AdvanceHE

Curriculum design for mental health and wellbeing: guidance and resources for learning and teaching development programmes in higher education

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Contents

Introduction

The information and resources outlined here are designed to support the development of knowledge and understanding regarding the transactional relationship between wellbeing and learning. They are also designed to help structure consideration of the implications for curriculum design and inform positive action in educational practice.

Designed for Level 6/7 of the UK Quality Code (QAA, 2014), these activities and resources are presented for application and use in university teacher development programmes and related postgraduate learning and teaching qualifications.

Aligned with the defined themes emerging from this research, and incorporating defined aims, learning activities and outcomes, the material acknowledges the diversity of related teaching practices. It also recognises that many who participate in related programmes are new to UK higher education, new to teaching and, in many cases, new to delivering and supporting related staff development activities. Information and resources are all derived from tested programmes catering for diverse participant groups including colleagues new to teaching and academia.

Linked to evidence, case studies and relevant secondary literature and further reading, details are included outlining possible approaches to integration within existing programmes or use as elements for new programmes or CPD activities.

Noting the ‘inconsistent’ and ‘multifarious’ use of the term in higher education (Fraser and Bosanquet, 2006), the curriculum is defined here in terms of overall experience in study. Focusing significantly on core learning, teaching and assessment practices, wider factors including regulatory systems, social integration, meaning in learning and articulation between programmes and secondary student support services are also explored. The experience of teaching staff is also acknowledged as an area of significance and treated as an integrated and coincident concern.

The relationship between wellbeing and learning is a legitimate pedagogical concern. The focus here is on structuring engagement with research-informed steps to develop positive coincidence between curriculum, wellbeing and educational progress.

Structure and themes

Information, guidance and learning activities presented here are aligned with the thematic areas of the toolkit:

1. Infrastructure
   a. Staff wellbeing
   b. Collaborative design: who designs
   c. Validation and support for curriculum development
2. Social belonging
   a. Psychologically safe learning environments
   b. Social community, identity, and status
   c. Inclusivity
   d. Clearly defined roles and relationships
   e. Social belonging
3. Learning focused
   a. Deep learning
   b. Meaning
   c. Internal cohesion
   d. Sustainable challenge
   e. Workload
   f. Assessment for learning
   g. Curriculum delivery
4. Scaffolded design
   a. Connection to pre-learning and experience
   b. Explicit preparation for assessment tasks
   c. Preparing students for progression
   d. Assessment: how and why
   e. Preparation for non-classroom learning spaces
5. Learner development
   a. Self-attribution and awareness
   b. Self-management
   c. Meta learning
   d. Feedback
6. Getting students back on track
   a. Effective signposting
   b. Collaboration between academics and support professionals
   c. Maintaining boundaries
   d. When students present in crisis

Developed primarily to be accessible and engaging for colleagues new to teaching and/or supporting learning in UK universities, information is also designed to be of interest and relevance to anyone working in higher education, including more experienced colleagues.

Activities and accompanying resources are designed to be flexible, reconfigurable, and useful for self-study, as stand-alone CPD activities, and/or as elements capable of adaptation and integration within taught postgraduate programmes in learning and teaching.

Ranging in complexity from relatively simple prompts and scaffolds for reflection and/or discussion to structured and sequenced activities requiring carefully designed working time to engage with fully, all incorporate detailed guidance for facilitators and links to further information.

Thematic sections sequence from the general and overarching to the specific, each incorporating a summary of key research mapped to defined aims, learning outcomes and structured learning activities. Outlined in an introductory activities map, information is provided about how exercises can be applied and coordinated as structured learning activities, and/or drawn together in formative or summative assessment activity.

A capstone activity is provided which offers a summary of key points from all thematic areas. This can be used as a stand-alone activity or in conjunction with other activities and exercises.

Colleagues supporting teaching development and CPD programmes are encouraged to review and adapt individual activities according to the context and needs of participant groups.

Activities map

The following table maps toolkit themes and sub-themes to aims, learning outcomes and learning activities. Related case studies, research studies, key recommendations and top tips are highlighted in each activity. All are purposefully designed to be configurable and adaptable for use in staff development programmes or self-study activities.

Theme	Sub-theme	Aims	Learning outcomes	Activity	Synopsis	Application notes
INFRASTRUCTURE	**Staff development**	To evaluate conceptions of curriculum in UK higher education and related disciplinary conventions and practices.	Reflect on personal conceptions and experiences of the curriculum.	Welcome to Curriculumland: the curriculum as territory and terrain	This activity is designed to be relevant for colleagues new to teaching and/or supporting learning in UK higher education and is conceived primarily to structure reflection in a social learning context about the nature of the curriculum.	Half-day CPD workshop activity for small groups.
		To examine frameworks and regulation of UK higher education curricula.	Explain how curricula is organised and structured in UK higher education.	Benchmark statement analysis exercise	These activities are designed to support development of familiarity with relevant parts of the UK Quality Code and to structure consideration of variations in subject specific practices.	1-2hr workshop activity for small groups. Assessed coursework or presentation assignment.
	Staff wellbeing	To reflect on the importance of self-care and wellbeing in teaching.	Consider the relationship between the curriculum and staff wellbeing.	Staff wellbeing: key questions in curriculum design	Staff wellbeing being an integrated concern in all activities in this collection, this activity focuses attention specifically on staff wellbeing as a guiding principle of curriculum design. The key aim is to encourage consideration of staff wellbeing as a legitimate point of reference in curriculum thinking.	1-2hr individual reflection activity. 1-2hr workshop activity for small groups.

Theme	Sub-theme	Aims	Learning outcomes	Activity	Synopsis	Application notes
				See also: The hero's journey exercise (Activity 3)	This activity structures application of a narrative framework to reflection on the journey and experience of teachers in higher education.	Half or full-day CPD workshop activity for small groups. Assessed coursework or presentation assignment.
	Collaborative design: who designs	To support evidence informed and academic community approach to the design of university learning, teaching, and assessment activities.	Apply a student-centred and learning-communities approach to the design of curricula.	Stakeholder mapping in curriculum development	This activity is designed to support consideration of curriculum development processes in terms of leadership, process management, but most significantly, collaboration and stakeholder involvement. The key focus is on exploring who should be involved, when, and how this is best coordinated to ensure a whole university approach.	Half-day CPD workshop activity for small groups. 1-2hr facilitated workshop activity for programme development team.

Theme	Sub-theme	Aims	Learning outcomes	Activity	Synopsis	Application notes
	Validation and support for curriculum development	To develop competency, agency and creativity in the design of higher education curricula for wellbeing and mental health.	Use evidence-informed approaches to the design of higher education curricula using wellbeing moderators as a foundational design principle.	Developing a programme design framework	The purpose of this activity is to explore the design of a core programme framework. Working in reverse through programme rationale, philosophy, aims and learning outcomes, the activity provides an opportunity to focus on the principles of backwards design and constructive alignment, as well as institution specific requirements and expectations.	Half-day CPD workshop activity for small groups. 1-2hr facilitated workshop activity for programme development teams. Assessed coursework or presentation assignment.
		To guide participants in applying constructive alignment principles in curriculum design.	Apply constructive alignment principles in curriculum design.			
		To explore how wellbeing should be defined as a discipline-specific consideration.	Express how wellbeing can be situated and defined as a discipline specific concern.	Crafting programme wellbeing statements	The objective of this activity is to focus consideration of what wellbeing means in the context of individual disciplines and how this should be expressed and described.	1-2hr workshop activity for small groups. Assessed coursework or presentation assignment.

Theme	Sub-theme	Aims	Learning outcomes	Activity	Synopsis	Application notes
SOCIAL BELONGING	**Psychologically safe learning environments**	To reflect on student experience in study and the role of the curriculum in maintaining positive learning environments.	Apply a discipline situated approach to curriculum design for wellbeing.	See: Crafting programme wellbeing statements		
				See: Scaffolding in the curriculum: guided vs unguided study exercise	This activity focuses attention on notions of control and guidance in teaching and learning. The key aim is to structure participant consideration of the responsibilities of both teacher and student and how this is positioned in curriculum design.	1-2hr workshop activity for small groups. Assessed coursework or presentation assignment.
	Social community, identity, and status	To evaluate concepts and expectations regarding participation and engagement.	Structure and support positive learning behaviours recognising the legitimacy of different approaches to study.	Mapping co-study, collaboration, group work, team, and social learning	Recognising the significant value of social networks for wellbeing and mental health, and the important role that the curriculum plays in enabling students to build and develop new networks, the purpose of this activity is to consider approaches to fostering and supporting effective student collaboration, teamwork, and team learning.	1-2hr workshop activity for small groups. Assessed coursework or presentation assignment.

Theme	Sub-theme	Aims	Learning outcomes	Activity	Synopsis	Application notes
		To consider the role of peer learning, mentoring, and learning networks.	Design effective approaches to groupwork and team learning	Adapting a team learning framework	The purpose of this exercise is to consider the role of competency frameworks as a scaffold for structuring approaches to the development and application of new skills and learning activities. Directly applicable in the context of designing approaches to teamwork activities, the framework is also configurable as an individual self-reflection exercise and/or adapted as a way of articulating competency development in other disciplinary contexts.	1-2hr workshop activity for small groups. Assessed coursework or presentation assignment.
	Inclusivity	To explore ethical, legal, and pedagogical implications of inclusivity in higher education.	Identify specific approaches to inclusive curriculum design and the implications for wellbeing in learning.	Considering an inclusive practice framewor	This activity is designed to structure consideration of inclusivity as a principle of curriculum design.	1-2hr programme team activity. Self-and/or programme audit activity.

Theme	Sub-theme	Aims	Learning outcomes	Activity	Synopsis	Application notes
	Clearly defined roles and relationships	To reflect on responsibilities and personal and professional boundaries in teaching and learning.	Apply evidence informed approaches to the development of personalisation in the curriculum.	See: Personalised learning design	This activity structures opportunity to reflect on the role and value of personalisation in student experience in study and ways in which this can be structured through the curriculum. Designed primarily for application in a group discussion context, the activity can be used as a self-reflection exercise or as a framework for a formal assessment with supplementary review of key literature including the listed sources of further reading.	1-2hr workshop activity for small groups. Assessed coursework or presentation assignment.
	Social belonging	To consider the social factors impacting student experience in study.	Apply structured approaches to supporting student socialisation in study.	See: Mapping co-study, collaboration, group work, team, and social learning	Recognising the significant value of social networks for wellbeing and mental health, and the important role that the curriculum plays in enabling students to build and develop new networks, the purpose of this activity is to consider approaches to fostering and supporting effective student collaboration, teamwork, and team learning.	1-2hr workshop activity for small groups. Assessed coursework or presentation assignment.

Theme	Sub-theme	Aims	Learning outcomes	Activity	Synopsis	Application notes
LEARNING FOCUSED	**Deep learning**	To explore the contrast between deep and surface learning and the implications for wellbeing.	To apply a student journey focused approach to curriculum design and/or evaluation.	The hero's journey exercise	This activity structures application of a narrative framework to reflection on the journey and experience of students and teachers in higher education.	Half or full-day CPD workshop activity for small groups. Assessed coursework or presentation assignment.
	Meaning	To share perspectives regarding meaning in learning.	Confidently situate meaning in learning as a legitimate pedagogical concern.	See: The hero's journey exercise		
	Internal cohesion	To explore the significance of curriculum coherence for student and staff experience in study.	Apply constructive alignment principles to the design of curricula.	See: Developing a programme design framework	The purpose of this activity is to explore the design of a core programme framework. Working in reverse through programme rationale, philosophy, aims, and learning outcomes, the activity provides an opportunity to focus on the principles of backwards design and constructive alignment, as well as institution specific requirements and expectations.	Half-day CPD workshop activity for small groups. 1-2hr facilitated workshop activity for programme development teams. Assessed coursework or presentation assignment.

Theme	Sub-theme	Aims	Learning outcomes	Activity	Synopsis	Application notes
	Sustainable challenge	To reflect on the importance and value of proportionate challenge in learning.	Articulate how challenge is situated in curriculum design.	See: Scaffolding in the curriculum: Guided vs unguided study exercise	This activity focuses attention on notions of control and guidance in teaching and learning. The key aim is to structure participant consideration of the responsibilities of both teacher and student and how this is positioned in curriculum design.	1-2hr workshop activity for small groups. Assessed coursework or presentation assignment.
	Workload	To support participants in applying a project management approach to curriculum planning.	Embed time and motion thinking in curriculum design approaches.	What, when and how much? – Exploring notional learning and teaching hours	The focus of this activity is time and effort in study, and the role of the curriculum as a regulator of workload for students and staff.	Half-day CPD workshop activity for small groups with preparatory work. 1-2hr facilitated workshop activity for programme development teams. Assessed coursework or presentation assignment.

Theme	Sub-theme	Aims	Learning outcomes	Activity	Synopsis	Application notes
	Assessment for learning	To apply an assessment for learning approach to the evaluation and/or design of assessment.	Apply a learning focused approach to the evaluation and/or design of assessment.	Assessment for learning	Recognising the distinctiveness of institutional context and approaches to assessment, this activity outlines a summary of key functions and types of assessment and their implications for learning and teaching. A series of questions and prompts are included to structure individual reflection or discussion among participant groups. The aim of the activity is to encourage participants to position assessment as a central consideration in curriculum design and to recognise the implications of related design choices for student and staff experience in study.	1-2hr individual reflection activity. 1-2hr workshop activity for small groups.

