Employability Symposium 2021: 3Es for Wicked Problems

Session abstracts
22 April 2021

Session 1, 1.1 Oral presentation (20mins)
The Scottish Innovative Student Award (SISA): Preparing students to tackle wicked problems
Ann Davidson, Scottish Institute for Enterprise (SIE) and Dr Joy Perkins, University of Aberdeen and Dr Pauline Bremner, Robert Gordon University

Most, if not all, UK universities are assisting students to develop skills for the ever-changing employment landscape. It is against this backdrop that the Scottish Innovative Student Award (SISA) has been devised by the Scottish Institute for Enterprise (SIE). The three-tier award recognises students’ enterprise skills, which already exist in academic modules at Level 1 and then builds upon this to enhance students’ creative potential at Level 2 through a national one-day workshop, and entrepreneurial-based activity at Level 3. This presentation will explore the SISA methodology of embedding Enterprise Education into the curriculum/co-curriculum, to help address ‘wicked problems’ in multi-disciplinary areas.

Session 1, 1.2 Oral presentation (20mins)
Revaluing enterprise education in the twenty-first century: Unifying learning and teaching, research, and knowledge exchange to thrive and succeed in a changing world
Dr Gary Wood and Dr Ceri Batchelder, University of Sheffield and Dr Princy Johnson, Liverpool John Moores University

Enterprise Education is receiving increasing attention, but is not yet a core focus for HEIs. In parallel, increased use of impact measures in research, teaching, and knowledge exchange has been introduced. Too often these areas feel like competing priorities. We draw on our experience of delivering Enterprise and Leadership programmes in a variety of contexts to propose a positioning of Enterprise Education at the core of university activities. There are three benefits: (1) it provides an integrated approach to delivering excellence across REF, TEF and KEF; (2) it improves student and staff employability and professional capability; and (3) it enables students, institutions and their staff to develop resilience.

Session 1, 1.3 Oral presentation (20mins)
A problem-based, student-led concept for embedding employability skills in the curriculum
Dr Mircea Scrob and Helen Hook, University of Birmingham

This presentation will showcase an Entrepreneurial Skills module which was designed to embed employability skills, technological innovation and creative thinking in the curriculum of students at the University of Birmingham. In this module, prompts are set by Digital Birmingham with challenges the city faces and the students work in groups to create a business concept that will solve those challenges. Every part of the business journey is covered, from ideation up to pitching to a panel of industry experts. The focus is two-fold: on the process of going through the entrepreneurial journey and gaining skills; and on outcomes, harnessing the creativity of students to solve real-world problems.
Session 2, 2.1 Oral presentation (20mins)
Entrepreneurially equipped and employable: A co-curricular approach to developing graduate attributes fit for tackling the wicked problems faced by our society
Anka Djordjevic, University of Exeter
The University of Exeter has a portfolio of co-curricular programmes and opportunities that enable graduates to develop the entrepreneurial competencies they need in order to thrive in the complex and uncertain job market. In this session, delegates will have an opportunity to explore the approach that the Student Employability and Development team has applied to their first year Employability curriculum, personal development sessions and flagship experiential learning programmes. Through this approach, students develop their skills, improve themselves and are motivated by connecting to the entrepreneurial ethos of working to create value for others.

Session 2, 2.2 Oral presentation (20mins)
Solving wicked problems in healthcare innovation: Bringing industry and entrepreneurial doctoral researchers together
Dr Fumi Kitagawa, Layla Mathieson and Jean O'Donoghue, University of Edinburgh and Kirsty Ross, University of Strathclyde
This case study explores using a “Student-led Individually Created Course” (SLICC) in close collaboration with industry and a PhD cohort to address healthcare innovation. The SLICC framework helped students co-create their learning experience with our industry partner, Canon Medical, which led to deeper student engagement drawing on their own research expertise. Our experiences show that the SLICC format can be flexible and agile, providing a fully online mode of learning with external partners capable of addressing wicked problems. It could be adapted to look at evaluating work placements, capstone projects and students’ consultancy projects in many other settings.

