-designed with student representatives. Assessment on the Independent Studies module follows a path from formative to more summative; with a balance between assessing the output and the process, assessing the latter through a culminating reflective interview. Authenticity in topic and output are encouraged by connection to the professional world beyond HE with wide scope and format choice. Peer assessment was introduced, which the students now appreciate after some initial reluctance. Support for students is delivered through workshops; with the students choosing the topics and supervision, but there are also peer groups where collaboration is encouraged. Subsequently three further modules have been co-created and designed, focused on developing ‘graduateness’. Student engagement is much higher, all round.

Further information: Colin Bryson (colin.bryson@newcastle.ac.uk)

2.20 Going beyond ‘you said, we did’ approaches to student engagement: developing effective co-design processes with part-time undergraduate health and social care leadership students at Sheffield Hallam University, UK

This project contests the assumption that part-time learners cannot be engaged effectively in authentic co-ownership of academic programmes. It presents a challenge to the rhetoric of ‘you said, we did’ approaches that cast students as predominantly passive consumers; it does so by adapting a co-design process. The co-design process is adapted from the work of Boyd, McKernon and Old (2010) who engaged healthcare patients effectively in identifying and improving services by developing an accessible toolkit (http://www.healthcodesign.org.nz). Within the spirit of collaborative learning identified by Coates (2007) students will be invited to help co-design a process-driven Student Engagement Toolkit for effective course ownership. More specifically the anticipated outcomes of the project are to:

1. Present alternative approaches for effective engagement of part-time students that go beyond models of consumption;
2. Disseminate lessons learned and recommendations that contribute to the on-going flexible pedagogies agenda;
3. Produce a prototype Student Engagement Toolkit (SET).

The leadership programme is underpinned by an ethos of engagement and co-design. On an individual level approaches such as the patchwork text assessment, spanning the duration of the programme, facilitates student choice over the pace, content and context of what they choose to present for the assessment. At the cohort level all students collectively participate in regular group reviews to shape the programme and any changes. The students who have volunteered for the co-design project will work with staff and other stakeholders in consultation with their wider cohort to map ‘the student journey’ and explore their engagement in order to co-design a toolkit. The toolkit will inform our programme provision and be disseminated to the wider institution and beyond. Students will co-write and contribute to the various project reports, wider publications and presentations as part of the wider dissemination strategy. The 18 month project is sponsored by a HE Academy teaching development grant commencing March 2014.

Further information: Ann-marie Steele (a.steele@shu.ac.uk)

3. Engaging students as teachers and assessors

There is overlap with the previous section on co-designing the curriculum. The emphasis here though is students are engaged in developing teaching resources, and directly teaching and assessing other students.
3.1 Programme co-ordinators redesigned the first year geography curriculum in collaboration with students at University College Dublin, Ireland

The programme enrolls approximately 400 students each year. The co-ordinators advertised for four third-year students to apply for the job of co-designing the curriculum with existing academic staff. These students were paid to design a new virtual learning environment based around case studies covering important themes for first-year geography, such as migration and the coffee trade. They then produced written, audio and video resources for the virtual learning environment that first-year students could interact with and use to support their learning. These case studies prompted discussion among small groups of students online and in class. The third-year students then collaborated with the programme co-ordinators to identify examples of good student work that could be used as the basis for teaching sessions. In this way, the current students’ work directly influenced and contributed to the curriculum.

_Further information:_ Bovill et al. (2011)

3.4 Medical students act as educational partners in the development of online resources at the University of Bristol, UK

This initiative involves an extension of the SSC (Student Selected Component) programme which students undertake as an open module within the undergraduate medical curriculum. Since 2003, this programme has offered the opportunity to undertake the development of e-learning materials on a clinical topic of their choice as another option within the SSC, with the intention that these are made available to other students within their peer group and those who will follow in later years. Students identify an area of need, based on existing educational resources, their own experience and from research with their peers and tutors. E-learning materials can be in any media or designs, using tools chosen and frequently learnt from scratch by the students. Typically, the e-SSCs will involve 20 to 25 students per year. As part of the assessment for this component, students write a reflective account of the project and the process of development. An analysis of a sample of these reports (25 from 2007/2008) has shown that through this initiative, students develop a range of skills (literature searching, developing a personal inquiry, IT skills, project management, collaborative team working) and different approaches to identifying and resolving problems. The analysis of reflective accounts also showed that ideas about educational theory and design principles were developing over time as one cohort builds upon the experience of those who have gone before.

