Students as Co-Creators Symposium 2022: Beyond Engagement: The emerging role of students as co-creators of their learning experience

26 January 2023, theStudio, Manchester

Session abstracts

Keynote session, 10:05 – 10:40, Room: Work

The transformational potential of co-creation
Professor Catherine Bovill, University of Edinburgh

In this keynote, I will highlight the wide range of co-creation practice taking place across higher education internationally, and I will present a range of evidence demonstrating the benefits of co-creation. For staff and students who experience co-creation, some of these benefits are transformational, suggesting that we need to maximise co-creation opportunities for all staff and students. This requires a significant change of mind-set and perspective for many staff and students to consider how we can co-create all aspects of the student experience.

Session 1.1, 10:45 – 11:25, Room: Work

Session 1.1a
Towards a more Inclusive understanding of uartnership: Case study of a student-initiated inter-institutional virtual service-learning initiative
Alya Prasad, The University of Hong Kong

Case Study
Partnerships have noteworthy benefits. Yet they are largely faculty-initiated and often exclusive to highly engaged and academically brilliant students. Partnerships in literature are also rarely framed as inter-institutional and cross-disciplinary initiatives, calling for more inclusive understandings of partnerships. This session brings to you an evidence-informed example of an authentic and inclusive co-creation project, Full STEAM Ahead, a virtual service-learning initiative for Burmese refugee/migrant students that was entirely student-initiated, inclusive of undergraduate and graduate students from different faculties, and international universities. It will highlight engagement and co-agency supportive strategies, research findings, challenges, and implications.

Session 1.1b
The value of including diverse student voices in co-creation activities and curriculum development
Dr Rebecca Gamble and Dr Anthony Ogbuokiri, Nottingham Trent University

Oral presentation
Working together as Equality, Diversity and Inclusion department leads, within the School of Architecture, Design and the Built Environment at Nottingham Trent University, Dr Anthony Ogbuokiri and Dr Rebecca Gamble recognise the importance and value of including diverse student voices in co-creation activities and curriculum development. In this oral presentation, they will share three distinct examples of how co-creation ensures that we value the student voice and embed EDI principles meaningfully within the curriculum. Including active collaborative learning to celebrate global perspectives and build strong student community; curriculum co-design with students, graduates, colleagues and industry partners; and facilitating student-led initiatives.
Session 1.2, 10:45 – 11:25, Room: Build

Session 1.2a
Falling through the gaps
Jonathan Martin, University of the Arts London
Case Study
Falling through the gaps: Researching digital literacy: Becoming post-pandemic and post-digitaly liberated. This co-created, co-produced, and co-researched project sought to address our overarching research objective by asking the more prosaic question: How can we make our interconnected digital platforms work better for us? This work approached ideas of being with and in the various digital platforms that comprise our virtual environments.

Session 1.2b
Student and educator engagement with student co-creative recognition awards to promote co-creation, inclusivity, belonging and flourishing
Louise Younie, Dr Ana Cabral, Harris Nageswaran, Max Addo, Emily Salines and Dr Janet De Wilde, Queen Mary University of London
Oral presentation
Queen Mary University of London has as its mission that staff and students flourish, and its 2030 Strategy identifies co-creation as one of its pillars for fostering students’ engagement. It is within this context that the SEED (Student Enhanced Engagement & Development) Award was created in 2020. Early evaluation of this recognition scheme evidenced development of student agency, belonging and transformation whilst also leading to educator and curriculum development. In this session, we will share the provisional results of our research which adopts a creative enquiry and co-creative research process with student engagement throughout, and traditional methodologies such as survey, interview and thematic analysis.

Session 2.1, 11:40 – 12:20, Room: Work

Session 2.1a
Silenced by History- Herstory: The students’ transformative journey through collaborative storytelling
Maria Iglesias Mora, University of Central Lancashire (UCLan)
Reflection
This reflection will showcase a collaborative student-led project called Silenced by History: Herstory, by which students from different subject areas across the School of Humanities Language and Global Studies (HLGS) at UCLan, had to identify, gather, co-create and present in the educational platform, ThingLink- stories about ordinary, yet at the same time, extraordinary, women from across the globe who have been silenced throughout history, i.e. who have not been given the same recognition their male counterparts received in history, or who have not even been included in history books. We wanted to address this injustice and to reach out to as many people as possible whilst, at the same time, developing new skills for our students.

Session 2.1c
Beyond engagement: Students as co-creators of learning experience that assures the development of graduate qualities
Dr Maria Ishkova, Robyn Martyn, Dr Lilia Mantai, Michael Fernando, Hannah Nguyen, The University of Sydney and Jason Zeng, The University of Sydney and University of Manchester
Reflection
In this video reflection, recent graduates, students and educators from the University of Sydney Business School elaborate on how Students as Partners (SaP) practices help
learners to build an integrated professional, ethical, and personal identity by motivating them to dive into the depths of the disciplinary expertise, sharpening their critical thinking and problem-solving skills and improving cultural competence. They will give examples of how the SaP approach inspires inventiveness, challenges the information and digital literacy and interdisciplinary effectiveness, pushes the boundaries of communication skills and builds influence via the impact learners see they have on other students’ learning.

