

The Hidden Curriculum: Unpacking the academic practices critical for student success

18 July 2019, Advance HE, York

Session abstracts

Registration & refreshments: 09:00-09:45, Visitor Area

Welcome: 09:45-10:00, MR 1-3

Tim Hinchcliffe and Patrick Baugham, Advance HE

Keynote: 10:00-10:45, MR 1-3

Orderly disorders and radical re-alignments: Rethinking the curriculum

Professor Paul Kleiman, Ciel Associates

As the configurations of higher education become ever more complex, institutions and disciplines try to work out how best to configure/re-configure themselves in order to ensure sustainability and success. In that process debates about the purposes of higher education have become increasingly serious and pressing. Located somewhere within the challenging socio-political-economic drivers and pressures are discourses and practices associated with creativity, innovation and transformation. Frequently these appear to be, or are perceived to be, paradoxical or even antithetical in a higher education system focused increasingly on predictable linearity, supplying the job market, and reducing graduates to both customers and human capital. But, as our students face an increasingly complex and uncertain future, we may well need to re-think the facets of the hidden curriculum: what is taught, and why and how it is taught.

Parallel session 1: 10:45-11:45

1.1a: Student response systems: A tool to help improve BAME student engagement and create an inclusive learning environment?

Oral presentation, MR 7-8

Petrena Notice and Victoria Coombs, Canterbury Christ Church University

In recent years there has been a proliferation in the progress made in widening university access and participation to students from underrepresented and disadvantaged groups in the UK. Nonetheless, existing literature highlights an attainment gap between Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) students and their white peers. Although the causal factors are complex: poor attainment and progression have been associated with lower levels of engagement. This research assesses whether student response systems can enhance student engagement, finding that students engaged more when SRS was utilised in the classroom, giving students a sense of belonging.

1.1b: Developing more diverse and inclusive capstones for Management and Business students

Oral presentation, MR 7-8

Angela Mazzetti and Stefanie Reissner, Newcastle University Business School

With a changing cultural and socio-economic student demographic profile and changing employer needs, it is important that Business Schools develop more diverse and inclusive capstone options which take into consideration the skills and aspirations of their students to better prepare them for their future of work. This presentation provides insights into our experiences of designing and implementing two alternative capstones at Newcastle University Business School. The first alternative, Advanced Business Practice, offers a

practice-based alternative to consultancy-style projects and the second alternative, Advanced Business Topics, provides a research-based alternative to the traditional dissertation.

1.1c: Creating evidence-based practice to facilitate BTEC students' transition to university

Oral presentation, MR 7-8

Dan Herbert, University of Birmingham and Helen MacKenzie, University of Loughborough

Transitions between stages and institutions in education have received increasing focus in the last 10 years. This HEFCE/OfS-funded two-year project focused on the transition of students with BTEC qualifications into selective universities. We will present the results of interventions developed through the project as well as the wider issues around transition that the project surfaced.

1.2a: Exploring the opportunities and dilemmas of using collaborative action research: Working with students as co-creators to embed equality and decolonise the undergraduate Level One Architecture curriculum

Oral presentation, MR 1-3

Danielle Chavrimootoo, Kingston University

The aim of this work in progress project is to understand the opportunities and dilemmas of attempting to embed equality and decolonise the year one Architecture curriculum. The project aims to explore staff and students' reflective considerations of working together to develop a more inclusive Level One curriculum. It is hoped that the research project will, in turn, provide guidance to academics and educational developers who may be considering using co-creation strategies to support diversifying the curriculum.

1.2b: Understanding the barriers posed by the hidden curriculum that HE students from diverse cultural and social backgrounds experience in their studies

Oral presentation, MR 1-3

George Koutsouris and Anna Mountford-Zimdars, University of Exeter

This presentation reports on the findings from a small-scale project that attempts to better understand the barriers that HE students from diverse cultural/social backgrounds experience in their studies, using the theoretical lenses of the 'Hidden Curriculum' (HC) and the 'implied student'. The study focused on students' perceptions of and attitudes towards aspects of the HC and involved eight undergraduate/postgraduate students from Humanities and Social Sciences courses as co-researchers. The findings suggest that HE students can experience barriers just because of their previous educational, cultural or social experiences and that tutors and the institution might not be adequately prepared to address such barriers.