_Further information:_ Timmis et al. (2010); Williams et al. (2011)

3.6 Students co-develop and co-deliver a suite of successful learning courses at University of Ballarat, Australia

At the University of Ballarat a suite of "Student Lead Learning Programs" called "Succeed @ UB" have been co-developed and co-delivered with students.

- **UBReady** is a crash course in skills development. The online teaching materials were developed by students over the summer break and the face-to-face component is co-delivered by staff and students. Last semester 150 students attended and 10 student leaders assisted.
- **The mentor program** assists with transition to university life. Last semester 110 student leaders worked with 1000-1500 students.
- **The PASS program** assists students studying in courses with traditionally high failure rates. There are 40 PASS leaders.

All three programs are overseen by one staff member. She has six interns reporting to her (ie. student leaders employed 8 hours per week for 40 weeks). The Interns are currently working on some “quick and dirty” videos and resources to teach some basic transition and study skills.

_Further information:_ [http://www.ballarat.edu.au/staff/learning-and-teaching@ub/clipp/succeed@ub](http://www.ballarat.edu.au/staff/learning-and-teaching@ub/clipp/succeed@ub)

3.8 Engaging students in researching research support and developing web resources at University of Newcastle, UK

Students identified good practice across a large faculty in undergraduate dissertation and research modules, and then shared the models of student support identified widely through a web resource that all students may draw on to assist them in such modules. All second year students were offered the opportunity to be part of the Research Project. Four students were selected and paid £200 for this. A member of staff supervised the project and interns but always ensured that the students were the ones who informed the shape of the project. The students worked in pairs to identify all the relevant modules, send out initial email contact and then arrange face-to-face interviews with
those staff who were willing. This was a major task for most of them as they had never been involved in this type of more social research before. They also spoke with student representatives in each subject to gather more student views. An emergent component from the student intern input was their desire to create a set of quality standards for research module student support with both ‘essential’ elements and ‘good practice’ elements. This will be progressed through our quality mechanisms. As intended too, development of resources for a website to assist students in dealing with dissertation issues has identified a wide variety of engaging practices – from playing a funny flash game to ways of finding a research topic.

**Further information:** Grace Barker (grace.barker@newcastle.ac.uk) and Colin Bryson (colin.bryson@newcastle.ac.uk)

### 3.12 Students are involved in the co-creation of teaching resources as part of an institutional flexible learning initiative, University of British Columbia (UBC), Canada

A number of instructors have incorporated the concept of students as producers of learning content into their courses at UBC for quite a while, and the new round of flexible learning projects features several more approaches for using student-generated content in a variety of ways and across a wide range of disciplines.

In physics, a project being led by Doug Bonn, a professor and head of the department, will ask students to develop a learning object of their choice that relates to the pre-reading material for the class, such as a worked example, clicker question, media cast, or another type of artefact. These will be used to illustrate concepts from the pre-reading material in class, and instructors will be able to use learning objects in subsequent classes (students will have the choice of assigning a Creative Commons license to their creation). The instructors will develop a framework for using this content in two flipped classroom courses, Introductory Physics (PHYS 100) in September 2013 and in Energy and Waves (PHYS 101) in January 2014. The goal of the project is to further shift the dynamics of the class beyond a flipped classroom towards a genuine learning community in which all students can participate in creating learning materials for one another and alongside faculty members.

Lisa Matthewson, an associate professor in the Department of Linguistics, is leading a project to redesign three courses: Introduction to Language and Linguistics (LING 100), Linguistic Theory and Analysis I (LING 200), and Studies in Phonology (LING 311). The courses will use a flipped classroom approach so that students can model the activity of linguists as they develop a deeper understanding of linguistics and how it is carried out. As part of the project, a team of upper-level students will help develop in-class activities. Undergraduate students are also working with faculty members on the redesign of the course.

Another example of student-generated content that began well before the Flexible Learning Initiative was a project started by Associate Professor Jon Beasley-Murray in his course Murder, Madness and Mayhem: Latin American Literature in Translation (SPAN 312) in Spring 2008. During the course, he asked students to edit and create Wikipedia articles on texts and authors they were reading in class and bring these articles up to what Wikipedia calls ‘featured article’ status. Less than 0.1 percent of Wikipedia’s articles achieve this status, and they are determined to be the best articles that Wikipedia has to offer, according to the editors of the online encyclopedia.

