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**Strand - Student success**

**Measuring student success – are there alternative metrics?**

There is a plethora of literature to support the importance of student engagement in the wider university experience as a measure of value and contribution to success. Various reports have acknowledged that students who engage with the wider Higher Education experience (beyond their core discipline) are more likely to succeed in their studies, develop resilience and the skills/attributes to sustain them in their future careers and are less likely to leave their studies. It is for this reason that increasing opportunities for engagement is deemed core to most Higher Educational institutional missions and values. Engagement is a key element of institutional competitiveness and contributes enormously to a positive learning experience. Yet this is a complex and wicked problem in itself as; the diversity of the student population widens, pressure from external stakeholders intensifies to enhance graduate attributes, and student expectations (and those of their families) increase. Understanding engagement in the context of both the internal and external environment is a critical factor to enriching student learning and developing a sense of belonging; and as a creative sector we need to explore and share innovative approaches which enhance engagement in the broadest sense.

A case study is presented for integrating design challenge-led learning into the UG experience based on evidence gathered during 2012-2017 at University of Huddersfield. The underlining and guiding principle of the case study are based upon the values of experiential learning and the Chinese proverb – “Tell me and I will forget; show me and I may remember; involve me and I will understand”. Engagement is defined as designing learning opportunities to develop: a sense of belonging, integration with studies and wider HE experience, feeling of value and identity, networks and friends, confidence in working beyond discipline, skills to succeed beyond course. It was recognised that in today’s global economy and in society as a whole we are faced with many complex challenges which require new ways of working and the development of advanced skills and attributes. Interdisciplinary challenge-led learning is presented as a new mode of knowledge production, it focuses on building intellectual capacity through creating sustainable networks to co-create knowledge and develop learning communities to equip graduates to deal with and provide solutions to complex challenges. Two contrasting frameworks are presented for introducing complex global challenges and commercial challenges into an interdisciplinary context to increase engagement opportunities within the students learning journey. The presentation provides a synthesis of impact from the university, external stakeholders and student’s perspective.

This presentation will be of interest to all design academics who wish to transcend disciplines and develop new epistemological approaches. Providing opportunities for development of problem solving, teamwork, self-awareness and interpersonal communication skill whilst extending their students’ professional network. It will also be of interest to HE leaders who wish to explore mechanisms for embedding learning communities, enhancing knowledge co-creation and developing commercial awareness to build a sense of belonging within the academic community and the wider HE network to improve engagement.