Session 2, 2.3 Oral presentation (20mins)
SOARing for employability and entrepreneurship
Arti Kumar, Freelance HE Consultant / trainer
'SOARing to Success' addresses a key and continuing need: How we lay the foundations for sustainability employability and a fulfilling life in an increasingly complex world. SOAR delivers both understanding and practical 'tools' for enabling the transitions our students need to make.

Parallel Session 3, 3.1a Oral presentation (20mins)
An integrated approach to developing global employability
Dr Ruth Brooks, University of Huddersfield
With an increasingly socially and culturally diverse student body, it is a challenge to prepare graduates for an intensely competitive global labour. Adopting an interdisciplinary approach, this presentation discusses a pilot project to develop an employability spine across three years of an undergraduate degree. The learning outcomes for each year were mapped against Tomlinson’s (2017) 'Graduate Capital Model' and Bennett’s (1986) Development Model of Intercultural Sensitivity. Findings indicate that an interdisciplinary global
professional, intercultural effectiveness and capital holdings approach adds a cutting-edge dimension to the traditional skills and abilities activities undertaken to develop employability.

**Parallel Session 3, 3.1b Oral presentation (20mins)**

*Birley place: An innovation to support learning about the complexities of interprofessional working*

Ffion Evans, Professor Kirsten Jack, Elenor Hannan, Professor Claire Hamshire and Professor Alison Chambers, Manchester Metropolitan University

This presentation will outline how a team from Manchester Metropolitan University's Faculty of Health, Psychology and Social Care approached the challenge of embedding Interprofessional Education (IPE) into the curricula for a large group of first-year undergraduates. By integrating the University Graduate Outcomes framework within IPE, a blended learning programme was developed which enabled students to apply and rehearse employability and interpersonal skills. The integration of bespoke learning resources within a simulated web-based virtual community – Birley Place, supported the development of real-world employment competencies and helped navigate the challenges of integrating IPE across the Faculty's suite of programmes.

**Parallel Session 3, 3.1c Oral presentation (20mins)**

*Embedding employability explicitly in the undergraduate Physics curriculum to boost creativity, self-efficacy and leadership*

Dr Andrea Jiménez Dalmaroni, Cardiff University

In order to answer the demands of a 21st century society, Physics education should provide explicit opportunities for students to acquire the additional knowledge and practise skills that will allow them to be more successful in the workplace. To this end, and using the techniques of backward curriculum design, we developed a new employability module to support a year placement for second year undergraduate students. The module, based on collaborative and active learning, provides Physics students an opportunity to practise graduate attributes and transferable skills, appropriate to any modern professional workplace, crucially boosting students' creativity, self-efficacy and leadership skills.

**Parallel session 3, 3.1d Oral presentation (20mins)**

*Socially distanced work experience in a Music degree programme*

Dr Michelle Phillips and Hannah McCabe, Royal Northern College of Music

Many undergraduate degree programmes include an element of work-related learning. Research suggests that such training can enhance employability. Given how the creative industries have suffered during COVID-19, it is more important than ever to equip graduates with skills for their careers. At the RNCM, we redesigned the compulsory year 3 module ‘Professional Placement’ to become online classes with industry experts, in order to enable students to experience work-related learning. These sessions have been extremely well received by students, highly effective in an online environment, and they have also enabled students to encounter more industry partners than they would have done if they had undertaken a Professional Placement with one industry partner.
Parallel Session 3, 3.2a Oral presentation (20mins)
Solving wicked problems through transdisciplinary Enterprise Education
Dr Iain Stalker and Dr Fredrick Agboma, University of Bolton
Growing awareness of environmental issues and their cumulative impact have provoked increasing demands for accountability and corporate responsibility. There is a groundswell of opinion that we must seek to replace traditional “take-make-waste” models with a ‘Circular Economy’. Such imbalances cannot be redressed by professionals in isolation: these are ‘wicked problems’ comprising systems-within-systems. In this session we will discuss the new MSc in Entrepreneurship and Innovation (MSC E&I), part of an innovative suite of Career Development Masters programmes at the University of Bolton, developed with the express intent of providing transdisciplinary education to equip professionals with the skills and sensitivities to successfully tackle ‘wicked problems’.