Session 2.2, 11:40 – 12:20, Room: Build

Session 2.2a
Engaging students as co-creators in curriculum enhancement: Institutional strategy, values and culture
Steph Fuller, Dr Ana Cabral, Angela Gallagher-Brett, Emily Salines, Dr Janet De Wilde, Marianne Melsen, Khahliso Khama and Radhika Thiagarajan, Queen Mary University of London
Reflection
In this reflection, we will explore Queen Mary University of London’s co-creation approach to curriculum enhancement. We unpack the role of our institutional values and curriculum development projects in redefining meaningful student participation and further highlight an internal recognition scheme (SEED Award – Student Enhanced Engagement & Development) established to acknowledge the contribution of student co-creators while elevating authentic student voices in various university structures. At the centre of this presentation are reflections from the students, their representatives and staff who worked collaboratively in the development of an inclusive curriculum that enhances the student learning experience.

Session 2.2b
Co-creating change in staff-student liaison committees (SSLCs): Developing a course for staff acting as co-chairs
Dr Ana Cabral, Steph Fuller, Emily Salines, Dr Janet De Wilde, Marianne Melsen, Khahliso Khama and Radhika Thiagarajan, Queen Mary University of London
Reflection
Co-creation and engagement are key pillars of Queen Mary’s Strategy, and the institutional values put a clear emphasis on collaboration and inclusion. In order to promote student engagement, Queen Mary created the roles of staff and student co-chairs in SSLCs. We will present our experience of designing and running a course where academics acting as co-chairs from SSLCs are invited to reflect on their chairing approach and consider strategies involving co-creation with their student co-chairs which can, ultimately, lead to more student engagement and effect change. The design, facilitation, monitoring and evaluation of our course itself followed a co-creation approach.

Session 2.2c
Overcoming challenges of student-staff partnership in higher education
Dr Amee Yostrakul, Edge Hill University
Reflection
There has been a growing interest in co-creation in higher education, however existing literature does not give sufficient consideration to co-creation of the curriculum. This reflection piece discusses the benefits and challenges of implementing co-creation of the curriculum. Results from a study on student-staff partnership in curriculum design in a UK university will be highlighted and discussed. Questions such as ‘How might we overcome students’ perception of their role in learning and teaching process?’ and ‘How might we help students to overcome lack of experience and confident to co-create curriculum?’ will be explored.
Sponsored session, 13:15 – 13:35, Room: Work

Who wants to be a co-creator? Reflecting on student-staff partnership working
Helena Lim and Conor Murray-Guild, Evasys
Interactive session

Session 3.1, 13:40 – 14:40, Room: Work

Session 3.1b
The use of co-creation to create peer mentoring support on a Level One Law module
Carol Edwards and Liz Hardie, The Open University
Case Study
This case study will explore how staff and students worked together, using co-creation, to devise and deliver a peer mentoring programme for a Level One Law module. Explanation will be provided of how asynchronous forum posts and synchronous online sessions were created. Student voice will be included along with an outline of the benefits to all of co-creation to both students and staff.

Session 3.1c
Co-designing culture change initiatives with under-represented students
Rachael O’Connor, University of Leeds
Oral presentation
This presentation will explore the co-design of a staff/student reverse mentoring scheme in partnership with a student consultation team who self-identify as under-represented from a range of disciplines. The presentation will outline the project we undertook and critically explore the experiences of the students involved. It’s aim is to give an honest insight into co-designing interventions designed to improve the experiences of university for under-represented students, with under-represented students, and seeks to encourage colleagues to consider the diversity of voices in their own projects and how best to support students through what can be very emotionally challenging processes.

Session 3.2, 13:40 – 14:40, Room: Build

Session 3.2a
Co-creation of learning materials and an enhanced student experience at the University of Manchester
Dr Nick Weise, University of Manchester
Oral presentation
Dr Nick Weise will present his work co-creating synchronous assessment and feedback material with undergraduate supplemental instructors, asynchronous content with interdisciplinary group project students, pastoral care for commuter students to address awarding gaps and inclusive environments for taught student accreditation by Advance HE.

Session 3.2b
Student as partners in course design
Dr James Brooks, University of Manchester
Oral presentation
This session presents the benefits of involving students as partners in the co-creation of course learning materials and in involving the students in the design of their own assessment rubric. This is presented through the lens of a newly developed course unit for final year undergraduate Engineering students. The students independently study a topic of their choosing and create their own learning materials for it. Though the student-created materials we can discuss what they value, and how they want to see their learning
environment with the ultimate aim of transitioning students from university study to lifelong independent learning in employment.