1.2c: Using curriculum redesign to uncover and respond to the hidden curriculum

Oral presentation, MR 1-3

Beverley Gibbs, University of Sheffield

This session describes how a major curriculum design opportunity is uncovering and responding to the hidden curriculum. This includes processes deployed including a negotiated learning and teaching ethos, innovative student engagement, and explicit staged programme learning outcomes. Features that became unhidden included development of transferable skills, concepts of professionalism, and mental models of student behaviour that are based on 'being like us'. The talk concludes with some of our responses, including structured support for transferable skills, a space for individual reflection on professional competences, and a change in language *from "the students are..." to "some students can..."*.

Refreshments: 11:45-12:00

Parallel session 2: 12:00-13:00

2.1: Academic reading: The hidden threshold concept

Workshop, MR 7-8

Angela Rhead, Keele University

Reading is widely subordinated to writing in academic literacies discourse and university practice. Moreover, university academic support interventions are persistently criticised for sitting outside disciplinary knowledge and delivering remedies for student deficit, not curriculum design. This workshop will share research about an exciting teaching innovation: 'Academic Reading Retreats'. Drawing together academics and students to uncover the hidden, difficult to explain, intuitive practices of confident readers, academic reading retreats unearth tacit assumptions, providing insight and strategies for undergraduates, postgraduates and academics alike. Participants will consider practice examples and strategies, and reflect on opportunities to adopt and adapt in their own practice.

2.2: Evaluating an online pre-university course for 'alternative' (contextual) offer holders: Considering assumptions in curriculum design

Workshop, MR 1-3

Louise Green, Katherine Koule and Rebecca Surin, UCL Institute of Education

This research workshop explores ways in which pre-university provision for 'alternative' offer holders might be evaluated effectively, and focuses on how linguistic aspects of 'hidden curricula' may need particular attention. Drawing on our experiences of designing, running and evaluating Preparation for Academic Study, a University College London self-access online course for pre-university 'alternative' offer holders, we invite participants to critically discuss ways in which the effectiveness of such a course can be measured, and to share experiences and perceptions of similar initiatives offered by other higher education institutions.

Lunch & Poster session: 13:00-13:45, MR 1-3

Evaluation of student engagement by aligning curriculum using a constructive alignment framework: An action research approach

MShanthi Rajan, University of Bolton, RAK Academic Centre, UAE

Student Engagement (SE) has gained importance in academic institutions and research in academia identifies the importance of SE with regards to student success and their overall academic achievements. Curriculum and instructional design plays a significant role allowing learners to construct meaning to what they learn and its impact on student performance. In order to bring about an efficient system it is imperative that all aspects of teaching, learning and assessments are fine-tuned and constructively aligned to support deep learning. The role of an educationist is to create a conducive learning environment that supports the learning activities appropriate to achieving intended learning outcomes.

Demystifying, challenging and (re)working together: Cross-specialist collaboration to support transitions into HE

Steve Dixon-Smith, Anna Holder, Kim Trogal and Ian Badger, University for the Creative Arts

This case study documents curricular and pedagogical innovations that address hidden curricula and demystify academic practices for diverse cohorts of undergraduate Architecture students transitioning into HE.

Resulting from cross-specialist collaboration, the approach supports diverse student cohorts to combat 'misrecognition of students from 'non-traditional' backgrounds and their abilities' when 'academic practices are presented as neutral, decontextualised sets of technical skills and literacy that students from socially disadvantaged backgrounds are

seen to lack' (Burke, 2015:21). This combines with curricular work that responds to critique of the epistemological basis of histories of art and design upon which curricula are commonly built (Hylton, 2019:426).