An article written by Beasley-Murray’s students on El Señor Presidente by Miguel Ángel Asturias became Wikipedia’s 2,000th featured article, and it was showcased on Wikipedia’s main page. Pages on Mario Vargas Llosa and The General in His Labyrinth also received featured status, and eight others received “good article” status (approximately 0.4 percent of Wikipedia articles earn that status). Only two Latin American literary topics had previously received a featured article ranking. This meant, as Beasley-Murray noted in his essay on the course, that the class ‘effected an exponential increase in the number of quality articles about Latin American culture.’


### 3.14 Students undertake paid internships as agents of change or educational researchers in biosciences at the University of Leeds, UK

The Faculty of Biological Sciences, University of Leeds has recently begun to run two programmes of non-laboratory based internships for first and second year students. The first, badged as “Students as agents of change” is where students work in groups to develop a resource to enhance the curriculum; it can be something they have identified
themselves as being needed within their programme or a project initiated by a member of staff. The second scheme is where the intern contributes (individually) to an educational research project. Examples of ongoing projects include podcasting of research seminars for student/staff use; improvements to educational environment; collation and evaluation of Open Educational Resources for teachers/students. Start-up funding for these internships was obtained from the University of Leeds Academic Development Fund and the Leeds for Life Foundation. These internships are extremely popular, with 63 applications for 18 internships in September 2011. A second tranche occurred in January 2012. Students undertaking Students as agents of change projects agree the number of hours required to complete their project with their supervisor and are paid in instalments when they meet defined objectives/milestones. Educational research interns are paid, in two installments, for 75 hours work. For both schemes, academic support and advice is provided, as required, throughout the internship, a true collaborative partnership between the intern and supervisor to meet the agreed outcomes. Students are required to blog their initial aspirations, reflect on progress and the skills gained throughout the internship and provide an end of internship case study. The Faculty has incorporated the resources into its teaching and its public engagement activities and has committed to the continued funding of the scheme. There is an opportunity for students who are stimulated by these experiences to undertake a dissertation in educational development in the biosciences in their final year.

Further information: Lewis (2011); Lewis and Morris (2012); http://insight.glos.ac.uk/tli/activities/ntf/creativehops/examples/Pages/ExamplesofCreativeHonoursprojectsfromScience,Technology,EngineeringandMathematics.aspx

4. Engaging students as SoTL practitioners

4.1 The Undergraduate Learning and Teaching Research Internship Scheme (ULTRIS) introduces undergraduate students to authentic research outside their chosen discipline at the University of Western Australia

By focusing their research on a teaching and learning issue of identified priority for the University, students are able to make significant contributions to the understanding of the problem and provide insights to inform future changes in policy and practice. Beyond the benefits to the institution and the individual students, this model of undergraduate research heralds an opportunity for research into teaching and learning to gain acceptance and interest amongst a new and previously uninvolved cohort of investigators. The second year interns are allocated a supervisor and attend an intensive training period (basic research methods) at the commencement and throughout the semester long program. Each student is provided a $3,000 stipend to eliminate the need for outside employment. Each student selects a research question from an umbrella teaching and learning topic of strategic importance to the University. In 2009 the focus of research was on staff-student interaction outside the classroom; this was followed by the first year experience, sustainability and internationalisation. The students develop their own research questions and subsequent research design, collect and analyse data, write an academic paper and report their findings both within the university community and at an external teaching and learning conference. ULTRIS was adapted for the new BPhil program at UWA, with 42 new 1st year students exploring sustainable education during the program in 2012.

