

Our kind of excellence

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What does excellent teaching look like in your context?

Where can you find it?



What is teaching excellence and/or excellent teaching?

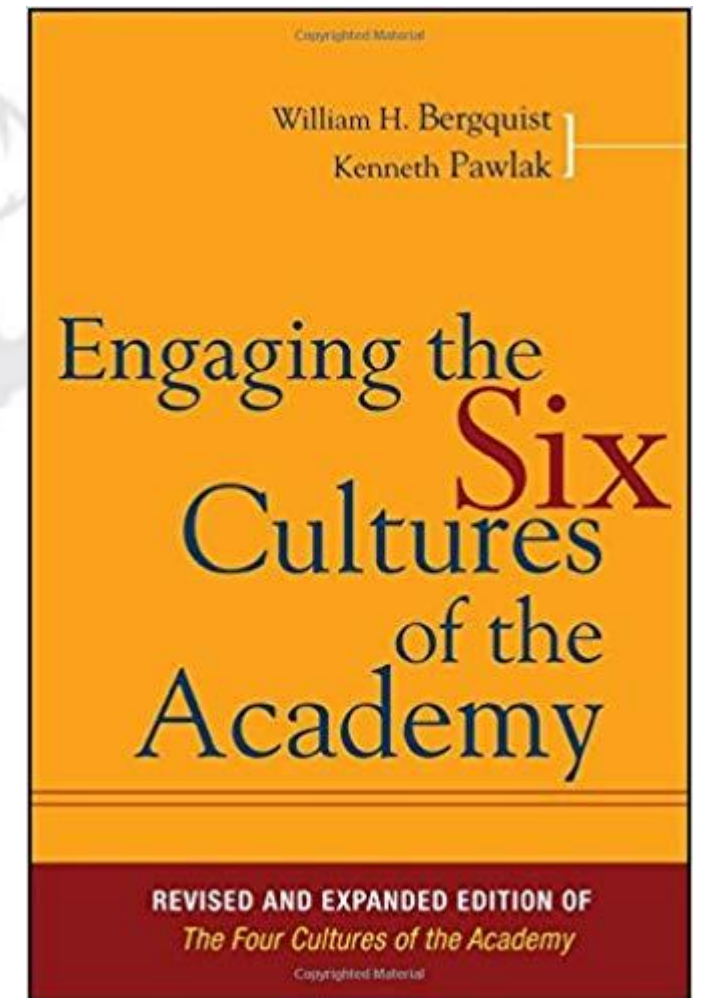
“...the effectiveness of academics in **enabling students to learn...** the level of competence in teaching which **maximises learning gain** and capacity for original critical thought recognised as exemplary by peers” (Wood & Su, 2017)

Where there is a “high degree of **student participation and interaction, a clear structure and passion and enthusiasm in the lecturer**” (Revell & Wainwright, 2009)

“Being **dynamically engaged** in teaching practice and inspiring and practically scaffolding the potential dynamic engagement of one’s students” (Gunn & Fisk, 2013)

- Identify a back to basics methodology for locating excellence
- Recognise the role of context and culture in teaching excellence
- Discuss YOUR kind of excellence

