

Students as partners in the internationalisation project

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About us and our work

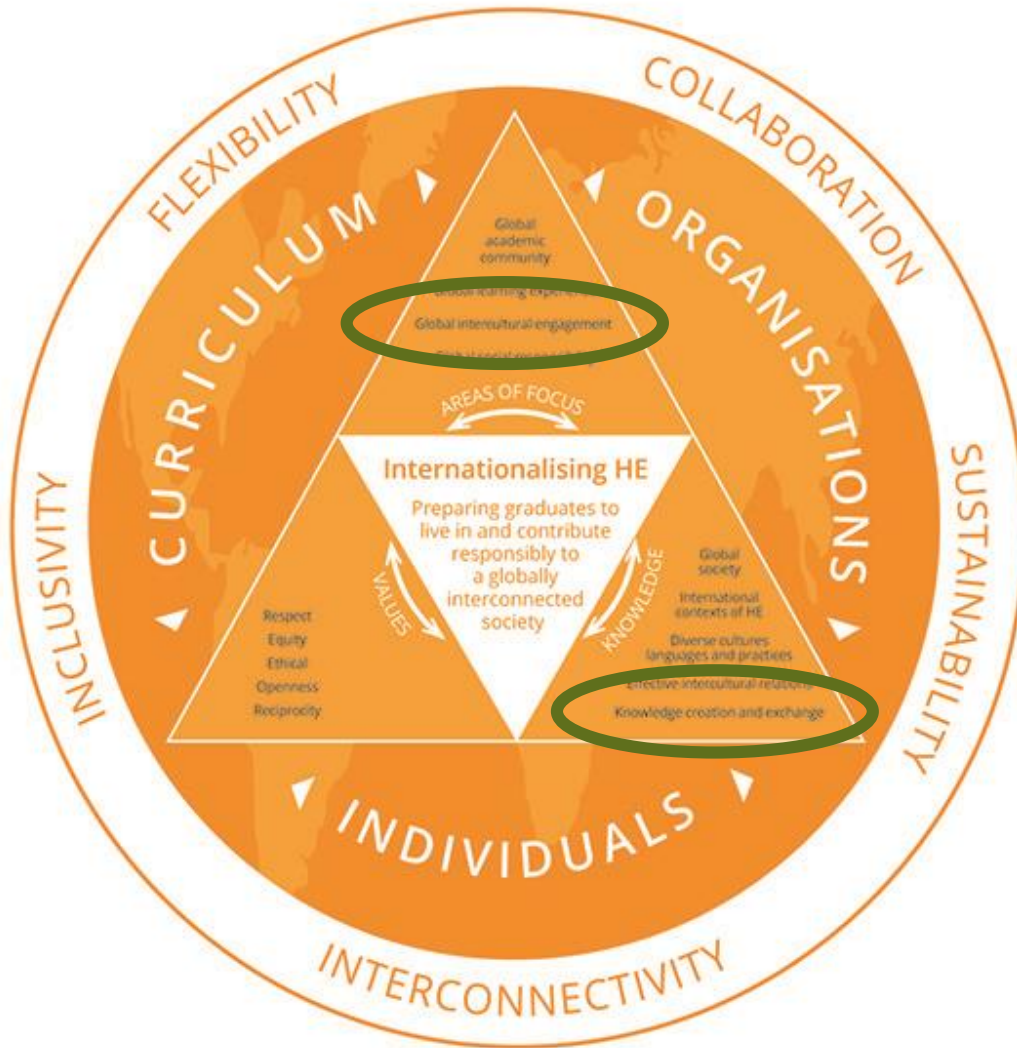
- Jasper is from the University of Lincoln, where he is Dean of the Lincoln Academy of Learning and Teaching, and co-ordinator of the Student Consultants on Teaching scheme;
- Madawi and Delia are from The University of Sheffield, where they took part in the Student Observation of Teaching scheme; which is organised by
- Tim, who is a Senior University Teacher in the School of Education.

How this fits with internationalisation and the curriculum

The HEA's Internationalising Higher Education Framework

Areas of focus:

Global intercultural engagement
Knowledge creation and institutional exchange



About you

What practices of student partnership are you particularly proud of in your own work?

Discuss it round your tables for a couple of minutes,
then we are happy to hear a sample of responses
from each table

The case for student partnership as core to internationalisation (1/2)

- There is much staff can learn from an **increasingly diverse and global student population**
- Helps move us towards the vision of **co-operative higher education** (Neary and Winn, 2015)
- **Cost-effective:** a high level of resource required to get structures in place, but once they're there it can move towards being self-sustaining (cf. Matthews *et al.*, 2018)
- **Impactful:** it makes a difference to staff practices and student experiences and self-perception



The case for student partnership as core to internationalisation (2/2)



- It's a key point for enabling wider change:
“Reflective practice that integrates students’ angles of vision and analyses thus has the potential not only to yield richer, deeper insights but also to change traditional relationships between faculty and students, and thus processes of teaching and learning.”