Theme	Sub-theme	Aims	Learning outcomes	Activity	Synopsis	Application notes
	Curriculum delivery	To critically evaluate the practical realities of curriculum delivery.	Reflect on the implications of operational practice in curriculum design.	See: What, when and how much? – Exploring notional learning and teaching hours	The focus of this activity is time and effort in study, and the role of the curriculum as a regulator of workload for students and staff.	Half-day CPD workshop activity for small groups with preparatory work. 1-2hr facilitated workshop activity for programme development teams. Assessed coursework or presentation assignment.
SCAFFOLDED DESIGN	**Transition**	To consider the research related to student transitions in higher education and the implications for curriculum design.	Apply conceptual understanding of student transitions in the design of curricula and/or learning activities.	Scales of transition and design choices exercise	This activity is presented in two parts. The first uses a defined success framework to structure consideration of curriculum planning and/or review of established programmes. The second focuses on transitions within study and the role of curriculum in supporting these effectively.	1-2hr workshop activity for small groups. Assessed coursework or presentation assignment.

Theme	Sub-theme	Aims	Learning outcomes	Activity	Synopsis	Application notes
		To reflect on the range of transitions and micro-transitions in the curriculum.	Identify key transitions in and through the curriculum including those relevant to particular to disciplinary contexts.			
				See: The hero's journey exercise	This activity structures application of a narrative framework to reflection on the journey and experience of students and teachers in higher education.	Half or full-day CPD workshop activity for small groups. Assessed coursework or presentation assignment.
		To explore the principles of scaffolded learning in curriculum design for mental health and wellbeing.	Articulate a scaffolded learning approach to wellbeing in the curriculum.	Scaffolding in the curriculum: Guided vs unguided study exercise	This activity focuses attention on notions of control and guidance in teaching and learning. The key aim is to structure participant consideration of the responsibilities of both teacher and student and how this is positioned in curriculum design.	1-2hr workshop activity for small groups. Assessed coursework or presentation assignment.

Theme	Sub-theme	Aims	Learning outcomes	Activity	Synopsis	Application notes
				See: Personalised learning design	This activity structures opportunity to reflect on the role and value of personalisation in student experience in study and ways in which this can be structured through the curriculum. Designed primarily for application in a group discussion context, the activity can be used as a self-reflection exercise or as a framework for a formal assessment with supplementary review of key literature including the listed sources of further reading.	1-2hr workshop activity for small groups. Assessed coursework or presentation assignment.
	Connection to pre-learning and experience	To consider how the curriculum sequences.	Define plans for supporting effective connection with student pre-learning and experience.	See: Scales of transition and design choices exercise	This activity is presented in two parts. The first uses a defined success framework to structure consideration of curriculum planning and/or review of established programmes. The second focuses on transitions within study and the role of curriculum in supporting these effectively.	1-2hr workshop activity for small groups. Assessed coursework or presentation assignment.

Theme	Sub-theme	Aims	Learning outcomes	Activity	Synopsis	Application notes
	Explicit preparation for learning and assessment tasks	To consider the importance of preparation for assessment as a factor in assessment design.	Design assessment incorporating detailed consideration of assessment preparation.	See: Assessment for learning	Recognising the distinctiveness of institutional context and approaches to assessment, this activity outlines a summary of key functions and types of assessment and their implications for learning and teaching. A series of questions and prompts are included to structure individual reflection or discussion among participant groups. The aim of the activity is to encourage participants to position assessment as a central consideration in curriculum design and to recognise the implications of related design choices for student and staff experience in study.	1-2hr individual reflection activity. 1-2hr workshop activity for small groups.
	Preparing students for progression	To reflect on the importance of completion and progression in learning.		See: Scales of transition and design choices exercise	This activity is presented in two parts. The first uses a defined success framework to structure consideration of curriculum planning and/or review of established programmes. The second focuses on transitions within study and the role of curriculum in supporting these effectively.	1-2hr workshop activity for small groups. Assessed coursework or presentation assignment.

Theme	Sub-theme	Aims	Learning outcomes	Activity	Synopsis	Application notes
	Assessment: how and why	To explore the function and purposes of assessment and to consider their implications for assessment design.	Articulate a clear rationale for design approaches to assessment in terms of function and purpose.	See: Assessment for learning	Recognising the distinctiveness of institutional context and approaches to assessment, this activity outlines a summary of key functions and types of assessment and their implications for learning and teaching. A series of questions and prompts are included to structure individual reflection or discussion among participant groups. The aim of the activity is to encourage participants to position assessment as a central consideration in curriculum design and to recognise the implications of related design choices for student and staff experience in study.	1-2hr individual reflection activity. 1-2hr workshop activity for small groups.
	Preparation for non-classroom learning spaces	To consider the importance of preparing students for unfamiliar learning environments and/or activities.	Describe clear strategies for supporting students in preparing for unfamiliar learning spaces.	See: Scales of transition and design choices exercise	This activity is presented in two parts. The first uses a defined success framework to structure consideration of curriculum planning and/or review of established programmes. The second focuses on transitions within study and the role of curriculum in supporting these effectively.	1-2hr workshop activity for small groups. Assessed coursework or presentation assignment.

Theme	Sub-theme	Aims	Learning outcomes	Activity	Synopsis	Application notes
LEARNER DEVELOPMENT	**Self-attribution and awareness**	To reflect on the importance of self-attribution and self-awareness for wellbeing in learning.	Apply evidence informed approaches to the development of personalisation in the curriculum.	Personalised learning design	This activity structures opportunity to reflect on the role and value of personalisation in student experience in study and ways in which this can be structured through the curriculum. Designed primarily for application in a group discussion context, the activity can be used as a self-reflection exercise or as a framework for a formal assessment with supplementary review of key literature including the listed sources of further reading.	1-2hr workshop activity for small groups. Assessed coursework or presentation assignment.
				See: The hero's journey exercise	This activity structures application of a narrative framework to reflection on the journey and experience of teachers in higher education.	1-2hr workshop activity for small groups. Assessed coursework or presentation assignment.
	Developing self-efficacy	To consider the significance of self-efficacy in learning for wellbeing in study.	Articulate plans for aligning the curriculum with support for developing student self-efficacy in study.	See: The hero's journey exercise		

Theme	Sub-theme	Aims	Learning outcomes	Activity	Synopsis	Application notes
	Self-management	To consider how self-management in learning is supported and developed by the curriculum.	Describe how the curriculum is designed to scaffold release of responsibility to students and support effective self-management in learning.	See: Scaffolding in the curriculum: Guided vs unguided study exercise	This activity focuses attention on notions of control and guidance in teaching and learning. The key aim is to structure participant consideration of the responsibilities of both teacher and student and how this is positioned in curriculum design.	1-2hr workshop activity for small groups. Assessed coursework or presentation assignment.
	Meta learning	To reflect on the role of the curriculum in supporting students learning how to learn.	Identify how students are supported in developing autonomy and agency in their learning.	See: Personalised learning design	This activity structures opportunity to reflect on the role and value of personalisation in student experience in study and ways in which this can be structured through the curriculum. Designed primarily for application in a group discussion context, the activity can be used as a self-reflection exercise or as a framework for a formal assessment with supplementary review of key literature including the listed sources of further reading.	1-2hr workshop activity for small groups. Assessed coursework or presentation assignment.

Theme	Sub-theme	Aims	Learning outcomes	Activity	Synopsis	Application notes
				See: Adapting a team learning framework	The purpose of this exercise is to consider the role of competency frameworks as a scaffold for structuring approaches to the development and application of new skills and learning activities. Directly applicable in the context of designing approaches to teamwork activities, the framework is also configurable as an individual self-reflection exercise and/or adapted as a way of articulating competency development in other disciplinary contexts.	1-2hr workshop activity for small groups. Assessed coursework or presentation assignment.

Theme	Sub-theme	Aims	Learning outcomes	Activity	Synopsis	Application notes
	Feedback	To reflect on the role of feedback for student wellbeing in study.	Apply evidence informed approaches in the design of assessment and feedback for wellbeing.	See: Assessment for learning	Recognising the distinctiveness of institutional context and approaches to assessment, this activity outlines a summary of key functions and types of assessment and their implications for learning and teaching. A series of questions and prompts are included to structure individual reflection or discussion among participant groups. The aim of the activity is to encourage participants to position assessment as a central consideration in curriculum design and to recognise the implications of related design choices for student and staff experience in study.	1-2hr individual reflection activity. 1-2hr workshop activity for small groups.
GETTING STUDENTS BACK ON TRACK	**Re-engaging the disengaged**	To consider approaches to supporting students disengaging and/ or re-engaging with study.	Define structured approaches to supporting student re-engagement with student and reflect on institutional processes for supporting disengagement with study.	Engaging and re-engaging students in study	The aim of this activity is to structure consideration of engagement and re-engagement and to apply informed approaches to curriculum design.	Flexible framework of points of consideration.

Theme	Sub-theme	Aims	Learning outcomes	Activity	Synopsis	Application notes
	Effective signposting	To consider the importance of student navigation between and across different parts of university study and support.	Plan approaches to ensuring effective signposting for students.	See: Personalised learning design	This activity structures opportunity to reflect on the role and value of personalisation in student experience in study and ways in which this can be structured through the curriculum. Designed primarily for application in a group discussion context, the activity can be used as a self-reflection exercise or as a framework for a formal assessment with supplementary review of key literature including the listed sources of further reading.	1-2hr workshop activity for small groups. Assessed coursework or presentation assignment.
	Collaboration between academics and support professionals	To highlight the significance of effective coordination between academics and support professionals in curriculum design and delivery.	Apply a student-centred and learning-communities approach to the design of curricula.	See: Stakeholder mapping in curriculum development	This activity is designed to support consideration of curriculum development processes in terms of leadership, process management, but most significantly, collaboration and stakeholder involvement. The key focus is on exploring who should be involved, when, and how this is best coordinated to ensure a whole university approach.	Half-day CPD workshop activity for small groups. 1-2hr facilitated workshop activity for programme development teams.

Theme	Sub-theme	Aims	Learning outcomes	Activity	Synopsis	Application notes
	Maintaining boundaries	To consider the importance of managing and maintaining clear professional boundaries.	Articulate a clear strategy for managing and maintaining appropriate professional boundaries.	See: Personalised learning design		
	When students present in crisis	To consider how to prepare for managing complex student support needs or crisis situations.	Articulate strategies for managing crisis situations in student support.	See: Personalised learning design		
CAPSTONE AND SUMMARY		To consider the research regarding mental health and wellbeing in higher education disciplinary contexts.	Apply frameworks of evaluation related to wellbeing and mental health in a specific higher education context.	Considering curriculum wellbeing moderators and inhibitors	An overarching activity mapped to all thematic areas in this research, these integrated activities focus on reviewing the mediating effect of different aspects of the curriculum experience and how staff and student wellbeing can be situated as coincident concerns in approaches to curriculum design.	Half to full-day workshop activity and/or team-learning activity. Major assignment.

References

Fraser, S P and Bosanquet, A M (2006) 'The curriculum? That's just a unit outline, isn't it?', *Studies in Higher Education,* 31 (3): 269-284. Available at: doi.org/10.1080/03075070600680521

QAA (2014) 'The Frameworks for HE Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies. Part A: Setting and Maintaining Academic Standards', in QAA *UK Quality Code for Higher Education.* Gloucester: The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education. Available at: www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/qualifications-frameworks.pdf

Theme 1: Infrastructure

Overview

The clear evidence of significant student wellbeing problems in universities, occupational health problems (Kinman and Wray, 2013) and indicators of a continuing decline in the mental health and wellbeing of university staff (O'Brien and Guiney, 2018; Morrish, 2019), situates the curriculum, wellbeing and staff and student experience as intersecting and transactional concerns.

This thematic area explores the value of situating wellbeing in learning as an active focus of consideration in the curriculum development process, and an explicit and clearly defined area of disciplinary study. It recognises the limits of the curriculum and related expertise of university teaching and student support in terms of clinically diagnosed mental health conditions and consequent need for effective articulation with specialist psychotherapeutic support for students and staff. Acknowledging a tendency for narrow, content focused conceptions of the curriculum (Fraser and Bosanquet, 2006), the focus in this section is the value of situating wellbeing as a more central concern (Hughes and Spanner, 2019).

While seeking to avoid 'tokenistic' approaches (Howard, 2020) and recognising a tendency to consider wellbeing as 'other' to the curriculum (Hughes et al, 2018), how to be healthy while studying as a point of consideration in curriculum design, and focus in conceptions of professional development, is valuable in order to ensure that a) students have opportunity to realise their potential in study; b) graduate professionals are equipped and capable of managing sustainable and healthy careers in their disciplines; and c) the experience of the teacher, instructor, and/or student-facing staff are sustained rather than compromised by curriculum design choices.

Sub themes and a series of related learning activities are outlined the table below. These incorporate defined aims and learning outcomes. A summary table of key lessons and top tips from this research are also included and referenced in each activity.