Parallel session 3, 3.2b Oral presentation (20mins)
Enterprising students: A values-driven, competency-based framework for embedding enterprise in the HE curriculum
Dr Daniel Marshall, Ester Ragonese and Steve Altham, Liverpool John Moores University
Higher education needs to equip students with enterprise skills alongside the technical and subject knowledge they receive, to enable successful transition to the workplace. Adapting the Advance HE Enterprise and Entrepreneurship Education Framework, we are developing a values-driven, competency-based framework to underpin an enterprise programme for Liverpool John Moores University students. The development of enterprise skills is integral to the programme to empower students to recognise and reflect on core competencies they encounter in HE, improving employability awareness and graduate outcomes. This session will present the framework and emerging themes from an ongoing pilot study with students.

Parallel Session 3, 3.2c Oral presentation (20mins)
A cross-disciplinary humanities and social sciences entrepreneurship module: what we did and what we’ve learned.
Dr Andrea Macrae, Oxford Brookes University
2020-2021 saw the first run of a new entrepreneurship module offered to second year undergraduate Humanities and Social Sciences students at Oxford Brookes University. This talk shares the journey of that module; problems it faced (resolved and fresh); solutions and work-arounds; and key lessons so far, from both staff and student perspectives. It also gives a flavour of some of the work produced by the students, and what this suggests regarding the value and potential future direction of the module.

Parallel Session 3, 3.2d Oral presentation (20mins)
Improving student problem-solving capabilities and self-confidence through enjoyable entrepreneurial activity
Marcus Simmons, University of Central Lancashire
Developing student’s ability to solve problems and overcome uncertainty is central to Entrepreneurship Education. This case study will illustrate how an Enterprise module utilised experiential learning to educate students through entrepreneurial activity. Students reported improved problem-solving skills, deeper learning and increased self-confidence from a
module they enjoyed and valued. Improved academic outcomes were also achieved but did not relate directly to entrepreneurial outcomes.

**Parallel Session 3, 3.3a Oral presentation (20mins)**  
**Sharing a theoretically informed 'image' of teaching creativity**  
Jane Hartley, University of Central Lancashire  
This presentation shares a theoretically informed 'image' of teaching creativity in the context of questions as to how this might be achieved. It is based in generic theorisations of the creative process and offered as potential use to others, wrestling with how to design and deliver curricula for 'the as yet unknown' - curricula and teaching that might produce a novelty of value to context. The framework was developed as part of an abductive process of analysis undertaken as part of a critical auto-ethnographic research project.

**Parallel Session 3, 3.3b Oral presentation (20mins)**  
**Reflecting on the 3Es: Developing students' reflective practice on placement**  
Keith Herrmann, Higher Ed Research and Heidi Hazeu, University of Surrey  
On placement, University of Surrey students are tackling the world's 'wicked problems'. They are often working on exciting projects dealing with climate change, social justice, new technologies for sustainability, etc. When reviewing the placement programme, we found that these authentic learning experiences were not adequately captured in how we were assessing students. There was a need to better frame the competencies, skills and behaviours they develop on placement. We reviewed the placement programme to ensure greater consistency in the student experience and provide a structured framework to help students develop a practical understanding of employability through much enhanced reflective practice.

**Parallel session 3, 3.3c Oral presentation (20mins)**  
**Creative business accelerator**  
Emma Thatcher and Richard Sant, University of the Arts London  
Creative HE courses often produce students with a wealth of ideas to start a business, but their enterprise learning needs are different from traditional models offered by HE business support hubs. Starting with the idea of the traditional Start-Up Accelerator model, UAL's C&E team developed a unique Creative Business Accelerator; utilising a framework that suited the needs of creative graduates to grow their businesses.