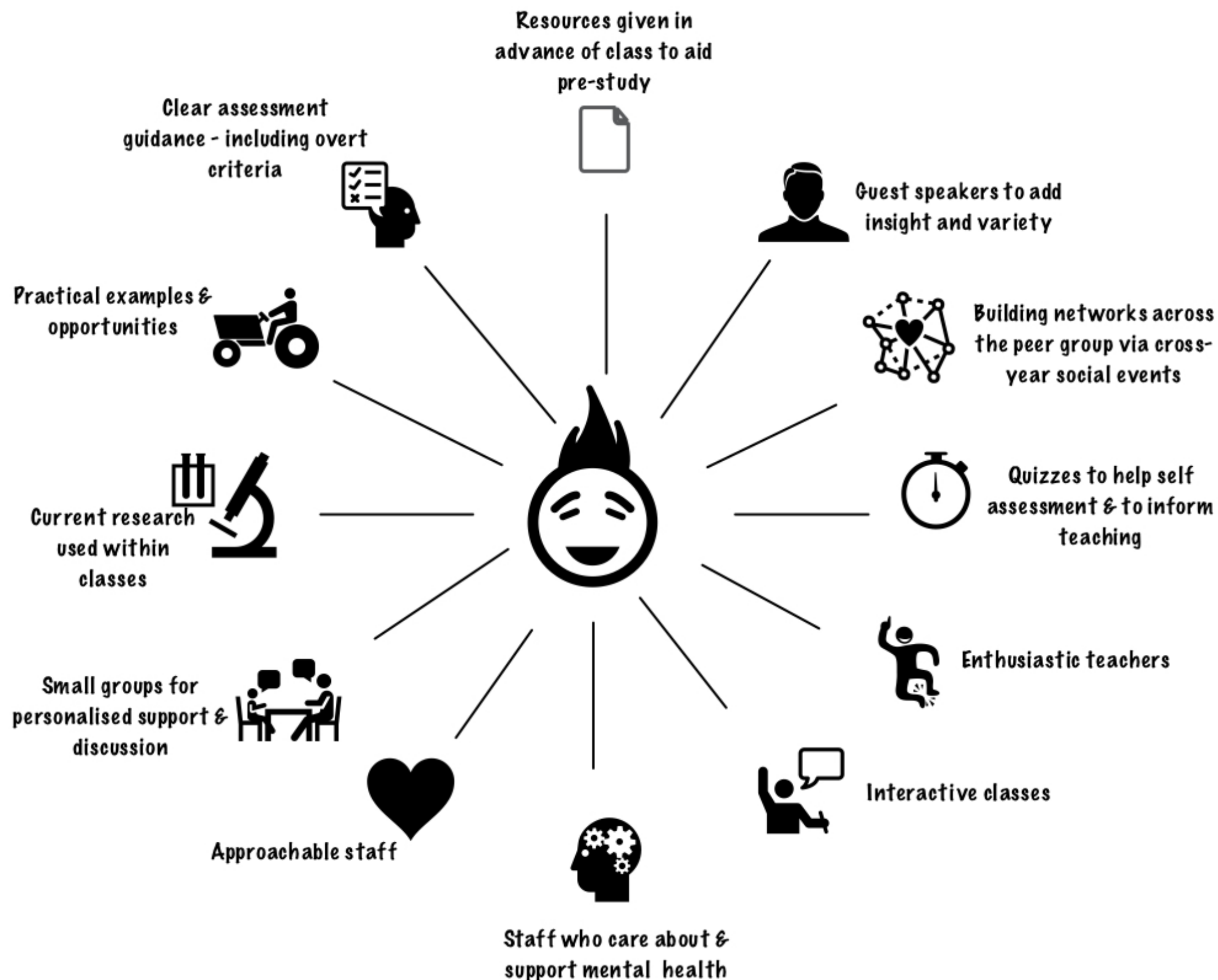
Harper Adams – Cultural Backdrop



Locating excellence:

Bias beware (Trigger: What Works? Thomas et al, 2017)

- **Cultural fit**
 - Single culture?
 - Reinforcement/Challenge
- **Reliance on line of sight**
 - Blind spots
 - Loud voices
- **Creep of expectations**
 - Normalisation of the novel



Enthusiasm

“[E]nthusiasm is contagious and students absolutely value tutors and professional services staff who are passionate and invested. ...there are many ways show enthusiasm and it is not only about appearing as a bouncy, energetic individual “ (Arnold & Barnett, 2018).

Enthusiasm for teaching and the subject = most reported factor from students (Greatbatch and Holland, 2016)

Working with excellence



Ask

Analyse

Find

Amplify

Benefits

- **Reconnection** with the lost
- Credible sharing with a 'mandate'
- **Inspiration**
- **Connection** with culture
- **Reassurance** (Quizzes!)
- **Stories** – oh the stories



A second study

- **What are the barriers and enablers of excellent, impactful teaching?**



Phase 1:

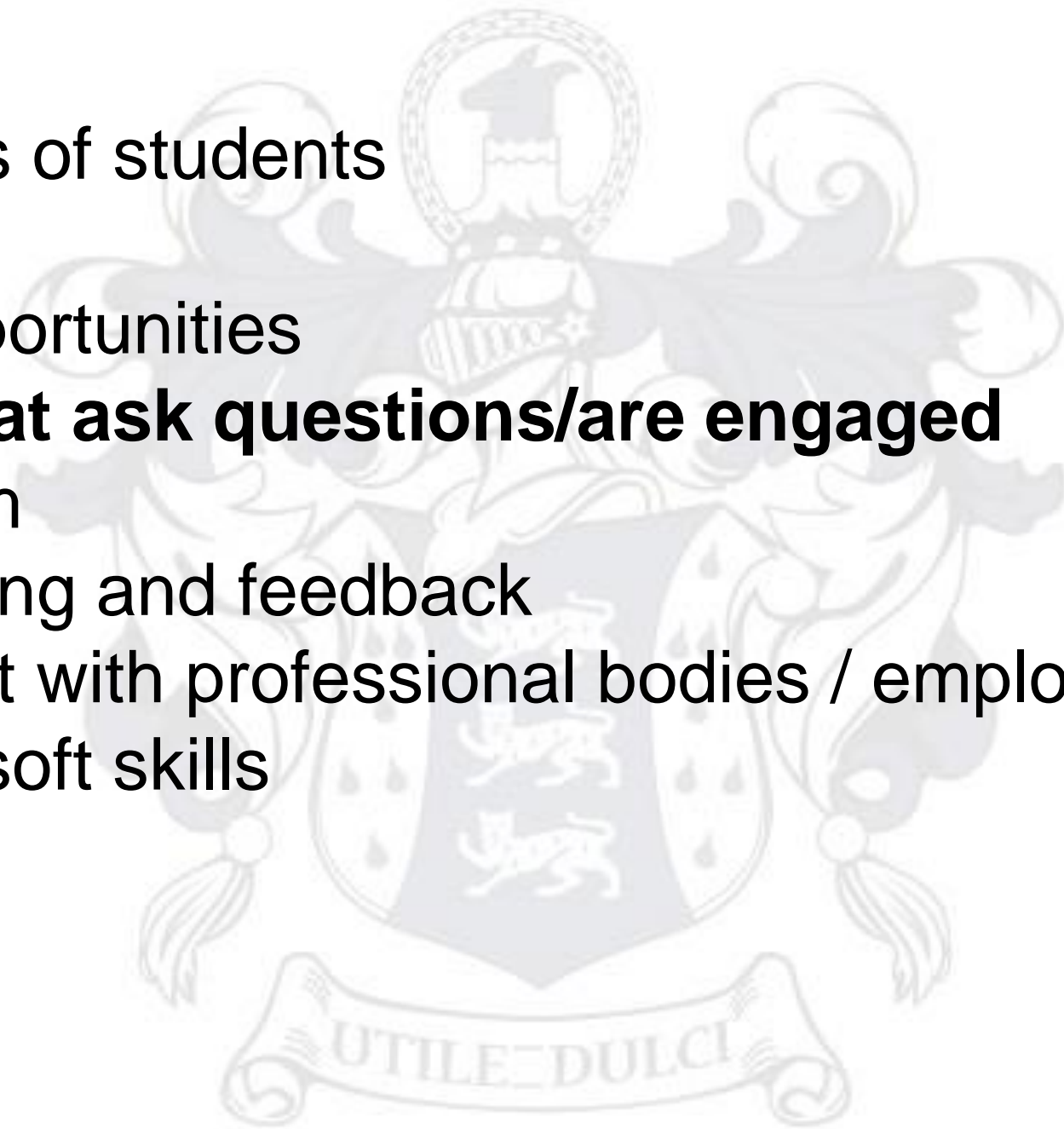
- Two focus groups, to explore both research questions;
- Semi-structured facilitator prompts;
- Discussions were recorded and transcribed;
- Thematic analysis (TA) of those transcripts on a pairs/peer review basis;
- The findings from the focus groups have informed the development of phase two.