Key areas of focus in this theme are:

+ conceptions and experience of curricula
+ disciplinary frameworks
+ staff wellbeing
+ stakeholders and design processes
+ programme design frameworks
+ defining wellbeing in the curriculum.

Sub-themes, aims, learning outcomes and learning activities:

Sub-theme	Aims	Learning outcomes	Activity	Synopsis
Staff development	To evaluate conceptions of curriculum in UK higher education and related disciplinary conventions and practices.	Reflect on personal conceptions and experiences of the curriculum.	Welcome to Curriculumland: the curriculum as territory and terrain	This activity is designed to be relevant for colleagues new to teaching and/or supporting learning in UK higher education and is conceived primarily to structure reflection in a social learning context about the nature of the curriculum.
	To examine frameworks and regulation of UK higher education curricula.	Explain how curricula is organised and structured in UK higher education.	Benchmark statement analysis exercise	These activities are designed to support development of familiarity with relevant parts of the UK Quality Code and to structure consideration of variations in subject specific practices.
Staff wellbeing	To reflect on the importance of self-care and wellbeing in teaching.	Consider the relationship between the curriculum and staff wellbeing.	Staff wellbeing: key questions in curriculum design	Staff wellbeing being an integrated concern in all activities in this collection, this activity focuses attention specifically on staff wellbeing as a guiding principle of curriculum design. The key aim is to encourage consideration of staff wellbeing as a legitimate point of reference in curriculum thinking.
			See also: The hero's journey exercise (Activity 3)	This activity structures application of a narrative framework to reflection on the journey and experience of students and teachers in higher education.

Sub-theme	Aims	Learning outcomes	Activity	Synopsis
Collaborative design: who designs	To support evidence informed and academic community approach to the design of university learning, teaching, and assessment activities.	Apply a student-centred and learning-communities approach to the design of curricula.	Stakeholder mapping in curriculum development	This activity is designed to support consideration of curriculum development processes in terms of leadership, process management, but most significantly, collaboration and stakeholder involvement. The key focus is on exploring who should be involved, *when*, and *how* this is best coordinated to ensure a whole university approach.
Validation and support for curriculum development	To develop competency, agency and creativity in the design of higher education curricula for wellbeing and mental health.	Use evidence-informed approaches to the design of higher education curricula using wellbeing moderators as a foundational design principle.	Developing a programme design framework	The purpose of this activity is to explore the design of a core programme framework. Working in reverse through programme rationale, philosophy, aims and learning outcomes, the activity provides an opportunity to focus on the principles of backwards design and constructive alignment, as well as institution specific requirements and expectations.
	To guide participants in applying constructive alignment principles in curriculum design.	Apply constructive alignment principles in curriculum design.		
	To explore how wellbeing should be defined as a discipline specific consideration.	Express how wellbeing can be situated and defined as a discipline specific concern.	Crafting programme wellbeing statements	The objective of this activity is to focus consideration of what wellbeing means in the context of individual disciplines and how this should be expressed and described.

Summary of key recommendations and top tips:

Sub-theme	Key lessons	Top tips
Staff wellbeing	+ The wellbeing of university staff is important in and of itself. + There is a clear and explainable relationship between staff wellbeing and student wellbeing. + Universities must take a whole university approach to staff wellbeing if they wish to impact positively on student wellbeing. Collaborative approaches can benefit the development of curriculum that genuinely meets the needs of students.	+ Use validation question sets to focus on key issues relating to wellbeing such as workload bunching, transition, internal cohesion, etc. + Align the work of curriculum development teams and quality teams to focus on quality enhancement that includes consideration of student wellbeing. + Use the Education for Mental Health tool kit to provide academic staff with insight into the relationship between curriculum and wellbeing.
Collaborative design	+ Collaborative approaches can benefit the development of curriculum that genuinely meets the needs of students. + They can also support staff wellbeing by spreading the load and creating a broader sense of ownership. + A genuine whole university approach can bring together a range of expertise, including student services experts in mental health, disability and inclusion that can benefit the quality of curriculum design. + However, this process may need careful facilitation and staff development.	+ Cowan suggested that universities should reconceptualise curriculum development to see it as an opportunity to develop staff knowledge and understanding of teaching, learning and assessment. + Some universities have seen benefits from creating half or whole day sessions to bring together staff from across the university to work on curriculum design. + Whole university approaches may be enabled if staff in professional roles are provided with staff development on teaching, learning and assessment.

Sub-theme	Key lessons	Top tips
Validation and support for curriculum development	+ While validation remains as a separate process focused on compliance in some universities, in others there is a clear move to align curriculum development and validation in one process with more of a focus on quality enhancement. + This shift can support academic staff to develop curriculum that supports learning and wellbeing. + Validation processes can assist by providing explicit focus on wellbeing as part of curriculum approval. This can provide a sense of constructive alignment from curriculum conception to approval. + These approaches can ensure the curriculum has properly considered those aspects that can support wellbeing and learning such as scaffolding, deep learning, social integration, internal cohesion, producing meaning and the development of student mastery and self-efficacy.	+ Use validation question sets to focus on key issues relating to wellbeing such as workload bunching, transition, internal cohesion, etc. + Align the work of curriculum development teams and quality teams to focus on quality enhancement that includes consideration of student wellbeing. + Use the Education for Mental Health tool kit to provide academic staff with insight into the relationship between curriculum and wellbeing.

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Learning and teaching activity:

Welcome to Curriculumland: the curriculum as territory and terrain

Key dimensions of the PSF: A1, A4, K3, V1, V2, V3, V4

Overview

To design university curricula, it is worthwhile first to consider what we define the curriculum to be.

Aimed at colleagues new to teaching and/or supporting learning in UK higher education, this activity is designed primarily to structure reflection in a social learning context about the nature of the curriculum.

Derived from the Latin meaning a 'race', and the verb *currere*, meaning to 'run or proceed' (Goodson, 1997), curriculum is a term that encompasses very different beliefs about what knowledge is and how it relates to learning and teaching. Generally associated with discipline-specific areas of knowledge and related conventions in learning, teaching and assessment, it is not defined specifically within the UK Quality Code (QAA, 2018a) and is therefore a social construction (Weller, 2015), dynamic and partly ambiguous.

This exercise is not designed to establish a concrete definition, but to provide a scaffold for reflection, dialogue and active consideration of what the curriculum means in terms of institutional processes, procedures, regulatory requirements and the expectations and experience of students and teaching staff. It is designed to get participants thinking about their place in learning design and how their discipline works most effectively in a higher education teaching context.

The key aim is to reflect on the importance of the how, where and when, as well as the what and why of learning. The activity also frames opportunity to focus on issues relating to rights and responsibilities, belonging and identity, and the staff and student journey in learning.

Activity

Recognising the value of analogical thinking (Krawczyk, 2018), what if we consider the curriculum more like geography and terrain?

Imagine Curriculumland as an unfamiliar territory with borders, customs, and rules of entry and residency. Consider what lies within and outside Curriculumland, the motivations, expectations, experience and status of residents and visitors, and the various journeys undertaken through different environments, via different routes, to different locations within Curriculumland.

This could be *Engineeringland, Healthstudiesland,* or *Performingartsland*, for example, each comprising distinctive regional diversity, variations in infrastructure and characteristics of landscape, architecture, and space, and even sharing borders with different lands, some porous and dynamic, others more difficult to cross, for reasons any border can be difficult to cross. Focusing on the experience of students and staff, the activity is structured around a series of questions.

Figure 1: Curriculumland – considering curriculum as territory and terrain

Consider the following questions about visitors to Curriculumland:

+ What is the experience of visitors entering Curriculumland?
+ What do visitors commonly experience as distinctive or unfamiliar by way of initial impressions?
+ What rights and responsibilities do visitors to Curriculumland have?
+ Are there customs or rules that visitors can misunderstand?
+ How easy is it for visitors to navigate and travel through Curriculumland?
  – Are routes clearly defined and different routes that can be taken?
  – Are there different modes of travel?
  – How easy is it for visitors to become disorientated or lost?
+ What are the hazards or risks visitors need to be aware of?
  – Do visitors ever deliberately or inadvertently break local laws or breach customs?
+ Are there areas of Curriculumland that are less commonly visited, but nevertheless worthwhile visiting?
  – Are there areas of hostile terrain but nevertheless outstanding natural beauty?
  – Are there ‘tourist’ areas that mask or inhibit visitor experience of authentic Curriculumland?
+ What systems or agencies are in place to support visitors who have trouble?
+ What does the Tourist Information Board of Curriculumland promote that might be surprising to, or challenged by, residents?

Consider the following questions about residents of Curriculumland:

+ What rights and responsibilities do residents of Curriculumland have?
+ Are there customs or rules that residents consider as significant or contentious?
+ How easy is it for residents to navigate and travel through Curriculumland?
  - Are routes clearly defined and different routes that can be taken?
  - Are there different modes of transportation?
  - How easy is it for residents to become disorientated or lost?
+ Are there areas of Curriculumland that are less commonly visited, but nevertheless worthwhile visiting?
  - Are there areas of hostile terrain but nevertheless outstanding natural beauty?
+ What systems or agencies are in place to support residents who have trouble?

Guidance for facilitators

The activity can be undertaken in a number of ways. For example:

+ A 10-30-minute open think-note-share exercise working with online or in- person groups
  - give participants 10-30 minutes to reflect on the context framework and post/note/share either a direct response to one or more of the questions, identify which of the questions they think is/ are most significant and why, a suggestion for any missing questions, or any general thoughts or reflections about how the exercise has led them to reflect on their own Curriculumland.
  - plenary, open discussion or small group discussion and presentation of summary key points by individual groups to conclude activity.
+ A half-day workshop activity involving scene-setting and group work to devise and present:
  - a ‘visitor and/or resident experience’ analysis of a defined Curriculumland.
  - a ‘Welcome to Curriculumland’ visitor information guide for a defined Curriculumland.
+ As a structured self-reflection exercise and/or assessed component incorporating direct engagement with relevant secondary literature and/or action plan to ‘enrich the visitor experience’.

The activity, however structured or facilitated, is designed primarily to encourage active consideration of what *the curriculum* means. Common emerging themes typically include:

+ the ‘hidden curriculum’ of ‘unspoken or assumed rules and norms’ and known diversity of student experience (Hinchcliffe, 2020)
+ the significance of student transitions (Kift, Nelson and Clarke, 2010)
+ status, rights, and responsibilities
+ the challenge of supporting personalised and flexibility of experiences of the curriculum alongside equality of learning opportunity

+ uncertain distinctions between curriculum and pedagogy (what and how learning is experienced/ structured)
+ the curriculum as more than learning content.

Consideration of the following working definition of the curriculum, albeit not directly related to higher education, can provide a useful scaffold for open plenary discussion in workshop activities and/or reflection through individual work:

> "The curriculum is a framework for setting out the aims of a programme of education, including the knowledge and understanding to be gained at each stage (intent); for translating that framework over time into a structure and narrative, within an institutional context (implementation) and for evaluating what knowledge and understanding [have been] gained against expectations (impact/achievement)."
>
> *(Ofsted, 2019).*

Summary

The curriculum is a complex and partly ambiguous term. Recognising this, structured consideration of the curriculum being a framework rather than simply indicative content is important in ensuring that a structured approach is taken to considering learning activities and experiences as well as subjects.

Relevant case studies

Wellbeing in London
Film studies
Skills and support for your English degree
Time to thrive
Clinical humanities and wellbeing
Master's in education insights

Relevant key lessons and top tips

Sub-theme	Key lessons	Top tips
Staff wellbeing	+ The wellbeing of university staff is important in and of itself. + There is a clear and explainable relationship between staff wellbeing and student wellbeing. + Universities must take a whole university approach to staff wellbeing if they wish to impact positively on student wellbeing. Collaborative approaches can benefit the development of curriculum that genuinely meets the needs of students.	+ Align the work of curriculum development teams and quality teams to focus on quality enhancement that includes consideration of student wellbeing. + Use the Education for Mental Health tool kit to provide academic staff with insight into the relationship between curriculum and wellbeing.
Collaborative design	+ Collaborative approaches can benefit the development of curriculum that genuinely meets the needs of students.	+ Whole university approaches may be enabled if staff in professional roles are provided with staff development on teaching, learning and assessment.
Transition	+ Transition is a crucial element for student success, persistence, and wellbeing. + Curriculum should be designed with a specific focus on the process through which students must travel during transition. + The curriculum must be appropriately scaffolded and must explicitly prepare all students for success, no matter their previous experience or learning. + During transition students need support, via the curriculum, to socially integrate, academically integrate, develop self-belief, and manage their wellbeing. + It is easier to achieve all of this within curriculum design if the design process is genuinely collaborative, involving colleagues from across the university.	+ Begin meaningful engagement with the curriculum as soon as possible – preferably during induction/ orientation eg with no stakes tasks that engage students with aspects of their discipline that are interesting, exciting, fun etc. + Group tasks centred on disciplinary content can provide a focus for conversations and social connections. + Acknowledge the normality of transition experiences and provide reassurance – if possible, by giving concrete examples of steps students can take to feel more connected and settled in. + Academics and colleagues in student services can work together to provide psycho-education and guidance to support students to navigate transition successfully.