**Parallel session 3, 3.3d Oral presentation (20mins)**  
**Increasing the employability of Psychology undergraduate students: A specific skills-set curriculum**  
Dr Pauldy Otermans and Dr Sofia Barbosa Boucas, Brunel University London  
The aim of this session is to showcase how to place employability at the heart of the curriculum. We believe a degree is much more than a certificate. Our students must be ready for the graduate job market and be able to develop the relevant skills-sets whilst studying to give them a unique advantage that sets them apart from other graduates. This session provides a detailed overview of the different components of the Brunel Psychology
Parallel session 4, 4.1a Oral presentation (20mins)
Interdisciplinary design for ambiguity: Work in a wicked world
Elaine Brown and Dr Beatriz Acevedo, Anglia Ruskin University
If our role in higher education is to prepare students for their futures, it is a future of change and uncertainty for which students should be prepared. Students need opportunities to experience the discomfort of change and uncertainty to develop and rehearse flexible mind-sets. This session explores the process of designing institution-wide, undergraduate, interdisciplinary Ruskin modules that pursue the integration of different disciplines to shape the skills, attributes and behaviours needed to address wicked problems. We will reflect that the change, uncertainty and ambiguity for which we design, also need to be echoed within the design process itself.

Parallel session 4, 4.1b Oral presentation (20mins)
To be or not to be enterprising? An interdisciplinary approach to Enterprise Education
Joanne Morrissey, Dr Beatriz Acevedo and Marcia Baldry, Anglia Ruskin University
This presentation concerns the co-creation of guidelines and content for an interdisciplinary module titled “To be or not to be enterprising?” as part of the Ruskin Modules at Anglia Ruskin University. Ruskin Modules are interdisciplinary initiatives, compulsory for Level 5 students across the institution, framed around wicked problems related with Sustainable Development Goals, and dealing with uncertainty and ambiguity.

Parallel session 4, 4.1c Oral presentation (20mins)
Upskilling a generation using soft skills and transferable skills training: Our employability vision
Dev Aditya and Dr Pauldy Otermans, Otermans Institute
“Upskilling is not a gift, it is a given”. Our vision is to upskill a generation through employability and transferable skills training and make them employable. We use a blend of in-person and digital training to reach our learners currently in eight countries using interactive teaching methods and pedagogy. Preliminary data shows that over 91% of the learners are very satisfied with the digital training sessions (5-star) and over 79% of learners agreed that they understand and can apply the content. With this, we are developing a scientific framework for the development of soft skills and transferable skills.
Parallel session 4, 4.1d Oral presentation (20mins)
Successful transitions: Engaging students to build, manage and sustain a creative career beyond graduation
Kirsteen Aubrey, Manchester Metropolitan University
Entering a post-COVID world and a fluctuating labour market, this case study questions the implications for employability, a particular challenge in Art, Design and Media graduates. Researching quantitative and qualitative data, the analysis of Programme traits and student narrative informed a series of multimodal employability activities that explores the impact of location, approach, scale and duration on engagement. Discipline understanding and the student voice were key to informing meaningful employability engagement. Designing activities in spaces and with an approach that reflects discipline, career readiness and student confidence is key, and has scope to be utilised across the HE sector.

Parallel session 4, 4.2a Oral presentation (20mins)
Transforming social capital through reimagining 3Es in the curriculum - London South Bank University Business School
Angela Dalrymple and Angela Ellermeier, London South Bank University
In an area of high economic deprivation, LSBU Business School has engaged employers, students and academics to reimagine and co-create an inspiring new 3E-based curriculum. This resulted in significant improvements in student progression, NSS satisfaction, applied and authentic assessment transformation, civic engagement, and a leap in social capital to adapt to the "messy" business environment into which students graduate. LSBU’s throughline now connects students, apprentices, employers and academics in transforming the employability landscape across south London.