Phase 2:

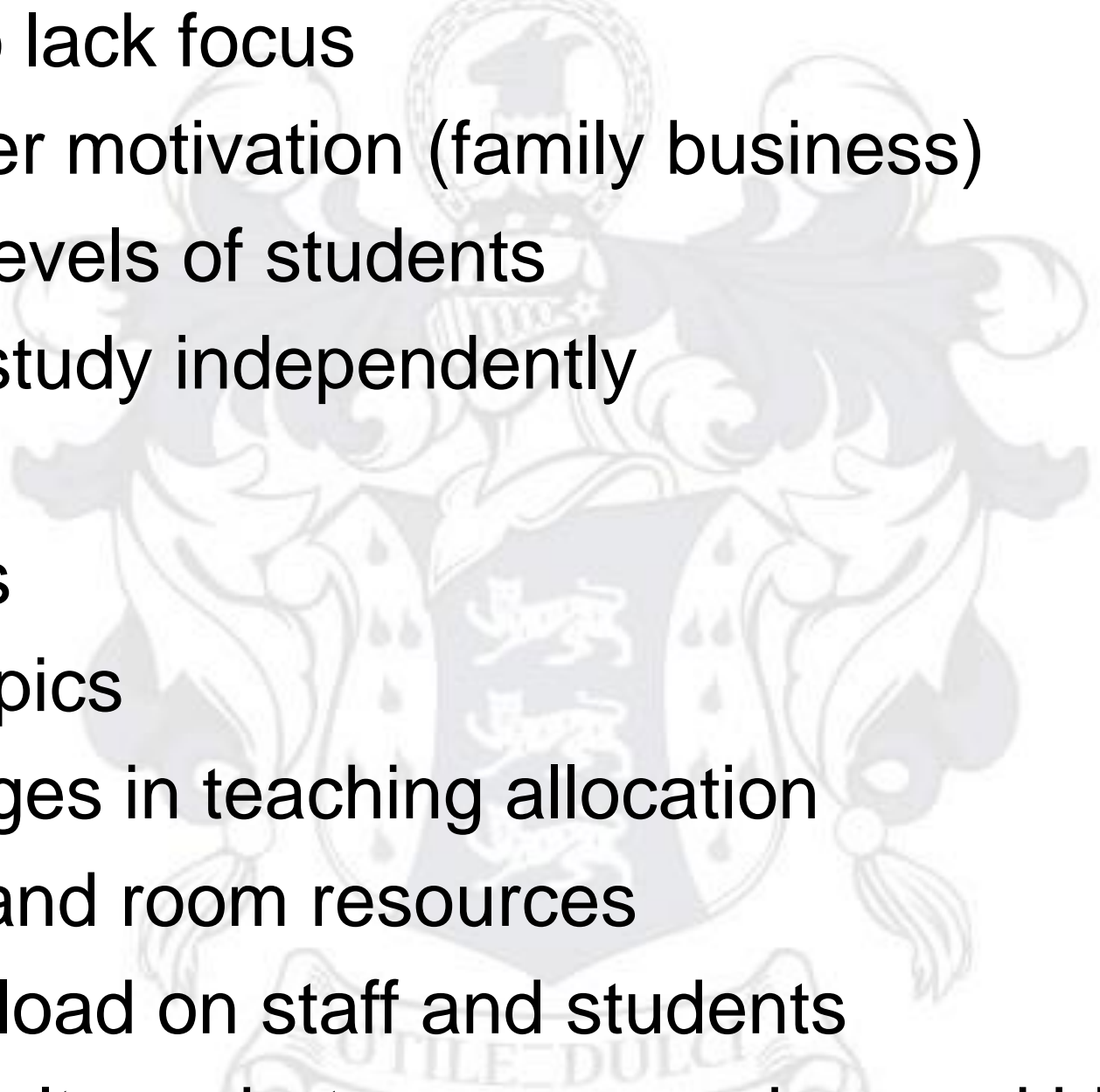
- Anonymous online questionnaire delivered via Bristol Online Surveys (BOS) issued to all teaching staff within the department and preceded by a short pilot to test accessibility.
- Comprises scaled response and free-text response questions, set to answer both research questions.

Enablers

1. Small groups of students
2. Tech
3. Practical opportunities
- 4. Students that ask questions/are engaged**
5. Staff freedom
6. Online marking and feedback
7. Curriculum fit with professional bodies / employers
8. Inclusion of soft skills