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Learning and teaching activity:

Benchmark statements analysis exercises

Key dimensions of the PSF: A1, A2, A3, A4, K1, K2, K4, K5, V1, V2, V3, V4

Overview

These activities are designed to support development of familiarity with relevant parts of the UK Quality Code and to structure consideration of variations in subject specific practices.

University curricula aligned with the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (QAA, 2018a) will be directly articulated with one or more related subject benchmark statements (QAA, 2020). Developed as guidance by subject experts, subject benchmark statements present a description of the nature and extent of the subject, characteristics of graduates, and an outline of typical learning, teaching and assessment practices. While explicitly not designed or presented as prescriptive, these are nevertheless important and necessary points of reference in the design, development and formal approval of degree programmes, and therefore valuable sources of consideration for anyone supporting learning in UK higher education.

The purpose of these exercises is to develop familiarity and understanding of relevant aspects of subject benchmark statements, to focus consideration of generic and discipline-specific aspects of curriculum and pedagogy and consider wellbeing as a discipline situated concern.

Activities and guidance for facilitators

There are a range of ways that subject benchmark statements can be used as a scaffold for workshop activities or as a framework for secondary activities. For example:

Activity 1: spot the difference/similarities

Using the full list of Subject Benchmark Statements published by QAA, select two subject statements considered to have most potential to reflect significant variations or subject differences. This may be a ‘home’ subject discipline and a second considered to be most contrasting.

Review each statement and compare to note points of contrast, difference and commonality in terms of style and content related to:

I. Nature and extent of the subject
II. Graduate characteristics
III. Reference to, or role of, regulatory, professional, or statutory bodies
IV. Learning, teaching and assessment practices.

Review notes and, if working in collaboration, try to reach agreement about the most significant points identified in the comparison between the two statements. Sharing among multiple groups can develop a detailed map of analysis points.

Areas of consistency and variation do become apparent. For example, subjects including music include quite explicit mapping of competencies and abilities, whereas engineering tends to describe attributes in more general terms aligned to their context of application and impact. Correspondingly, while the benchmark statement for music emphasises the virtue of individuality much more significantly than engineering, it is engineering that refers to creativity more regularly than music.

Activity 2: Vive la difference

Working most effectively as a follow-up to Activity 1, this activity can also work as a stand-alone exercise.

As with Activity 1, the objective is to select a 'home' subject and a related benchmark statement with potential for greatest variation and difference. The aim then is to map any conspicuous variations and differences and to consider how these may be adapted for application in the home discipline. A further area of consideration can be to identify opportunities for collaborative learning between subjects, and for interdisciplinary learning across subjects.

Potential for more active focus on work-based learning in some subjects, or scope for a more clearly defined position regarding individuality of voice in others, for example, provide an opportunity to consider the conventions of teaching and learning in different disciplinary contexts. The potential value of involving engineers with aspects of theatrical performance, for example, may have transferable value with respect to the development of effective communication skills and structure opportunity to critically reflect on the dynamics of team working in a different disciplinary context.

Other ways that benchmark statements can be used to frame individual or collaborative learning activities include:

+ Identify key research literature related to the learning, teaching and assessment practices outlined in the statement.
+ Develop a one-page curriculum map outlining key student learning activities by period and stage of study to support realisation of the graduate characteristics.
+ Unpack the detail of selected graduate characteristics (eg 'have strategies for being creative', 'be skilled at solving problems', 'be professional in outlook') and map out the implications for curriculum design.

Summary

Subject benchmark statements are important points of reference for anyone involved in the design or support of teaching and learning in UK higher education. They provide a useful scaffold to ensure practice is aligned with regulatory requirements and conventions in the sector and confirm license for innovation and distinctiveness of approach.

Exploration of benchmark statements around and beyond a notional home discipline reveals increasing distinctiveness, subtle variations of emphasis in related skills, abilities, and attributes, and how these are defined. Recognition and consideration of these variations provide an opportunity to reflect on assumptions about how the curriculum is designed and operated in disciplinary contexts.

Relevant key lessons and top tips

Sub-theme	Key lessons	Top tips
Staff wellbeing	+ The wellbeing of university staff is important in and of itself. + There is a clear and explainable relationship between staff wellbeing and student wellbeing.	+ Use validation question sets to focus on key issues relating to wellbeing such as workload bunching, transition, internal cohesion, etc. + Align the work of curriculum development teams and quality teams to focus on quality enhancement that includes consideration of student wellbeing.
Validation and support for curriculum development	+ While validation remains as a separate process focused on compliance in some universities, in others there is a clear move to align curriculum development and validation in one process with more of a focus on quality enhancement. + Validation processes can assist by providing explicit focus on wellbeing as part of curriculum approval. This can provide a sense of constructive alignment from curriculum conception to approval.	+ Use validation question sets to focus on key issues relating to wellbeing such as workload bunching, transition, internal cohesion, etc. + Align the work of curriculum development teams and quality teams to focus on quality enhancement that includes consideration of student wellbeing.

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Learning and teaching activity:

Staff wellbeing: key questions in curriculum design

Key dimensions of the PSF: A1-5, K2-6, V2, V3

Overview

Our research includes a systematic review of the literature related to staff burnout and work engagement in higher education. It demonstrates significant occupational health problems for teaching staff. Staff wellbeing is therefore an integrated concern in all elements in this collection.

This activity focuses attention specifically on staff wellbeing as a guiding principle of curriculum design. The key aim is to encourage active consideration of staff wellbeing as a legitimate point of reference in curriculum thinking.

This activity can be undertaken individually, in pairs or in groups, and outlines a series of questions and points for consideration relating to staff wellbeing and the curriculum. Particularly relevant for colleagues new to curriculum design in higher education, the main objective is to consider the value of situating curriculum design thinking more directly on the experience of staff teaching and/or supporting learning.

Activity

Student experience tends to be the predominate focus of attention in curriculum development, design and operation. This activity encourages consideration of how the curriculum might be conceptualised if the focus was placed more exclusively on the experience of staff involved in teaching and/or supporting learning.

Focusing, in part, on mitigation for factors known to compromise staff wellbeing in higher education – including a sense of isolation, bureaucratic structures, student-as-consumer culture (O'Brien and Guiney, 2018) – the emphasis in this activity is nevertheless purposefully placed on applying an appreciative inquiry approach (Cooperrider and Srivastva, 1987). The basic aim is to consider what the curriculum might look like if it was specifically designed to support the wellbeing of staff.

Consider the following questions:

+ What areas or aspects of the curriculum do you enjoy/look forward to the most/find most meaningful (eg topics, activities)?
  – When, where and how often do these occur?
    • How might these be extended or applied more fully?
+ What areas or aspects of the curriculum do you dislike/look forward to the least/find meaningless (eg topics, activities)?
  – When, where and how often do these occur?
    • Are these necessary/valuable? What would be the implications of reducing or removing these?

+ Where do you/do you anticipate feeling most comfortable/at home in teaching and/or supporting learning?
  - Where/when in the curriculum does this occur?
    - How might this be extended or situated more fully at the heart of your practice?
+ Where do you/do you anticipate feeling most uncomfortable in teaching and/or supporting learning?
  - Where/when in the curriculum does this occur?
    - How might this be reduced or moved towards the periphery of your practice?
+ What is the high point related to a given aspect of the curriculum (eg activity, module, assessment)?
  - Where/when in the curriculum does this occur?
    - How might this be extended, replicated, or shared more widely?
+ What is the low point related to a given aspect of the curriculum (eg activity, module, assessment)?
  - Where/when in the curriculum does this occur?
    - Can this be addressed through curriculum changes?
    - Are these necessary/valuable? What would be the implications of reducing or removing these?
+ Who do you turn to for support, guidance or advice in teaching and/or supporting learning?
  - Do you/will you/can you feel safe in your teaching?
+ Who champions your work in the curriculum? How and where is this celebrated?
  - Who among your colleagues gets pleasure from your work?
  - How do you contribute to the wellbeing of colleagues in their curriculum?
+ If budget, time or available facilities were no barrier, what would you add to the curriculum for the sole purpose of improving your wellbeing in teaching and/or supporting learning?
+ How would the curriculum be configured and designed in an ideal world? What would it look like if perfectly structured to sustain your wellbeing?

Significant insights can emerge through consideration of the differences and commonalities in the themes and detail of responses to the questions among participant groups.

Plenary discussion of shared reflections and insights can structure opportunity to think practically about easily adaptable or transferable ‘quick wins’, and more creatively about ways of developing opportunities from what may initially be judged as fanciful impossibility. Treating the latter in particular as ‘Po’s’ (De Bono, 1972) – or signals for required provocations (hook to scaffold alternative/unconventional/lateral ways of thinking), forward movement and development – participants should be encouraged to consider that any adaptation to the curriculum that serves to better support staff wellbeing without negatively impacting the student learning experience as being equivalent in value to any step taken to actively improve the student learning experience. However impossible an idea or ambition may initially seem to be, all will ultimately be adaptable and incorporate some opportunity for moving a step away from current practice and towards a notional alternative ideal.

For example:

Insight or ideal	Provocation	Possibility/step forward
No assessment or marking	Don't do the marking	Increase emphasis on self and peer assessment activity. Outsource assessment. Adjust assessment – schedule professional conversations as teaching activity. Co-creation of assessment.
Nothing but marking	Just do assessment	Plan and negotiate specialist role in assessment and increased proportion of time. Just spend more time assessing. You can teach effectively through assessment. Design the curriculum to emphasise self-directed and pre-structured/ self-paced study and devote your synchronous/week-by-week teaching time supporting formative and summative assessment and feedback.
The dream of infinite resources	Bid, borrow or fake it	Find an ally to support specific and targeted resources projects (applications, proposals, negotiations, business cases, sponsorship seeking activity). Explore.
Supporting student projects	Extend the practice	Develop project-based learning in other areas of teaching.
Alignment between teaching and research	Connect activities	Involve students as co-researchers within or around the curriculum.

Summary guidance for facilitators

Recognising the limits of wishful thinking and legitimate practical constraints of curriculum design in higher education, there can be a tendency for perspectives of the possible to become eroded over time and for conventions of approach in disciplinary contexts to inhibit innovation with 'consistency' used as a rationalising justification. It is worthwhile to actively encouraging colleagues new to curriculum design that creativity is possible.

While it is rare for factors related to staff wellbeing to exert a significant influence in curriculum design thinking, doing so can develop alternative perspectives and support a more sustainable curriculum.

Relevant case studies

Master's in education insights.

Relevant key lessons and top tips

Sub-theme	Key lessons	Top tips
Staff wellbeing	+ The wellbeing of university staff is important in and of itself. + There is a clear and explainable relationship between staff wellbeing and student wellbeing.	+ Align the work of curriculum development teams and quality teams to focus on quality enhancement that includes consideration of student wellbeing.
Collaborative design	+ Collaborative approaches can benefit the development of curriculum that genuinely meets the needs of students. + They can also support staff wellbeing by spreading the load and creating a broader sense of ownership.	+ Cowan suggested that universities should reconceptualise curriculum development to see it as an opportunity to develop staff knowledge and understanding of teaching, learning and assessment.
Validation and support for curriculum development	+ Validation processes can assist by providing explicit focus on wellbeing as part of curriculum approval. This can provide a sense of constructive alignment from curriculum conception to approval. + These approaches can ensure curriculum has properly considered those aspects that can support wellbeing and learning such as scaffolding, deep learning, social integration, internal cohesion, producing meaning and the development of student mastery and self-efficacy.	+ Use validation question sets to focus on key issues relating to wellbeing such as workload bunching, transition, internal cohesion, etc. + Use the Education for Mental Health tool kit to provide academic staff with insight into the relationship between curriculum and wellbeing.

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Learning and teaching activity:

Stakeholder mapping in curriculum development

Key dimensions of the PSF: A1, K6, V3, V4

Overview

This activity is designed to support consideration of curriculum development processes in terms of leadership and process management, but most significantly, collaboration and stakeholder involvement. The key focus is on exploring who should be involved, when, and how this is best coordinated to ensure a whole university approach, recognising the value of team-based and project managed approaches to curriculum development (Voogt, Pieters and Handelzalts, 2016).

Particularly relevant for staff new to curriculum development in higher education, the aim is to focus consideration of authorship, design, collaboration and appropriate balance between expertise-led design and student co-creation. The activity also provides a useful context for integrated focus on institution-specific policies, procedures, curriculum design structures and curriculum design approaches.

Guidance for facilitators

Able to be undertaken individually, in pairs or small groups, the activity has three main steps. First, outlining some working definitions of curriculum structures in higher education, participants are presented initially with a simple cross diagram of a pair of axis lines denoting extremes of authorial approach, from lone author to complex collaboration along the x-axis, and from academically led to student-led design approaches down the y-axis.

Part 1 providing a scaffold to focus consideration first on key factors of collaboration, authorship, and student participation in design processes, the approach is deliberately two-dimension or ‘flat’ and is designed to instigate consideration of missing stakeholders, stakeholder responsibilities and patterns of development over time.

Capable of adaptation, the first step can be practical and on paper, or undertaken online. Depending on how the activity is facilitated, individual or small group presentations are a positive way of drawing together key insights and identifying key questions.