Further information: Partridge and Sandover (2010); Sandover et al. (2012a)

4.2 Building a network for undergraduates researching into teaching and learning: Connecting students across continents

The Matariki Undergraduate Research Network (MURN) connects undergraduate researchers investigating teaching and learning topics in four universities spread across four countries: University of Western Australia; University of Otago, NZ; Durham University, UK; and Queens University, Canada. The universities are part of the Matariki network and in each institution 6-12 undergraduates are offered internships to explore extra-curricular teaching and learning research projects focused on a common topic (internationalisation in 2012 and 2013). The students start at the same time in June and share an online classroom using web technology to engage in synchronous and asynchronous learning. They are trained locally and globally in educational research methods (with some synchronous sessions) and are supervised locally as they undertake their research. The preparatory workshops are delivered to all students either in a synchronised process via online delivery or by staff in the respective universities. A timeline of activities and events throughout the six month project is used to ensure that students in all universities are experiencing the
same program at the same time and are able to meet online to discuss developments, progress, challenges and achievements. The students network on a regular basis to share their learning journeys and research findings. This initiative has grown out the Undergraduate Learning and Teaching Research Internship Scheme (ULTRIS), which has been trialled and evaluated over two years at The University of Western Australia.

**Further information:** Sandover et al. (2012b)

### 4.6 Students are co-inquirers in SoTL at Western Washington University, USA

Students at Western Washington University (WWU) work alongside faculty, administrators, and staff from across the University, as well as several alumni and community members in the Teaching-Learning Academy (TLA). It provides a structure for integrating the student voice into institutional initiatives for enhancing learning. Each year the TLA participants talk together in bi-weekly dialogue groups to develop a BIG question on teaching and learning to study for the year. Typically, the Fall Quarter is entirely devoted to developing the BIG question. Next, often beginning in the Winter quarter, we survey ourselves to see what we think, and mine our collective knowledge on the BIG question. Then, we invite others into the study. Next, we collectively analyze the results of our study and then the Spring quarter is typically devoted to developing and enacting action projects based on our new understandings. Students participate in the TLA in a number of different ways. Most students enrol in one of several courses and participate in the TLA as part of their coursework, including through Communication 322, Communication 339, and other courses as well. Additionally, many students participate on a volunteer basis.

**Further information:** [http://library.wwu.edu/tla](http://library.wwu.edu/tla)

### 4.9 Engaging undergraduate students in pedagogic research projects at Northampton University, UK

URB@N stands for ‘Undergraduate Research Bursaries at Northampton’. It is an innovative scheme developed by the university where undergraduate students are selected to work as paid researchers on a pedagogic research project alongside an academic supervisor. It was piloted on a small scale in 2009, and has been growing annually since then. URB@N enables undergraduate students to be funded to work with academics as 'novice researchers' on pedagogic projects. Each project has a named academic leader who acts as supervisor. Rather than being discipline-focussed, research projects are centred on learning and teaching and are explored through student voices. Academic staff members from schools across the institution and partner colleges, are encouraged to propose research questions which have the potential to benefit the department, school and/or institution and which will ultimately impact positively on the student experience. Under the guidance of the academic supervisor, students who are successfully selected for the scheme are involved in the design, data collection, analysis and dissemination of the research. On successful completion of the project, students receive a tax-free bursary payment of £500. Some examples of the topic areas investigated in previous projects have included:

- Student experience of transition into university
- Student use of assessment feedback
- Issues surrounding seminar participation
- Student engagement with employability
- Student use of technology enhanced learning
- Inclusivity in the curriculum
- The learning needs of international students

**Further information:** [http://www.northampton.ac.uk/urban](http://www.northampton.ac.uk/urban)

### 4.17 Undergraduate interns as staff developers at University of Glasgow, UK

In 2007, seven undergraduate interns at the University of Glasgow were given the opportunity to develop enquiry-based materials for courses that they are taking. Taken from a variety of backgrounds, in terms of subject area and level of study, the interns spent four weeks investigating enquiry-based learning supported by a Teaching and Learning Centre facilitator, before moving on to work with a subject-based staff mentor for the following academic year, of which I was one. Each of the interns worked on a course that they also attended as a student, and developed, with the staff mentor, at least one enquiry-based intervention. In addition to the educational development, the interns were also invited to take part in several conferences, and present their work in their own right.

**Further information:** Tierney (2012)
4.19 Students involved in international collaborative writing groups through ISSoTL

During 2012-13 the International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (ISSoTL) organised an international collaborative writing group (ICWG) initiative. Seventy people from 13 countries took part. Each of the nine groups included at least one student member. Nine scholarships were provided to subsidize the costs of student members. The year-long process started with each group preparing a 2000 word summary of the specific topic they wished to explore. This was placed on-line and each participant was asked to comment on at least two other outlines. The groups met for a two day workshop prior to the start of ISSoTL12 in Hamilton, Canada. There the groups worked on their paper and met with the other groups to share ideas, discuss topics of common interest and to receive feedback on their work. The groups then had almost three months to submit their completed article to Teaching and Learning Inquiry (ISSoTL's journal) for international peer review. All eight articles which were ready for submission were accepted after revision and appeared in a special issue of the journal (v1.2).