Barriers

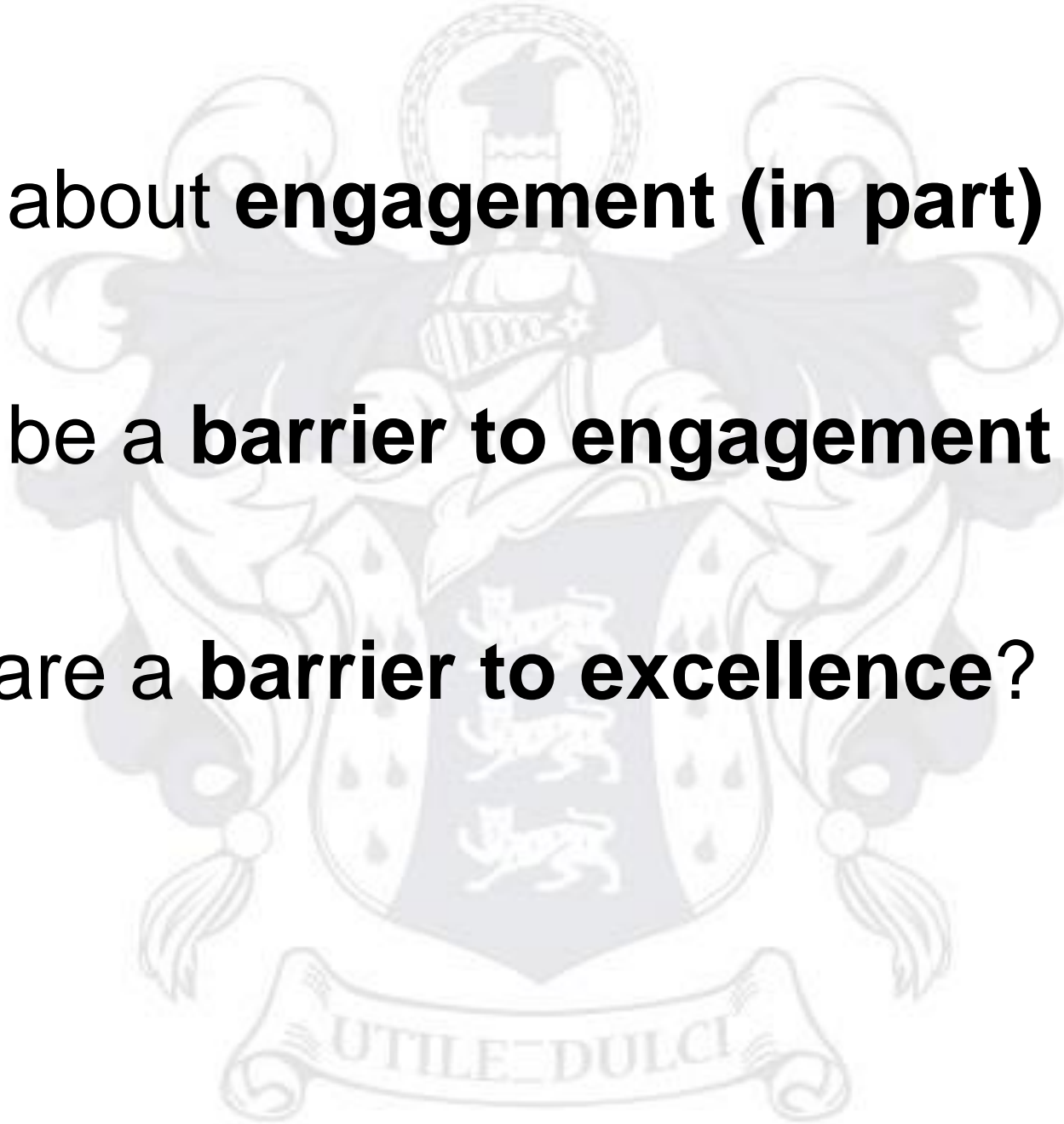
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- 1 Students who lack focus
 2. Lack of career motivation (family business)
 3. Confidence levels of students
 4. Unwilling to study independently
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1. Large groups
 2. Unfamiliar topics
 3. Annual changes in teaching allocation
 4. Timetabling and room resources
 5. Assessment load on staff and students
 6. Contrast of cultures between secondary and higher education