Part 2 moves to focus on wider stakeholder engagement and consultation using a standard RACI matrix to consider who is responsible, accountable, consulted and informed, regarding key stages and aspects of curriculum design.

Finally, Part 3 focuses on mapping out a timeline for curriculum development and consideration of project management in curriculum design and approval. This can be undertaken using a particular institutional framework or procedure as a scaffold, completed as a ‘blank piece of paper’ exercise, or as a straight-line sequence of key activities beginning with programme idea and concluding with validation and approval (eg ’10 key steps’).

Activity

Curriculum development and programme approval in higher education is predominantly a collaborative endeavour, generally led by subject experts with input from other relevant areas of expertise. Nevertheless, it is extremely common in university programme approvals processes for design flaws to be identified in the later stages of review, and routine for others to be missed and discovered only when the programme has become operational.

This activity considers the *who*, *how* and *when* of curriculum development and the value of project management approaches.

Step 1

For the purposes of this activity, a 'programme (of study)' is defined broadly and simply as per QAA glossary of terms:

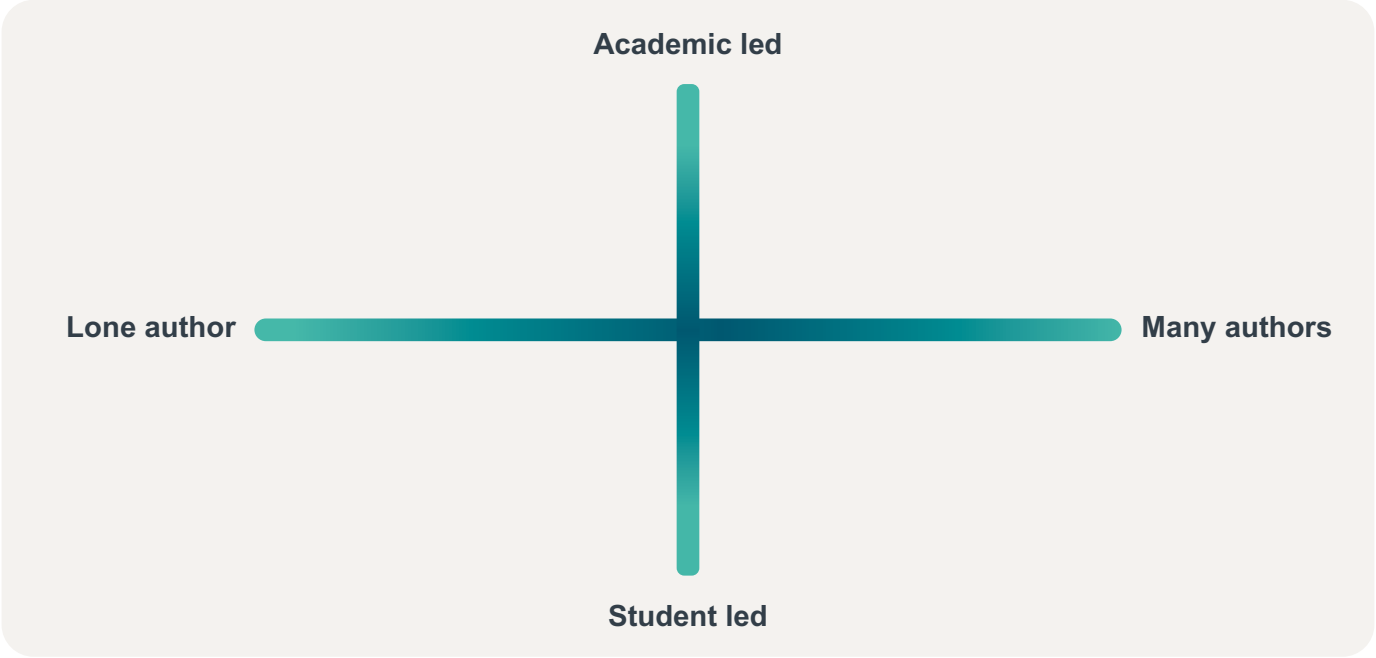
> "An approved pathway of study that provides a coherent learning experience and normally leads towards a qualification. UK higher education programmes must be approved and validated by UK degree-awarding bodies."
>
> *(QAA, 2018b)*

Considering typical undergraduate credit frameworks, new programmes of study and related development and approval processes will typically include:

+ programme approval paperwork (including rationale and market analysis)
+ programme specification (defined award and related credit framework)
+ module specifications
+ assessment framework.

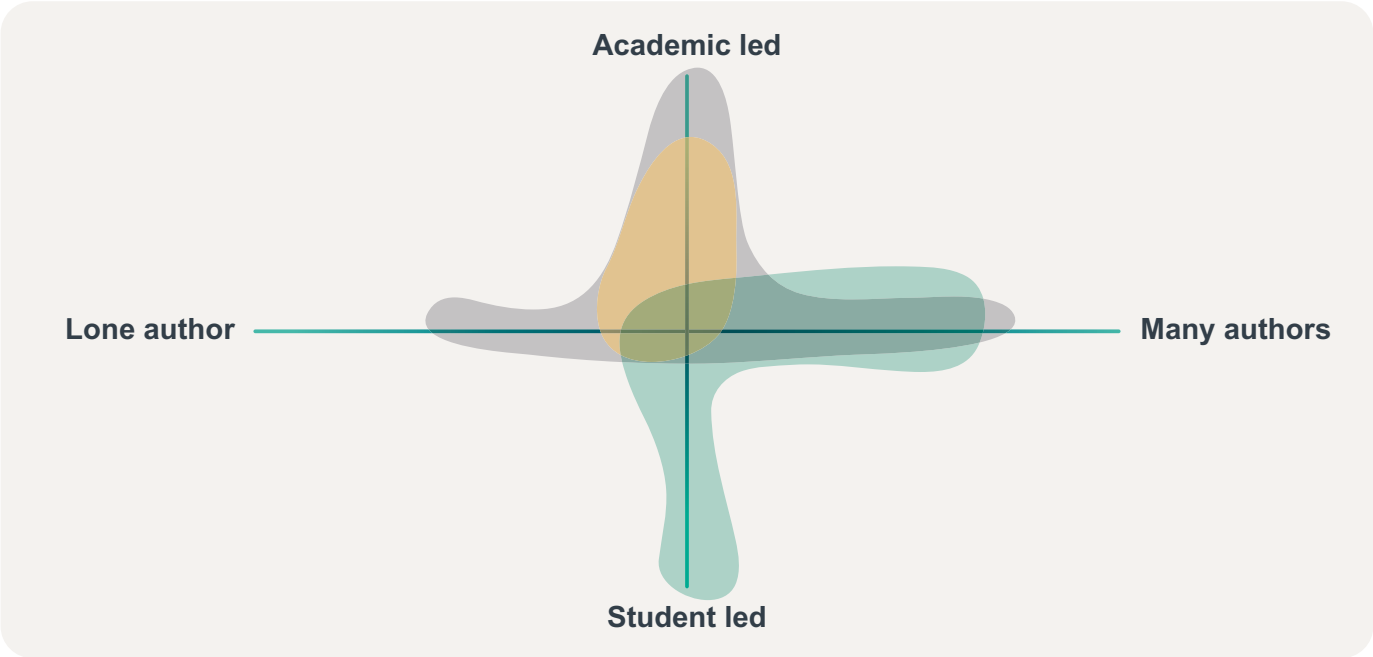
Considering first who develops new programmes of study, the figure outlined below is comprised of two axis lines. The x-axis representing one set of extreme positions, from lone author to many authors, the y-axis extremes of leadership position, from academic led to student led.

Figure 2: axes of authorship in curriculum development.



Participants are then tasked with sharing their conception of an ideal approach and representing this graphically where relevant. Without providing further specific context details at this stage, it is a useful way of sharing and gauging the experience of participants, exploring assumptions and encouraging participants to begin to ask questions about development processes and who should be involved.

Figure 3: axes of authorship in curriculum development illustrative responses.



Resulting in a shape imposed on the axes when represented graphically (or insights presented in alternative ways), outcomes provide a good context for discussion among groups, or for more detailed rationale and alignment with the literature by way of individual reflection.

More detailed activity, questions or themes that can emerge organically through discussion include:

+ What are the benefits or disbenefits of extreme points on either axis (lone/many, academic led/ student led)?
  - Does lone authorship = consistency of style, internal cohesion, but limitations of a single vision?
  - Does collaboration = inconsistency, lack of cohesion, but collective expertise and vision?
  - Does academic led = subject expertise but potential to be disconnected from student experience?
  - Does student led = aspiration focused but lacking subject expertise?
+ Who or what areas of expertise are missing from this analysis?
+ How might this balance change through curriculum development processes? What might these diagrams look like at the start, middle and closing stages of a curriculum development process, as a map of interactions over time?

Step 2

Following relevant plenary discussion and/or collation and review of individual and group analysis and insights, secondary activity can focus on the questions raised and on curriculum development planning and stakeholder engagement. Key points of discussion and consideration include:

+ What other key stakeholders need to be involved and/or consulted?
+ At what point in the development process should they be informed and/or involved?
+ How should curriculum development and programme design be coordinated and led?
+ Who is responsible, accountable, consulted, and/or informed?

An indicative stakeholder mapping framework is presented as a standard RACI matrix (Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, Informed) in the subsequent resource. This can be adapted as a framework for mapping overall stakeholder engagement ideas developed through preceding activities or presented as an indicative example to inform the final steps.

Step 3

Having considered wider stakeholder engagement, relevant institutional programme approval processes and timelines can be outlined/revisited, and indicative curriculum development timelines reviewed.

Normally working back from intended point of recruitment through defined structures of development approval and validation, points, processes and responsibilities for stakeholder engagement and consultation can be outlined in a sequence. This activity can be structured around an institutional process framework or simply focused on 10 key steps or stages in the development process. Considering points raised during Part 1 of the activity, particular attention should be placed on the authorial and editorial approach and steps to ensure consistency and cohesion.

Themes that tend to emerge or that are worth highlighting include:

+ leadership and the need for clear identification of wider responsibilities
+ coordination of authorship and version control for key documentation
+ cycles of collaboration (divergence) and lone editorial approach (convergence).

Summary guidance for facilitators

The activity provides a useful context to consider individual institutional approaches in terms of regulations and approval processes, and frames consideration of:

+ The benefits and disbenefits of different approaches to curriculum design (consistency vs richness, coherence vs diversity).
+ The challenges of coordination and management of development processes including effective alignment between and across modules.
+ The challenge of compromise between design vision and possibility.
+ The value of project management approaches and clearly defined leadership in curriculum development.
+ Risk areas in curriculum development and approaches to mitigation.
+ Importance of academic level and articulation between programme and module development.
+ Recognition of the importance of wider stakeholders including professional and/or statutory bodies, professional services, library etc.

Key takeaway points are that:

+ Approaches to curriculum development and design impact the quality of curriculum design. The quality of curriculum design has an impact on student wellbeing, learning, progression, and attainment.
+ Curriculum development processes require coordination, management, and clear understanding of roles and responsibilities.
+ Key stakeholders can often be excluded or only peripherally involved in curriculum development processes. Ensuring the right people and the right expertise is involved at the right time, and in the right way, requires planning.
+ There can be a tendency for narrow, content focused conceptions of the curriculum (Fraser and Bosanquet, 2006) despite identified value in an active focus on wellbeing in the curriculum (Hughes and Spanner, 2019).

Relevant case studies

Master's in education insights.

Relevant key lessons and top tips

Sub-theme	Key lessons	Top tips
Collaborative design	+ Collaborative approaches can benefit the development of curriculum that genuinely meets the needs of students. + They can also support staff wellbeing by spreading the load and creating a broader sense of ownership. + A genuine whole university approach can bring together a range of expertise, including student services experts in mental health, disability and inclusion that can benefit the quality of curriculum design. + However, this process may need careful facilitation and staff development.	+ Cowan suggested that universities should reconceptualise curriculum development to see it as an opportunity to develop staff knowledge and understanding of teaching, learning and assessment. + Some universities have seen benefits from creating half or whole day sessions to bring together staff from across the university to work on curriculum design. + Whole university approaches may be enabled if staff in professional roles are provided with staff development on teaching, learning and assessment.
Validation and support for curriculum development	+ While validation remains as a separate process focused on compliance in some universities, in others there is a clear move to align curriculum development and validation in one process with more of a focus on quality enhancement. + This shift can support academic staff to develop curriculum that supports learning and wellbeing. + Validation processes can assist by providing explicit focus on wellbeing as part of curriculum approval. This can provide a sense of constructive alignment from curriculum conception to approval. + These approaches can ensure curriculum has properly considered those aspects that can support wellbeing and learning such as scaffolding, deep learning, social integration, internal cohesion, producing meaning and the development of student mastery and self-efficacy.	+ Use validation question sets to focus on key issues relating to wellbeing such as workload bunching, transition, internal cohesion, etc. + Align the work of curriculum development teams and quality teams to focus on quality enhancement that includes consideration of student wellbeing. + Use the Education for Mental Health tool kit to provide academic staff with insight into the relationship between curriculum and wellbeing.