Further information: Healey et al. (2013)

5. Engaging students as strategy developers and advisors

5.1 Students engaged in designing the institutional learning and teaching strategy at University of Gloucestershire, UK

The University of Gloucestershire engaged students in both the process and product of strategy development over an eight month process of strategy development, consultation, revision and launch. The intention was to ensure students’ active engagement in strategy development as well as their active learning through their course of study. It commenced with a period of research into learner empowerment conducted by a network we coordinated of eight special interest groups (SIGs) consisting of staff and students, and one group consisting solely of students. When the draft strategy had been developed, based on the work of the eight SIGs, another group of students, comprising members of the student union executive, led by the Student Union President, were asked to comment on draft questions which would contribute to a student online consultation. The questions had been prepared initially by members of staff. However, as the Student Union President explained “Quite honestly the students wouldn’t have a clue what you were talking about if you asked them like that.” With this in mind they rewrote the consultation questions. Almost 300 students contributed to the strategy through a well-publicised online consultation which sought their views on draft principles and proposals related to learning teaching and assessment. In developing the strategy, students engaged purposefully in the sometimes heated discussions at the University Teaching Learning and Assessment Committee; they also contributed to discussion at Academic Board and the University’s governing Council when the strategy was submitted for approval. At the Council meeting students were keen to emphasise that their contribution to the strategy’s development had been genuine and significant; they described with some passion the value they placed in being engaged in the development of the strategy and its proposals to actively engage students in the learning process. When finally and formally launched at an event in the University in December 2007, the new Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy was introduced jointly by the Vice-Chancellor and the President of the Student Union. Two students went on to interview Professor Lewis Elton, the guest at the launch, in front of the delegates.

Further information: Healey et al. (2010)

5.3 Black and minority ethnic (BME) students advise senior managers at Kingston University, UK

The Academic Development Student Advisory Panel (ADSAP) was established in 2011 at Kingston University to advise senior managers within the Academic Development Centre (ADC) on strategies to understand and improve the experience of BME students. Approximately 8 – 10 students are involved with membership altering at the end of the academic year. The work is unpaid.

Since its inception ADSAP has engaged in a number of areas including:

- Advising the senior manager responsible for the development and implementation of the university’s Review of the Academic Framework
- Participating in a study tour to one of the university’s partner institutions in the US (University of North Carolina at Charlotte) to learn about and exchange views and experiences on: BME student attainment in higher education; academic mentoring for ethnic minorities; student engagement; and student societies
• Advising the staff team responsible for developing and implementing a new university wide pre-entry summer school scheme aimed at widening participation cohorts;
• Advising the staff team responsible for development and implementation of a new university wide first year academic mentoring scheme
• Providing ten hours of talking head footage (HD quality) of student perceptions and advice for staff and students on: staff-student relationships; transition into first year; final year and post graduate programmes; assessment and feedback; plagiarism; and academic skills centres.

The students have given joint conference presentations and engaged in formal meetings with members of university senior staff including Vice Chancellor, Deputy Vice Chancellor and Chair of Governors. 
Further information: Michael Hill (R.Hill@kingston.ac.uk)

5.4 A national centre, sparqs, supports students engage in QA and QE, Scotland
sparqs is a service funded by the Scottish Funding Council to assist and support students, students’ associations and institutions to improve the effectiveness and engagement in quality assurance and enhancement in institutions across Scotland. sparqs was created in 2003 to support the greater engagement of students in the management of quality assurance and enhancement in Scotland’s Colleges and Higher Education Institutions. The service is the responsibility of a consortium of partners consisting of NUS (National Union of Students) Scotland, Universities Scotland, Scotland's Colleges, Quality Assurance Agency in Scotland, Higher Education Academy, and Education Scotland (formerly HMIE). As part of their activities they deliver training sessions and supporting resources for a variety of Student representatives to enable their effective engagement within quality processes and for staff on how they can involve students.
Further information: http://www.sparqs.ac.uk/

5.6 Students pitch ideas on improving the student experience to the VC and other senior staff at ANU, Australia
As part of a VC’s course on Leadership and Influence in a Complex World students work in groups to develop ideas for improving the student experience at ANU. The exercise, which counts for 20% of the course mark, begins with developing individual 500 word proposal which are peer reviewed. Following discussions groups of 3-5 students with similar ideas are formed. A few weeks later each group has to submit a 500-word briefing prior to making a 5 minute pitch of the merits and practicalities of their idea to a panel consisting of the VC and other senior staff. The group will then be asked questions by the panel – anyone at random in the group can be asked a question.