**Session 3.2c**  
**Facilitating student ownership in creative coursework**  
Dr Paul Campbell, Laura Schlueter, Roisin Newlands Rutherford and Rares Comanici, University of Dundee  

**Case Study**  
Over the past decade at Dundee, we have implemented an alternative groupwork approach to assessed [practical] coursework. Here, YouTube video generation is used as a means to assess student understanding within a senior Physics module (Electromagnetism) and complete creative control of the undertaking is handled by the students alone. The concept has been a resounding success. A deeper knowledge of the course material is inferred (compared with previous course scores) but moreover, facilitating true team-working allows the students to develop communications skills, self-assess their natural position in team-work, and enhance employability by showcasing their videos online.

**Poster session, 14:40 – 15:00**  

**Co-creation to understand, develop and promote non-clinical practice placements within the Physiotherapy programme.**  
Amanda Deaves, Anna McKee, Joshua Thompson and Rohan Wardale, University of Liverpool  

**Poster**  
This co-creation project aimed to explore learner views and understanding of alternative placements within the Physiotherapy programme. Practice placements are an essential component of the clinical programme and they should reflect the contemporary areas of practice. Incorporating the four pillars of practice has the potential to enhance the learners’ employability by focusing upon a range of key skills in preparation for first posts. Utilising a collaborative approach, greater understanding was gained regarding non-clinical placements and the factors that influence quality within a placement. This knowledge influenced the promotion and the development of these new placements’ experiences within the School of Health Sciences.

**Recognition of students’ contribution to co-creation: SEED Award at Queen Mary**  
Dr Ana Cabral, Louise Younie, Harris Nageswaran, Max Addo, Emily Salines and Dr Janet De Wilde, Queen Mary University of London  

**Poster**  
The SEED (Student Enhanced Engagement and Development) Award is fully aligned with the Strategy 2030 of Queen Mary University of London and recognises students’ contribution to shaping education by working alongside educators to co-create their educational experience and develop skills that will enable them to stand out to potential employers. Applications follow the UK Professional Standards Framework areas of activity and, if successful, applicants receive a certificate, and the award is featured on their HEAR transcript. We will present the SEED Award and discuss what has been achieved, the challenges and lessons learned as well as our ideas for future enhancements.

**Session 4.1, 15:00 – 15:40, Room: Work**
Session 4.1a
Looking back to move forward: Evaluating an institutional co-creation programme
Dr Susan Smith, University College London, Dan Axson and Mia Brady, University of Sussex and Hannah Austwick, University of Leeds

Case Study
As partnership ways of working become increasingly embedded in the higher education landscape there is an increasing focus on both sustainability and scalability of practices. This has led to the establishment of institutional programmes to facilitate partnership working across various institutions. The case, a student-staff partnership itself, evaluated the initial projects run as part of one institutional scheme with the aim of identifying critical success factors that can be replicated across projects. We find that preparation of staff partners is equally as important as preparation of students for partnership ways of working.

Session 4.1b
Why can’t module choice be more like Netflix? The use of Agile methodologies to improve the student understanding of the module selection process
Helen Elliott and Meg Hardiman, Newcastle University

Oral presentation
Why can’t module choice be more like Netflix? In this presentation, we will explore a recent project at Newcastle University, in which we utilised Agile methodologies to investigate student choice around module selection. Staff worked with student interns as partners to uncover the root cause of student dissatisfaction and to produce actionable solutions.

Session 4.2, 15:00 – 15:40, Room: Build

Session 4.2a
Exploring the impact of student-led widening participation programmes (A case study of Black Access at the University of York)
Laura Whitelock, University of York

Case Study
What’s the impact of student-led widening participation programmes? At the University of York, we’ve discovered the answer to this question and then some over the last two years through our Access and Outreach programme ‘Black Access’, designed “for and by Black students”. From pilot to production, current University of York students of a Black background have been an integral part of the process, making decisions, designing the programme, creating and delivering sessions. In this session, we share our experiences and processes, as well as learnings and how our programme has affected participants, students and staff involved in the programme.

Session 4.2b
Co-creating personal and professional development for MBChB students
Kelly Coles, Gurpreet Chouhan, Charlotte Simms, Emily Garrett and Rebecca Evans, University of Warwick

Oral presentation
Medical students are required to demonstrate a range of skills and achievements outside of their core curriculum, to be better prepared for their future careers as doctors. Areas of focus are individually determined but may include intercalated years of study, additional research, committee work and work in the voluntary sector. Due to the challenging nature of a 4-year accelerated Graduate Entry Medicine Course (MBChB) course, it can be difficult to access the many opportunities and resources available. This is particularly true for students with extra responsibilities, disability or from Widening Participation backgrounds. This project seeks to centralise activity and create a robust, sustainable menu of opportunities that aims to address the disparity of employability development.