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Resource: stakeholder mapping framework

A standard RACI matrix enables consideration of curriculum design activities in terms of who is responsible for doing the work (R), who is accountable for the work being completed to standard and by deadline (A), who needs to be consulted (C), and who needs to be informed (I). This can include responsibility being shared, but not accountability. Additional stakeholders may include finance, student placement teams, timetabling teams, industrial partners, and/or clinical placement organisations. Additional design steps may include learning activities design including field trip or site visit planning. **This is presented as complete for guidance, but content can be deleted.**

Design step	Lead	Academic team	Technicians	Prof' body	Quality team	Education team	Dept or faculty	Admin	Library	Estates	Digital services	Students	Student support	Marketing team
Programme vision	R	**A**	C	C	I	I	C	I	I	I	I	C	I	I
Development approval	C	R	I	I	**A**	C	C	I	I	C	I	I	I	C
Programme philosophy	**A**	R	I	C	I	I	C	I	I	I	I	C	I	I
Programme aims	**A**	R	I	C	C	C	I	I	I	I	I	C	I	C
Programme learning outcomes	**A**	R	I	C	C	C	C	I	I	C	I	C	I	C
Programme structure	**A**	R	C	C	C	C	C	I	I	C	I	C	I	C
Module specifications	**A**	R	I/C	C	C	C	I	I	C	I	I	I	I	I
Assessment design	R	**A**	I/C	C	C	C	I	C	I	I/C	I/C	C	C	I
Programme handbook/info	R	R	I/C	I	C/**A**	I	I	C	I	I	I	C	C	I
Learning materials	R	R/**A**	I/C	I	I	I	I	I	I	I/C	I/C	C	C	I
Marketing plan	R	C	C	I	I	I	C	I	C	C	C	C	C	R/A

Learning and teaching activity:

Developing a programme design framework

Key dimensions of the PSF: A1, A2, A5, K1, K2, V1, V2

Overview

The purpose of this activity is to explore the design of a core programme framework. Working in reverse through programme rationale, philosophy, aims and learning outcomes, the activity provides an opportunity to focus on the principles of backwards design and constructive alignment, as well as institution-specific requirements and expectations. The activity is designed to be relevant to participants new to curriculum design in higher education.

Activity and guidance for facilitators

The one-page programme design framework provided is purposefully concise (Resource 1) The contention being that there is value in the essential characteristics and character of a programme being defined as simply as possible, and that everything that flows from this benefits from such clarity.

Able to be undertaken individually, in pairs or small groups, participants are presented initially with a summary of the activity and a copy of the programme design framework resource. Discretion can be applied about the relative merits of incorporating focus on examples of established programmes in a particular institutional context (encouraging modelling), versus the opportunity to approach the activity unencumbered by institutional convention. Recognising the need for consistency, if creativity is to be encouraged, sometimes a fresh perspective can lead to valuable new ideas. Exemplars and consideration of established institutional conventions can be integrated within a later part of the activity.

A key focus in the activity is the principle of constructive alignment which relates to purposeful articulation between clearly defined outcomes or impact of the learning process, the form of evidence and criteria for evaluating this, and the learning and teaching activities to support development of this evidence. The activity can be undertaken in simulation, as a planning exercise, or used to refresh or update an established programme.

Part 1: programme rationale

The activity begins with a focus on programme rationale. The programme rationale needs to be persuasive and compelling for an institution to formally commit to the development. It also needs to encapsulate the essential purpose and character of the programme for other stakeholders, including prospective students. The rationale therefore needs to:

+ Connect with real-world problems and/or opportunities.
+ Clearly identify meaningful graduate routes.
+ Demonstrate alignment with institutional strategy.
+ Highlight connection with relevant staff expertise and interest.
+ Demonstrate basic economic feasibility.

With respect to real-world problems, the rational should be aligned with at least one subject benchmark statement (QAA, 2020). and may also incorporate alignment with other frameworks such as the UN Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations, 2015).

In essence, the rationale is an explanation of how the proposed development will change the world and how it will fit in the institutional context.

Part 2: programme philosophy

Having crafted a rationale, the next stage is to consider the programme philosophy. Writing a programme philosophy and programme aims is a fundamental foundation for effective curriculum design. All stakeholders should be involved; particularly all those who will be writing modules. Philosophy will need to fit within the context in which the programme will operate but can be distinctive (it does not need to be the same as others but will need to work in conjunction with others).

+ The philosophy statement should be philosophical.
+ What does the team believe in? What are the team (and institutional) values?
+ What underpins the design choices made?
+ What is distinctive about the programme?
+ What learning experiences are hoped for?

An example philosophy statement from a postgraduate programme in learning and teaching in higher education:

> "This work-based learning programme is designed from the perspective that learning is a social activity, best undertaken within a multi-disciplinary community. We see learning as a product of discussion and debate. Using conceptual modules and theoretical perspectives of learning and teaching to underpin debate we intend to be provocative and so enhance critical reflection upon tacit assumptions about professionalism and 'power' within higher education. We uphold diversity of identities and approaches to teaching within an anti-oppressive and anti-discriminatory context. We support the development of creative academic practice and innovation."

Part 3: programme aims

Programme aims define the purpose of the programme and sets the 'job to be done' for the modules. It should be possible to map the modules against the programme aims and they should be constructed in such a way that they relate to the philosophy.

+ The aims should relate to the value of the programme to stakeholders (mainly students, employers, and professional bodies).
+ Aims should be quite broad (the learning outcomes will be more specific).
+ Five aims are ample.

Part 4: programme learning outcomes

Having established a rationale, philosophy and aims, the next stage is to develop programme learning outcomes. These are more specific than aims and form the key framework from which the curriculum will be developed in detail including the module sequence and structure.

+ The programme level learning outcomes should cascade from the programme philosophy and aims.
+ They should articulate with external benchmarks where applicable – eg quality benchmarking statements and/or professional body accreditation criteria.
+ Programme learning outcomes should articulate what a graduate will be able to do because of successfully completing the programme.
+ Five to 10 learning outcomes will suffice (depending on the time available for the activity).

Additional guidance about learning outcomes design is presented in Resource 2 and Resource 3.

Depending on the approaches taken to the activity and the nature of participants groups, sharing of design frameworks can frame a useful opportunity for peer review and consideration of:

+ The balance between clarity, brevity and specificity/detail (complexity and number of learning outcomes).
+ Effective alignment between programme design framework elements (rationale, philosophy, aims, outcomes).
+ Critical reflection on institutional standards and conventions (further comparison with institutional exemplars).

Guidance for facilitators

Recognising that programme development will rarely be possible as an entirely collaborative and synchronous activity, design and authorship can therefore very easily tend towards disaggregated endeavour, with key aspects of curriculum design activity becoming distanced, uncoordinated or even disconnected. This activity is therefore designed to focus consideration of the value and importance of shared ownership and understanding of the central identity and characteristics of a programme to ensure a cohesive whole can be brought together from more collective and collaborative design and development approaches by ensuring clarity of vision.

Key takeaway points are that programme design framework elements (rationale, philosophy, aims and learning outcomes):

+ Operate best when constructively aligned and constructed and owned collectively.
+ Work most effectively when foundational to all aspects of programme design.
+ Are meaningful and resonate with student and staff aspirations and interests.

Relevant case studies

Master's in educationIInsights

Relevant key lessons and top tips

Sub-theme	Key lessons	Top tips
Staff wellbeing	+ Universities must take a whole university approach to staff wellbeing if they wish to impact positively on student wellbeing. Collaborative approaches can benefit the development of curriculum that genuinely meets the needs of students.	+ Use validation question sets to focus on key issues relating to wellbeing such as workload bunching, transition, internal cohesion, etc. + Align the work of curriculum development teams and quality teams to focus on quality enhancement that includes consideration of student wellbeing.

Sub-theme	Key lessons	Top tips
Collaborative design	+ Collaborative approaches can benefit the development of curriculum that genuinely meets the needs of students. + They can also support staff wellbeing by spreading the load and creating a broader sense of ownership. + A genuine whole university approach can bring together a range of expertise, including student services experts in mental health, disability and inclusion that can benefit the quality of curriculum design. + However, this process may need careful facilitation and staff development.	+ Cowan suggested that universities should reconceptualise curriculum development to see it as an opportunity to develop staff knowledge and understanding of teaching, learning and assessment. + Some universities have seen benefits from creating half or whole day sessions to bring together staff from across the university to work on curriculum design. + Whole university approaches may be enabled if staff in professional roles are provided with staff development on teaching, learning and assessment.
Validation and support for curriculum development	+ While validation remains as a separate process focused on compliance in some universities, in others there is a clear move to align curriculum development and validation in one process with more of a focus on quality enhancement. + This shift can support academic staff to develop curriculum that supports learning and wellbeing. + Validation processes can assist by providing explicit focus on wellbeing as part of curriculum approval. This can provide a sense of constructive alignment from curriculum conception to approval. + These approaches can ensure curriculum has properly considered those aspects that can support wellbeing and learning such as scaffolding, deep learning, social integration, internal cohesion, producing meaning and the development of student mastery and self-efficacy.	+ Use validation question sets to focus on key issues relating to wellbeing such as workload bunching, transition, internal cohesion, etc. + Align the work of curriculum development teams and quality teams to focus on quality enhancement that includes consideration of student wellbeing. + Use the Education for Mental Health tool kit to provide academic staff with insight into the relationship between curriculum and wellbeing.

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United Nations (2015) *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable development.* New York, NY: United Nations DSDG. Available at: sdgs.un.org/2030agenda

Resource 1: programme design framework

This one-page design framework sets the challenge of defining the key characteristics and character of a programme in a concise but coherent way. The key aim is to ensure that there is a logical and clear flow between rationale, philosophy, aims and outcomes. Questions are provided as prompts but can be used as a scaffold.

Programme Rationale	Programme Philosophy	Programme Aims	Programme Learning Outcomes
+ What problems would the programme solve? (eg aligned with what UN Sustainable Development Goals?) + How does this align with institutional strategy? + Which subject benchmark statement would this align with? + Who wants to do this? + Whose lives would this programme change?	+ What does the team believe in? + What are the team (and institutional) values? + What underpins the design choices made? + What is distinctive about the programme? + What learning experiences are hoped for?	+ The aims should relate to the value of the programme to stakeholders (mainly students, employers, and professional bodies). + Aims should be quite broad (the learning outcomes will be more specific). + Four to six aims (approx).	+ These should cascade from the programme philosophy and aims. + They should articulate with external benchmarks where applicable – eg quality benchmarking statements and/or professional body accreditation criteria. + What will graduates be able to do? + Six to 10 learning outcomes (approx).
>	>	>	>

Resource 2: programme learning outcome design framework

Noting that institution-specific guidance and/or approaches should be referred to where relevant, the following guidance reflects good practice and presented for use if considered applicable.

Learning outcomes should be Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Results-Focused, and Time-Focused (SMART) (Doran, 1981)

Learning outcomes should describe what a student can do.

Learning outcomes need to be aligned by level and related regulatory guidance.

Learning outcomes typically include a suitable precursor statement – *On successful completion of the programme you/the student will be able to:* – and comprise:

+ an **active verb**
+ an **object** of the verb
+ a qualifying phrase providing **context**.

Eg *On successful completion of the module, you will be able to:*

Examine critically (verb) **theoretical frameworks and research** (object) **relevant to neonatal development** (context).

Avoid using 'understanding' in an outcome. As highlighted by Knight and Yorke, "Understanding cannot be judged, then, by evaluating the learner's retention of data or information; rather, assessment tasks would need to have the student apply data or information appropriately" (2003, 48). While the recall of information is a valid concern, try to focus on the context in which that would be applied.

Be careful not to lose the distinction between aims and outcomes (eg *"Students will explore theories of…"*). Aims highlight the **intentions** of a programme while learning outcomes articulate **what a student will be able to do** on successful completion.

A taxonomy of levels and learning outcomes relevant to curriculum design in UK higher education including a summary of key terminology from the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) of the UK Quality Code is provided below.

Note that it is not intended to imply explicit alignment along the horizontal axis as each taxonomy is designed to sequence vertically, and all terminology is subject to being situated within a given context and related standards framework, eg 'evaluating', 'describing', identifying', and 'interpreting', and related standards thereof, are very different depending on whether the context is simple arithmetic or quantum mechanics. Furthermore, 'creating', 'composing', 'predicting', or 'synthesising' can be considered very differently if the context is a simple report or composing proficient symphonic music.

Individual subject benchmark statements (QAA, 2020) provide further detail and descriptors mapped to different levels in UK higher education, and Annex D of the UK Quality Code (QAA, 2019c) provides further examples mapped to undergraduate degree classification outcomes.

Resource 3: a taxonomy framework of levels and learning outcomes

This table presents an indicative summary taxonomy of terminology mapped to UK higher education levels.