5.9 Igniting a Learning Revolution: Student-led higher education for sustainability and students as a force for renewal at Uppsala University and Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Sweden
The Centre for Environment and Development Studies (CEMUS) is a student-initiated and primarily student-led university centre, straddling the two universities in Uppsala. Since its inception in the early 1990s, the Centre has initiated and greatly expanded the space for trans-disciplinary student-led higher education as well as research and collaboration that transcends traditional academic disciplines and boundaries between academia and society at large. Around 700 students enroll annually in one or more of the 20 current undergraduate, graduate and PhD courses offered at CEMUS. The courses are organized and led by students, usually recruited from the current pool of students at CEMUS, and are hired on a 9-month project-basis as course coordinators. Often working in pairs of two, the course coordinators lead the process of planning, running and evaluating each course, and do so in close partnership with a selected multidisciplinary group of researchers and teachers as well as practitioners and educational developers, who contribute to the course as guest lecturers, examiners and advisors. Over the years, several hundreds of students have worked as course coordinators, thousands of researchers, teachers and guest lecturers have been engaged and well over 10,000 students have taken one or more of the many courses offered by CEMUS.

The educational model has served as an emancipatory force for students that continue to be amazed at what they are capable of creating when given responsibility and freedom. It has also served as an oasis of creativity and pedagogical experimentation for university teachers that has inspired educational development, including new courses in their own departments.
As CEMUS itself is in constant renewal, with just a handful of permanent staff and between 5 and 10 new course coordinators hired every year, a major challenge has been to maintain sufficient continuity and institutional memory to navigate and manage the evolution of the Centre. In the last two years this has sparked an increased collaboration with a number of new partners, both within and outside the university, nationally and internationally. The two-year project “Active Student Participation in Higher Education at Uppsala University” in collaboration with the Department of Quality Enhancement and Academic Teaching and Learning, and with strategic funds from the vice-chancellor of Uppsala University, aims to inspire and support students to become active co-creators of higher education. The installment of guest professorships and the development of new research fields, inspired by themes from CEMUS courses and made possible by co-funding from philanthropic organizations, is another example. Recent projects also include collaborations with students and educational developers at universities from several different continents.

Further information: Stoddard (2012, 2013); Hald (2011); Nitsch (2014); Reiser (2014)

5.10 Students centrally involved in curriculum and building design in Engineering at Queens University, Canada

In the late 1990s the Faculty of Engineering at Queen’s University in Kingston, Ontario introduced a new integrated learning curriculum that emphasized a common first-year program for all entering students, project-based active learning in small teams on real-world issues, development of communication skills and openness to social, environmental and economic issues affecting engineering decisions. A new engineering building was designed to facilitate this new approach that included, for example, dozens of small group rooms for project work, open labs with access 24-hours a day, space for informal social interaction, including a student-run tea room that encouraged environmental sustainability, and a "live building" in which the centre's mechanical, electrical and structural systems are monitored in real-time and left open to view, to show how sustainable practices can be incorporated into building design. Students were centrally involved in the planning of both the new curriculum and the building itself. Both undergraduate and graduate students were prominently represented on the planning committee and their views (and votes) were often decisive in making key decisions. Early in the planning stage members of the committee visited other innovative engineering programs in Europe and the USA, and students participated fully in all these visits. One consequence was that when they curriculum came to be implemented it met with widespread student support, instead of suspicion or antagonism.


For more information about partnership in learning and teaching and references see:

The following sets of case studies and bibliographies are regularly updated. They are available at:
www.mickhealey.c.o.uk/resources
Linking teaching and research through engaging students in research and inquiry.
Linking teaching and research: A selected bibliography.
Students as change agents in learning and teaching in higher education.
Students as change agents: A selected bibliography.