Parallel session 4, 4.2b Oral presentation (20mins)
Enabling authentic community-facing employability opportunities in a pandemic? Host a music festival!
Lucy Squire, University of South Wales
Enabling authentic community-facing employability opportunities in a pandemic? Host a music festival! This presentation will showcase how 250 creative industries students and staff collaborated in partnership with industry and each other to generate a diverse and inclusive festival that truly triumphed over adversity.

Parallel session 4, 4.2c Oral presentation (20mins)
Developing networks at all stages of the international student's learning journey
Dr Victoria Wilson-Crane and Dr Diane Dale, Kaplan International Pathways
Supporting students to engage with professional networks and professional bodies, what can they learn? What can professional organisations learn from engaging with students at an early stage of their UK HE journey? Using concepts of intercultural learning, liminality and the 'personal boardroom', international students on pathways programmes to UK HE have been encouraged to join a range of professional bodies and network organisations - part of the employability and career readiness offering at Kaplan International Pathways. It aimed to help students contextualise their knowledge from their pathways course, feel part of a professional group, access additional resources and guidance and begin to build a global
professional network for their future careers. Employers value team colleagues who can work independently and collaboratively maximising their own and other social and professional networks – why wait until the student is employed to start thinking about those skills?

Parallel session 4, 4.2d Oral presentation (20mins)
Embedding a student-centred approach to ‘employability work’ in subject studies
Jane Hartley, University of Central Lancashire
In this presentation, I will explain my embedding of ‘employability work’ into my subject teaching. I will discuss my reasoning for this and the approach taken (Bolles ‘self-inventory approach’), what I did and provide example student outcomes. The practice will be shared to be of potential use to others as it is based in proven, workable, and effective approaches, is under-considered in current discourses and attends to the happiness and wellbeing of students.

Parallel session 4, 4.3a Oral presentation (20mins)
Enterprise residency: Enterprise and entrepreneurship education at the heart of the curriculum
Caroline Nouvellon, Sheffield Hallam University
This session will provide an overview of Sheffield Hallam University’s approach in developing an employability strategy that recognises the equal value and importance of the 3Es (Enterprise, Entrepreneurship and Employability). The Highly Skilled Employability (HSE) model enshrines these values and serves as a blueprint for developing an innovative approach to embedding the 3Es into the curriculum.

Parallel session 4, 4.3b Oral presentation (20mins)
Student research projects: Bridging academic learning and the wider student experience
Dr Matthew Aldrich, University of East Anglia
The economics dissertation/project is a final year ‘capstone’ module that allows students to bring together knowledge, skills and attributes developed through their course and wider experiences. With an emphasis on intrinsic motivations, values and interests, students are challenged to research a ‘wicked problem’ for the benefit of society. This can be an academic dissertation or a project on behalf of an external organisation. Using a task-based approach, the two key elements of the module help students recognise their development: self-reflection and peer learning/feedback. This encourages deeper learning and self-awareness, connecting student learning with their wider experience and aspirations.

Parallel session 4, 4.3c Oral presentation (20mins)
A toolkit for diversifying assessment and developing skills literacy
Dr Shirley Shipman and Dr Andrea Macrae, Oxford Brookes University
This session presents a web-based tool that uniquely links transferable skills to assessments and that, additionally, supports and promotes diversification of assessment. The tool is searchable by assessment and skills type. The tool includes the full range of assessments across the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences and is unique in linking each form of assessment to a suite of core and subsidiary skills developed by students through successful completion of the assessment. In doing so, this enables teaching staff and students to recognise and articulate the transferable skills developed through each type of assessment.
Parallel session 4, 4.3d Oral presentation (20mins)

Co-designing graduates
Ms Lauren Moriarty, Leeds School of Arts, Leeds Beckett University

In this presentation, Lauren Moriarty will explore the outcomes of her ongoing co-design work with Product Design students, careers advisors, industry and academic teams. The study explores the territory of graduate employability in order to design co-created solutions for how we might embed employability into our course curricula. Her presentation will convey her experiences of co-designing with stakeholders as a research method, highlighting the merits and challenges. Twitter tags: @LBU_LSA  @LBU_BA_Product.