UK HE level	Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) (QAA, 2014)		Blooms Taxonomy (1956)		SOLO TAXONOMY (after Biggs and Collis, 1982)		Revised Bloom's Taxonomy (Krathwohl et al, 2000)	
8	**Creation and interpretation of new knowledge**	**Creating** and interpreting, acquiring, conceptualising, advancing.	**Evaluation**	Judge, evaluate, conclude, deduce, argue, estimate, validate, appraise, criticise, infer.	**Extended abstract**	Evaluate, theorise, generalise, **predict**, create, imagine, hypothesise, reflect.	**Creating**	Reorganising, deriving, **synthesising**.
7	**Comprehensive understanding**	Creating, self-directing, proposing.	**Synthesis**	**Compose,** produce, design, prepare, predict, modify, plan, invent, formulate, propose, organise, originate, derive.			**Evaluating**	Judging, critiquing, recommending, evaluating.
6	**A systematic and conceptual understanding**	Deploying, problem-solving, appreciating uncertainty and ambiguity, managing.	**Analysis**	Analyse, compare, contrast, categorise, investigate, detect, survey, experiment, discriminate, inspect.	**Relational**	Compare, contrast, explain causes, sequence, classify, analyse, relate, analogise, apply, formulate questions.	**Analysing**	Determining, interrelating, differentiating, attributing, organising, illustrating.

UK HE level	Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) (QAA, 2014)		Blooms Taxonomy (1956)		SOLO TAXONOMY (after Biggs and Collis, 1982)		Revised Bloom's Taxonomy (Krathwohl et al, 2000)	
5	**Critical understanding**	Applying, critically evaluating, and analysing, initiating, communicating to specialist and non-specialist audiences.	**Application**	Apply, develop, operate, organise, restructure, demonstrate, practice, exhibit.	**Multi-structural**	Define, describe, list, do algorithm, combine.	**Applying**	Executing, implementing, applying, presenting.
4	**Knowledge**	Presenting, **evaluating**, interpreting, arguing, communicating.	**Comprehension**	Discuss, **describe**, illustrate, represent, review, differentiate, conclude.	**Unistructural**	Define, **identify**, do simple, procedure.	**Understanding**	Constructing, **interpreting**, exemplifying, summarising, inferring, comparing.
3			**Knowledge**	Know, identify, relate, explain, express, define, recall, repeat, recognise.	**Pre-structural**		**Remembering**	Recognising, recalling.

Learning and teaching activity:

Crafting programme wellbeing statements

Key dimensions of the PSF: A1, A4, K3, K6, V1, V2, V3, V4

Overview

The objective of this activity is to focus consideration of what wellbeing means in the context of individual disciplines and how this should be expressed and described.

Mental health problems were the third most significant identified cause of sick leave in 2015 in the UK, constituting 17.5 million days or 12.7% of all absences through illness (Mental Health Foundation citing Office for National Statistics, 2021). While there are, of course, some professional sectors for which known challenges exist, there are no unaffected professions. Wellbeing is a significant social issue and ethical concern, but also a fundamentally practical and economic one too.

This activity therefore considers how wellbeing should be situated and defined as a discipline-specific concern, both in terms of in study processes and experiences, but also as a worthwhile outcome of the study process. If the employability of graduate students matters, then their capacity to manage healthy and sustainable careers and contribute actively and positively to cultures and practices that sustain the wellbeing of others, has clear potential benefits.

Activity

The aim here is to consider how self-care and wellbeing of self and others is, and could be, expressed as a graduate attribute in other subjects and disciplines, and the implications of this for curriculum design.

Focusing first on reviewing participants' 'home' subject discipline (where relevant) or selected subject discipline through relevant subject benchmark statement (QAA, 2020), the activity then focuses on designing or redesigning a graduate attribute statement using a model example. The activity then concludes by considering the implications for the curriculum and related responsibilities and understanding of students.

There being quite routine references to ethics and/or social responsibility in graduate attributes described in subject benchmark statements (QAA, 2020), wellbeing is only referred to explicitly as a graduate attribute in the benchmark statement for early childhood studies, which identifies the ability to "Work directly with young children, families and colleagues to promote health, wellbeing, safety and nurturing care" (QAA, 2019a, 15), as a key graduate competency. Noting the significance of wellbeing in the disciplinary context, the integrated focus both of children, families and colleagues is nevertheless distinctive. The benchmark statement for health studies (QAA, 2019b) includes the most explicit and extensive focus on wellbeing as a focus in study.

Part 1

Using the full list of subject benchmark statements published by QAA, select two subject statements considered to be have most potential to reflect significant variations or subject differences. This may be a 'home' subject discipline and a second considered to be most contrasting. If working in groups, these may be selected at random or allocated directly by facilitators.

Review the graduate attributes in each statement and compare to note points of contrast, difference, and commonality, regarding language and focus judged to be relevant to aspects of wellbeing in a personal and/or professional context. These may include, for example:

+ Ethics and values
+ Iustice
+ Safety
+ Corporate and/or social responsibility
+ Sustainability
+ Dealing with uncertainty.

Review notes and, if working in collaboration, try to reach agreement about the most significant points identified in the comparison between the two statements. Key questions emerging through this discussion include:

+ What are the graduate attributes most relevant to wellbeing in a professional context?
+ Are there notable variations by discipline or subject area in the way these are expressed?
+ Is there a sound argument that, while not explicit, there is implicit reference to factors relevant to wellbeing in profession?
+ What is missing?

Sharing among multiple groups can develop a detailed map of analysis points.

Part 2

Using the example graduate attribute from early childhood studies referred to previously as a reference point – "Work directly with young children, families and colleagues to promote health, wellbeing, safety and nurturing care" (QAA, 2019a, 15) – write or revise an equivalent graduate attribute for a selected subject discipline.

Consider specifically how personal wellbeing and professional responsibilities for the wellbeing of others aligns with the subject and related wider associations of related professions. Think specifically about what is distinctive about the disciplinary context.

Sharing outcomes among individuals or groups can help to highlight different perspectives and approaches.

Part 3

Having identified and/or revised an existing graduate attribute or attributes relevant to wellbeing in profession or career, the final stage is to map this to the 'how' of the curriculum – the where and through what activities and experiences these attributes will be fostered, supported, and developed – and to consider how this should be described and explained to students.

Key steps are therefore to:

1. Consider and describe how and through what activities and experiences the graduate attribute/s are developed through study.
2. Develop a concise programme wellbeing statement designed to be student facing to explain these activities and processes. This may include a focus on:
    a. The reality and purpose of challenge and stretch embedded in study.
    b. The responsibilities of students in taking active steps to seek support where this is required.
    c. The connections between collegiality in study and support for peers, and professional attributes and skills.

An exemplar:

> This programme is designed to be challenging. Involving unfamiliar ways of working and direct engagement with complex areas of new knowledge, personal commitment is required to achieve potential.
>
> By studying this programme, you are agreeing to take personal responsibility to engage actively with your studies, to seek out additional help or support whenever this is required, and to be supportive of your peers.

Sharing outcomes among individuals or groups can help to highlight different perspectives and approaches.

Guidance for facilitators

Individual steps in this activity are adaptable as either self-study activities or as interactive in-person workshop exercises. These can be abbreviated but are best completed in sequence. The whole exercise works effectively as a half-day workshop activity but can be adapted according to circumstances.

For in-person teaching, dependent on approaches to structured preparatory study, parts one to three work best based on approximately one to two hours per part of activity. As with all learning activities, a key objective is to create the necessary space for learning.

Noting the potential value of co-creation activities with students in either reviewing or co-creating programme wellbeing statements, other points worth highlighting in workshop plenary discussions include:

+ balance of responsibilities between students and university
+ the specificity of challenge
+ the specific challenges of disciplines and the role that graduates need to play in sustaining and/or transforming professional environments.

Relevant case studies

Master's in education insights

Relevant key lessons and top tips

Sub-theme	Key lessons	Top tips
Staff wellbeing	+ The wellbeing of university staff is important in and of itself. + There is a clear and explainable relationship between staff wellbeing and student wellbeing. + Universities must take a whole university approach to staff wellbeing if they wish to impact positively on student wellbeing. Collaborative approaches can benefit the development of curriculum that genuinely meets the needs of students.	+ Use validation question sets to focus on key issues relating to wellbeing such as workload bunching, transition, internal cohesion, etc. + Align the work of curriculum development teams and quality teams to focus on quality enhancement that includes consideration of student wellbeing. + Use the Education for Mental Health tool kit to provide academic staff with insight into the relationship between curriculum and wellbeing.

Sub-theme	Key lessons	Top tips
Collaborative design	+ Collaborative approaches can benefit the development of curriculum that genuinely meets the needs of students. + They can also support staff wellbeing by spreading the load and creating a broader sense of ownership. + A genuine whole university approach can bring together a range of expertise, including student services experts in mental health, disability and inclusion that can benefit the quality of curriculum design. + However, this process may need careful facilitation and staff development.	+ Cowan suggested that universities should reconceptualise curriculum development to see it as an opportunity to develop staff knowledge and understanding of teaching, learning and assessment. + Some universities have seen benefits from creating half or whole day sessions to bring together staff from across the university to work on curriculum design. + Whole university approaches may be enabled if staff in professional roles are provided with staff development on teaching, learning and assessment.
Validation and support for curriculum development	+ Validation processes can assist by providing explicit focus on wellbeing as part of curriculum approval. This can provide a sense of constructive alignment from curriculum conception to approval. + These approaches can ensure curriculum has properly considered those aspects that can support wellbeing and learning such as scaffolding, deep learning, social integration, internal cohesion, producing meaning and the development of student mastery and self-efficacy.	+ Use validation question sets to focus on key issues relating to wellbeing such as workload bunching, transition, internal cohesion, etc. + Align the work of curriculum development teams and quality teams to focus on quality enhancement that includes consideration of student wellbeing. + Use the Education for Mental Health tool kit to provide academic staff with insight into the relationship between curriculum and wellbeing.

Sub-theme	Key lessons	Top tips
Psychologically safe learning environments	+ In a psychologically safe classroom, students feel safe to make mistakes, take risks to further their learning and thinking and ask for help and support when needed. + Psychological safety makes it more likely that students will engage in classroom activities and debates - this supports learning and helps develop a sense of community and belonging. + An unsafe environment can raise anxiety and lead to class avoidance and/or disengagement. + Psychological safety must be planned for and time must be devoted to establishing and maintaining a healthy classroom culture. + Students will need to witness a safe environment being maintained consistently before they will trust it.	+ Use induction/orientation and/or the first class of term to focus on creating cohort identity, a safe social environment, and social rules. + Provide positive feedback to students who contribute early, encourage debate and be willing to show your own learning. + Discuss your own mistakes and highlight them in class to show that they are a normal part of the learning process.

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Theme 2: social belonging

Overview

This theme considers the benefits of learning community-focused approaches to curriculum design. With clear evidence of the alienating potential of university study and the significance of broader social context for individual learner experience, a focus in curriculum thinking on "entering the higher education community, fitting into higher the higher education community, and staying in the academic community" (Case, 2008), aligns directly with the evidence regarding the need for a 'whole university' (Hughes and Spanner, 2019) and 'whole curriculum' (Jisc and Emerge Education, 2021) approach with respect to learning and wellbeing.

There are, of course, established frameworks of rules, regulations, rights and responsibilities, designed to ensure fairness and equity in university study, and therefore functional community in learning. Higher education operates with ethical responsibilities, legal obligations, and regulatory expectations and requirements, to support quality, accessibility and equality of opportunity for staff and students.

In addition to specific guidance related to student wellbeing and protection by the Office for Students (OfS, 2021b), regulatory requirements present very clear objectives to ensure that "all students, from all backgrounds, and with the ability and desire to undertake higher education" (OfS, 2018):

+ Are supported to access, succeed in, and progress from, higher education.
+ Receive a high-quality academic experience, and their interests are protected while they study or in the event of provider, campus, or course closure.
+ Are able to progress into employment or further study, and their qualifications hold their value over time.
+ Receive value for money.

Significant related legislation, applicable for all members of the academic community, includes:

+ The Equality Act 2010, which sets out specific requirements for higher education with respect to treatment of protected characteristics, systems to prevent discrimination, accessibility, and reasonable adjustments according to individual need.
+ WCAG accessibility standards (UK Government, 2021), which set out minimum requirements for accessibility of digital and web content. Based around the design principles "perceivable, operable, understandable, and robust", the standards require universities to meet the needs of those with impairments to vision, hearing, mobility, or thinking and understanding (eg dyslexia, autism or learning difficulties).

There are, therefore, implications for curriculum design and the characteristics of related programmes. These are worthwhile positioning within any consideration of wellbeing in higher education. Functional and effective academic community leads to better learning and is therefore a legitimate concern in curriculum design.

Key areas of focus in this theme are:

+ conceptions and experience of curricula
+ disciplinary frameworks
+ staff wellbeing
+ stakeholders and design processes
+ programme design frameworks.

Learning activities and resources:

Sub-theme	Aims	Learning outcomes	Activity	Synopsis
Psychologically safe learning environments	To reflect on student experience in study and the role of the curriculum in maintaining positive learning environments.	Apply a discipline-situated approach to curriculum design for wellbeing.	See: Crafting programme wellbeing statements	The objective of this activity is to focus consideration of what wellbeing means in the context of individual disciplines and how this should be expressed and described.
			See: Scaffolding in the curriculum: guided vs unguided study exercise	This activity focuses attention on notions of control and guidance in teaching and learning. The key aim is to structure participant consideration of the responsibilities of both teacher and student and how this is positioned in curriculum design.
Social community, identity and status	To evaluate concepts and expectations regarding participation and engagement.	Structure and support positive learning behaviours recognising the legitimacy of different approaches to study.	Mapping co-study, collaboration, group work, team, and social learning	Recognising the significant value of social networks for wellbeing and mental health, and the important role that the curriculum plays in enabling students to build and develop new networks, the purpose of this activity is to consider approaches to fostering and supporting effective student collaboration, teamwork and team learning.