Parallel session 3: 13:45-14:45

3.1: Curricular interventions to encourage female students in STEM subjects: Biotechnology course as a case study

Workshop, MR 7-8

Nagamani Bora, University of Nottingham

Despite a number of attempts to increase the representation of women in STEM subjects through gender equity policies and campaigns there still exists a gap in achieving this goal. Biotechnology is an interdisciplinary modern science with a huge impact on socio-economic aspects of a country. There is an underrepresentation of female students on Biotechnology degree programmes at undergraduate level, where data also highlights a low proportion of high achievers. There is a requirement for intervention strategies at curricular level to address contributing factors for low female enrolment on this course ultimately leading to better representation of women in STEM careers.

3.2: Addressing old teacher deficits rather than new student demographics

Workshop, MR 1-3

James Wilkinson, Queen Mary University of London

Finding inclusive higher education pedagogies is important. However, some preoccupation with diversity risks over-emphasising student deficits while ignoring teacher shortcomings. These include a tendency to prioritise knowledge transmission without revealing and developing the practices needed to process, critique and transform that knowledge. Transmission can expertly model knowledge construction but fails to develop students' feelings of agency or of connection with the people and values they encounter in higher education.

Workshop participants will explore these issues using existing methods, combined to reveal and develop the above hidden practices, at the same time fostering motivation, self-esteem and generative agency.

Refreshments: 14:45-15:00

Parallel session 4: 15:00-15:40

4.1a: Embedding employability: Creating an inclusive curriculum that supports students to achieve their aspirations

Oral presentation, MR 7-8

Aranee Manoharan, Kingston University London

This presentation will make the case that employability is a hidden and neglected aspect of the curriculum that must be recognised and prioritised if we are to best serve increasingly diverse student populations and support them to achieve their personal aspirations. It will reflect upon Kingston University's journey towards embedding employability within the curriculum through subject-specific learning and teaching, by outlining our new approach, and sharing the successes and challenges experienced in its first year of implementation.

4.1b: Integrating employability into knowledge and skills development in the creative industries: A case study

Oral presentation, MR 7-8

Ian Palmer, Sarah Macdonald, Simon Fenton, Davi Stein, Alex Williams and Mark Spevick, Escape Studios, Pearson College London

Pearson College London incorporates industry engagement in all its activities, and co-designed its creative industry programmes with professionals and students to ensure this

is a key feature of its programmes. This has highlighted the importance of developing in students the non-discipline specific so-called 'soft' skills that are essential for graduates to succeed, which we refer to as the 'second syllabus'. Integrating this into the core learning and teaching, and using industry, peer and self-assessment to identify progress and areas for development across the discipline and transferable skills has allowed us support and engage students in this key area for employability.

4.2a: Autism and higher education: Nested hidden curricula

oral presentation, MR 1-3

Peter Hughes, Leeds Arts University

This paper is offered from the position of being an autistic academic and educational developer with broad experience in developing curricula, and teaching and supporting others in the development of curricula. Through the lens of autism I will engage with the concept of the "hidden curriculum" in terms of how it speaks to the experiences of autistic students in HE.

4.2b: The *Ixodonta africana* in the room: Teaching students to write in their disciplines and professions

Oral presentation, MR 1-3

Victor Guillen Solano, University of Sheffield

Assessment practices in anglophone academia still privilege written discourse, yet academic writing is a key element of the curriculum that is rarely explicitly taught. Students are often expected to either enter academia with the ability to produce relevant disciplinary and/or professional genres, or 'pick up' the necessary skills as they move across modules. Current curricula design practices in the UK can disadvantage international students who do not have English as a first language. In this session, I draw on my research to highlight the need to integrate academic literacy development into academic curricula and discuss current efforts in this area at one UK university.

Plenary: 15:40-16:00, MR 1-3

Tim Hinchcliffe and Patrick Baugham, Advance HE