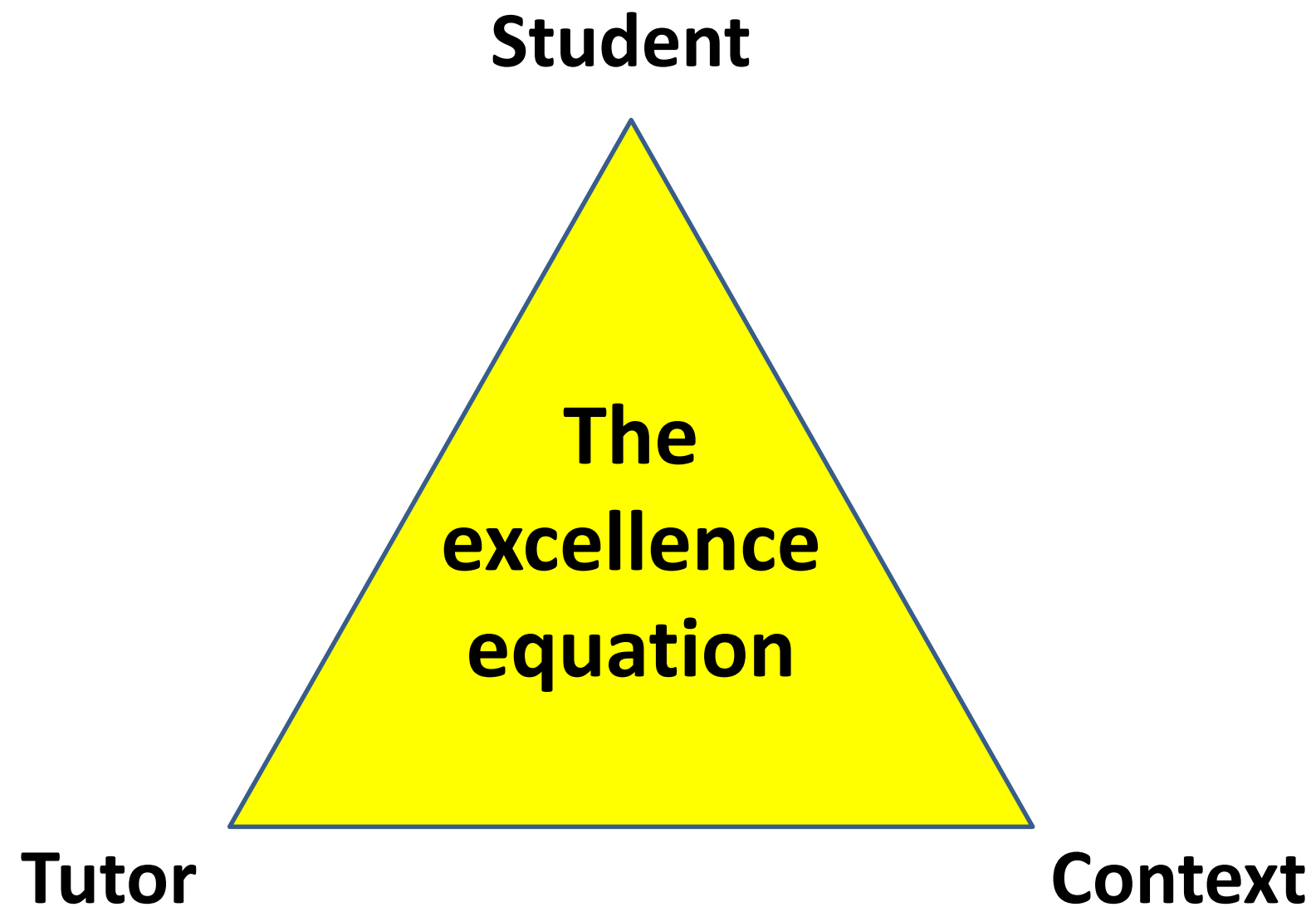
Dichotomy devil's advocate

Excellence is about **engagement (in part)**

Students can be a **barrier to engagement (!?)**

Are students are a **barrier to excellence?** (well of course not)





Conclusions

- Seek out excellence and amplify it – it's a change driver
- Beware of confusing novel and excellent – the lecture may not be dead just yet!
- Use YOUR students to identify excellence
- Recognise diversity – excellence in the most unexpected of places!
- Counter humility
- Explore on the contradictions – what do they tell us about the unsaid!
- Consider the excellence equation

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De Courcy, E. 2015. *Defining and Measuring Teaching Excellence in higher Education in the 21st Century* [Online] College Quarterly, v18 n1 Available at <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1070007> Accessed on 21st May 2018

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