(Cook-Sather, 2008, p. 476)

Some of the theory underpinning this work

- Long-standing tradition of fostering student-staff collaboration, with pioneers in the field like Alison Cook-Sather (e.g. Cook-Sather, 2008), and Catherine Bovill (e.g. Bovill *et al.*, 2016)
- Recent(ish) reviews of the literature and practices (Healey, Flint, and Harrington, 2014, for the HEA; Mercer-Mapstone *et al.*, 2017, for the *International Journal for Students as Partners*)
- Behind all of this, Michael Fielding on “radical collegiality” (Fielding, 1999); and behind this, Freire and other exponents of “radical pedagogy”
- Student observation schemes running in a number of UK institutions, e.g. Birmingham City (as detailed in O’Leary and Cui, 2018), Edinburgh Napier ([Students as Colleagues](#)), and LSE ([Changemakers](#)), plus plans to start them elsewhere

Student Consultants on Teaching at the University of Lincoln

- Project established at University of Lincoln in 2012 which involves training student volunteers to observe and give feedback on teaching outside their discipline of study. <https://lalt.lincoln.ac.uk/improving-teaching-according-to-the-student-experience/>
- Opportunity to engage wide diversity of students in student consultant activities over last 7 year
- Learning from reverse mentoring – understanding the international student lived experience
- Connecting Lincoln and Sheffield staff and students through shared project activities and developing more culturally inclusive and responsive approaches

University of Lincoln- scheme overview

- Student Union recruits and trains students and then links with academic teaching in a discipline different from the student. This project has run since 2012.
- Students observe and give feedback on teaching eg large group, seminar group
- Once confident students lead on student consultation and focus group activities
- In 2017/18, 8 students trained to work across 7 different Schools
- “It is not only about student experience... hearing staff views and understanding what goes on behind the scenes especially around marking is really interesting.” Lincoln nursing student
- Current challenge –finding a new home for this project –interdisciplinary projects are both valuable and vulnerable to change.
- Developing more equal staff –international student partnerships for learning to review teaching methods, induction materials, according to student experience and voice through exit interviews, examples of progression and making curriculum content more representative and international

Student Observation of Teaching at The University of Sheffield

- Students and staff volunteers from different disciplines, partnered to engage in conversations about the staff member's teaching
- Might be one-off observation and discussion; longitudinal relationship; or student mediating feedback from other students (e.g. through focus group)
- In two years of running, has directly involved c. 38 staff and 52 students, and impacted on at least 600 students
- More information here: <https://tinyurl.com/studentobservationofteaching>

What it's been like for students

- Realizing the value of the student role through open communication
- The importance of acknowledging diversity in outcomes
- Limits and boundaries on internationalizing the curriculum
- Critical thinking

What it's been like for staff

- **Insight from perspectives** that are not easily accessible, leading to better appreciation of the diversity of learners
- **Motivation for change**, on the level of specific, individual practices, and across departments / programmes
- **A sense of community and togetherness**: the best part of the Sheffield project was “being involved with a community of practice at the university around teaching, and actually getting to get together with academics from across the university” (Sheffield, staff)

Knowledge creation *across* the schemes

- **Value of working across disciplines** – staff understanding discipline-related factors, e.g. gender, students getting a sense of the bigger picture
- **Sustaining a more balanced staff-student dialogue** – working across institutional structures, to maximise the impact of engaged and enthused students
- **Succession planning** – involving established student volunteers in future student training, both face to face and digitally
- **Improving the quality of the conversation** about teaching excellence, by giving all parties more insight into what might influence this
- **Key value of coming together and learning across institutions** – a dialogue to enable different voices to be heard in a more responsive community of practice.

Challenges we have experienced

- **Student** engagement, and **staff** engagement
- **Time** is always going to be a challenge
- **Power differentials** are never going to go away
- The politics of **institutional support** for the schemes
- **Self-selecting groups**: how to make these schemes more popular?

Two questions for you

What are you *currently* doing to internationalise your curriculum that might involve students as partners?

What might you do *in future* that builds in student collaboration from the start?

Where next?

- Continue building the student partnership schemes at Sheffield and Lincoln
- Support their growth in other institutions (including here???)
- Keep adding to the academic literature on this topic
- Thinking about how to recognise student contribution to this kind of work (a national framework for student engagement, akin to the UKPSF???)
- Continue with our individual stories of growth, change, and learning, starting here, today!

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