Sub-theme	Aims	Learning outcomes	Activity	Synopsis
	To consider the role of peer learning, mentoring, and learning networks	Design effective approaches to groupwork and team learning.	Adapting a team learning framework	The purpose of this exercise is to consider the role of competency frameworks as a scaffold for structuring approaches to the development and application of new skills and learning activities. Directly applicable in the context of designing approaches to teamwork activities, the framework is also configurable as an individual self-reflection exercise and/or adapted as a way of articulating competency development in other disciplinary contexts.
Inclusivity	To explore ethical, legal and pedagogical implications of inclusivity in higher education.	Identify specific approaches to inclusive curriculum design and the implications for wellbeing in learning.	Considering an inclusive practice framework	This activity is designed to structure consideration of inclusivity as a principle of curriculum design.
Clearly defined roles and relationships	To reflect on responsibilities and personal and professional boundaries in teaching and learning.	Apply evidence-informed approaches to the development of personalisation in the curriculum.	See: Personalised learning design	This activity structures opportunity to reflect on the role and value of personalisation in student experience in study and ways in which this can be structured through the curriculum. Designed primarily for application in a group discussion context, the activity can be used as a self-reflection exercise or as a framework for a formal assessment with supplementary review of key literature including the listed sources of further reading.

Summary of key lessons and top tips:

Sub-theme	Key lessons	Top tips
Psychologically safe learning environments	+ In a psychologically safe classroom, students feel safe to make mistakes, take risks to further their learning and thinking and ask for help and support when needed. + Psychological safety makes it more likely that students will engage in classroom activities and debates – this supports learning and helps develop a sense of community and belonging. + An unsafe environment can raise anxiety and lead to class avoidance and/or disengagement. + Psychological safety must be planned for, and time must be devoted to establishing and maintaining a healthy classroom culture. + Students will need to witness a safe environment being maintained consistently before they will trust it.	+ Use induction/orientation and/or the first class of term to focus on creating cohort identity, a safe social environment, and social rules. + Provide positive feedback to students who contribute early, encourage debate and be willing to show your own learning. + Discuss your own mistakes and highlight them in class to show that they are a normal part of the learning process.

Sub-theme	Key lessons	Top tips
Inclusivity	+ An inclusive curriculum is accessible to all students and represents multiple perspectives and experiences, it is presented in a way to reduce marginalisation and discrimination, and it promotes respect and academic excellence. + Inclusivity in the classroom is related to sense of belonging, which is shown to be positively linked with academic performance, motivation, and learning. + Inclusivity and sense of belonging are also significantly related to students' mental health and wellbeing. Instead, lack of inclusivity and of sense of belonging lead to issues with mental health, feelings of alienation, psychological distress and consequently to a decrease in cognitive functions. + Adoption of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and Universal Design for Instruction (UDI) strategies support the learning process, curriculum design, and course delivery in a way to provide equal opportunities to ALL students for succeeding in education. + Research on UDL showed that this approach is effective to improve students' motivation, engagement, attitudes towards learning, knowledge acquisition, and academic skills' development.	+ Be aware of and receptive to the representation of certain groups in the course content and avoid stigmatising views of such groups and give serious consideration to adoptions of alternative examples and materials part of the curriculum when these inaccurately portray students' social identity groups, ethnicities, or cultures. Remember to include multiple perspectives on each topic of the course and use them appropriately. + When working with a controversial topic, anticipate possible responses and how you might deal with dissenting views on that topic. Be prepared, to correct stereotypes and challenge assumptions. + Consider your own responses and emotions using this awareness to appraise the planning process: consider that you may hold assumptions about the learning behaviours and capacities of your students, may manifest in your interactions with students. + Establishing agreed upon guidelines early on within the class as they can be an important aspect of productive class discussion. + Show care and genuine concern for your students. Investing some time and energy into informing yourself and becoming more aware and knowledgeable about the issues that affect your students can lead to more positive in-class experiences.

Sub-theme	Key lessons	Top tips
Clearly defined roles and responsibilities	+ There is a lack of clarity about the relationship between academic staff and students, where the boundaries lie and how they can be communicated and maintained. + Students cannot be expected to accurately work out and understand these relationships without explicit, clear guidance. + These relationships would benefit from being defined at a university level and communicated to staff via development and training. + Academic staff can then communicate these boundaries at the beginning of each year and throughout the year.	+ The definition of these relationships may benefit from co-creation between academics, students, learning and teaching staff, student services staff and university leaders. + For the definition of relationships to work, it needs to move beyond abstract language and deal in specifics. + To maintain boundaries, academic staff must be empowered with the resources and skills to signpost students supportively and effectively.
Classroom culture	+ Classroom culture (online and in person) is crucial to student learning, persistence, and wellbeing. + Students can benefit from a sense of psychological safety, social group identity and helpful and health social norms and rule + Creating a healthy classroom culture requires explicit attention and should be a feature of curriculum design.	+ Use induction/orientation and/or the first class of term to focus on creating cohort identity, a safe social environment, and social rules. + Provide positive feedback to students who contribute early, encourage debate and be willing to show your own learning. + Discuss your own mistakes and highlight them in class to show that they are a normal part of the learning process.

Sub-theme	Key lessons	Top tips
Defining boundaries	+ Students cannot be expected to understand the academic/student relationship and its boundaries if it is not explicitly explained and implicitly modelled. + When students do not understand the nature of the relationship this can cause them to avoid seeking appropriate support or lead to them seeking inappropriate support from their academics. + Students benefit when staff demonstrate genuine care for them within consistent, appropriate boundaries. + During transition, benefit can be gained by academics explicitly explaining the nature of the relationship, how students can contact them, what they can expect and what types of issue will need to be referred to colleagues in student services.	+ Send a video to new students before term; start introducing yourself, outlining your well-founded hopes for them and explaining the academic/student relationship. + In induction or the first meeting with tutee, articulate the nature and boundaries of the relationship. If, at any time, a student appears to be moving beyond those boundaries, you can then remind them of this conversation and then signpost them appropriately. + Set an automated email which clearly defines your response time, how to book an appointment with you (if that is a different process) and signposts to other services – including out of hours support. + Only respond to student emails within your defined office hours (you can set emails to send later).

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Learning and teaching activity:

Mapping co-study, collaboration, teamwork and social learning

Key dimensions of the PSF: A1, A2, A4, K1, K2, K3, K4, V1-4

Overview

Peer-based group learning is widely recognised as an active learning method capable of positively developing a range of transferable social and academic skills. Valued by employers and accrediting bodies because of work-relevant focus on communication, collaboration, negotiation and problem-solving, group work can also provide valuable opportunities for students to develop social interaction in their learning. Collaborative learning is also demonstrated to lead to better grades (Burke, 2011):

> "Teamwork can lead to an improvement in student learning due to: the development of social behavioural skills (Cohen, 1994; Goldfinch and Raeside, 1990), higher order thinking (Cohen, 1994), and critical thinking skills (Dochy, Segers et al, 1999; Gokhale, 1995; Sluijsmans, Dochy et al, 1999), the capacity for lifelong learning (Hanrahan and Isaacs, 2001), moving students from a passive to more active learning role (McGourty, Dominick et al, 1998), the ability to tackle more substantially-sized assessment projects (Goldfinch and Raeside 1990), and peer learning within teams (van den Berg, Admiraal et al, 2006)."
>
> *(Tucker and Abbasi, 2017).*

Group work can also be challenging and is demonstrated to inhibit academic performance if not implemented or managed effectively (Cooper, Downing and Brownell, 2018). While increased anxiety is inherent in any positive challenge in learning, perceptions of unfairness, fear of negative evaluation, and uncertainty about expectations, are common themes when anxieties prove counterproductive. The development of effective collaboration is further challenged with reduced opportunity for face-to-face activities.

> "Working in small groups is hard. For a group to work effectively, they must cooperate, communicate, delegate, and trust each other. For introverts or dominating personalities, this is often a challenging task. Consequently, group assignment is important, and numerous publications have supported instructor-selected groups, with the goal of forming teams of three to four students that are diverse in both academic skills and demographic properties."
>
> *(Taylor, 2011).*

Recognising the significant value of social networks for wellbeing and mental health, the important role that the curriculum plays in enabling students to build and develop new networks and what we know about situated learning and the move from 'legitimate peripheral participation' to collaborative enquiry (Lave and Wenger, 1991), the purpose of this activity is therefore to consider approaches to fostering and supporting effective student collaboration, teamwork, and team learning.

Activity and guidance for facilitators

This activity is extremely flexible and can be adapted and applied in a variety of ways. Framed around exploration of a series of initial questions and discussion points, participants are then invited to review and complete a student collaboration and team learning evaluation framework and consider implications for curriculum design. A summary of key guidance is provided including details relating to the evaluation framework.

Initial discussion can be coordinated in large or small group settings or managed asynchronously via an online discussion board. The key aim is to start a conversation about the experience of students as active members of the academic community.

Part 1: context setting

Evidence demonstrates that socialisation can improve a sense of belonging which, in turn, can significantly improve learning behaviours and experience. We also know that socialisation can be challenging for students in a new institutional setting and a potential barrier to learning. It is worthwhile therefore to consider the role of the curriculum in supporting student socialisation and approaches to design where explicit forms of collaboration are involved.

Key initial questions are therefore:

+ Where do students get know each other in the curriculum/your programme/context/experience (in person or online)?
+ What other structures or activities are in place to support student socialisation?
+ What expectations do we (universities) have of students entering higher education study regarding their responsibilities for socialisation?
+ What role does the curriculum have in supporting socialisation in study?
+ Where do students collaborate and in what ways?
+ How do we accommodate students who prefer to work on their own?

These questions can be framed as introductory points for consideration or devolved for individual reflection or group discussion. Emergent themes may include:

+ The distinction and/or articulation between induction activities, students' union activities and the curriculum.
+ Examples of programme-specific social activities and/or vertical tutoring models.
+ Examples of programme-specific team learning activities.
+ Uncertainties about student collaboration and issues of academic integrity in assessment.

Part 2: evaluating student collaboration and team learning

Using the *Student collaboration and teamwork evaluation framework*, part 2 of the activity enables detailed focus on individual circumstances. Working most effectively as a programme team activity, this can be completed as an individual exercise or in groups to collate aggregate examples. Mapped to a series of principles, the framework enables participants to identify known practice and areas of uncertainty. These can relate to positive or negative factors.

Sharing reflections and considerations can help to build up a picture of established areas of good practice and common areas of uncertainty.

Part 3: concluding and wrapping up

Emergent themes and examples can be compared against the *What we know works in student collaboration and teamwork* resource (Resource 1) and related Co-study, collaboration, teamwork, and social learning guidance (Resource 2).

Key points of summary and conclusions are:

+ The curriculum can provide a useful scaffold to support socialisation and develop a sense of belonging in the academic community.
+ There is value in focusing on ‘team’ rather than ‘group’ in curriculum thinking.
+ Students require active support in developing their collaboration and teamworking skills.
+ If students are to be assessed working in teams, they need to be taught how to work in teams.

Depending on the circumstances under which the activity is taking place, participants may be encouraged to develop an action plan as part of a curriculum development process or to develop an established programme or area of study. Further focus on team learning can be developed through completion of the *Adapting a team learning framework activity.*

Relevant case studies

Compassionate micro skills of communication (CMSC).

Relevant key lessons and top tips

Sub-theme	Key lessons	Top tips
Psychologically safe learning environments	+ In a psychologically safe classroom, students feel safe to make mistakes, take risks to further their learning and thinking and ask for help and support when needed. + Psychological safety makes it more likely that students will engage in classroom activities and debates – this supports learning and helps develop a sense of community and belonging. + An unsafe environment can raise anxiety and lead to class avoidance and/or disengagement. + Psychological safety must be planned for, and time must be devoted to establishing and maintaining a healthy classroom culture. + Students will need to witness a safe environment being maintained consistently before they will trust it.	+ Use induction/orientation and/or the first class of term to focus on creating cohort identity, a safe social environment, and social rules. + Provide positive feedback to students who contribute early, encourage debate and be willing to show your own learning. + Discuss your own mistakes and highlight them in class to show that they are a normal part of the learning process.

Sub-theme	Key lessons	Top tips
Inclusivity	+ An inclusive curriculum is accessible to all students and represents multiple perspectives and experiences, it is presented in a way to reduce marginalisation and discrimination, and it promotes respect and academic excellence. + Inclusivity in the classroom is related to sense of belonging, which is shown to be positively linked with academic performance, motivation and learning. + Inclusivity and sense of belonging are also significantly related to students' mental health and wellbeing. Instead, lack of inclusivity and sense of belonging leads to issues with mental health, feelings of alienation, psychological distress and consequently to a decrease in cognitive functions. + Adoption of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and Universal Design for Instruction (UDI) strategies support the learning process, curriculum design, and course delivery in a way to provide equal opportunities to ALL students for succeeding in education. + Research on UDL showed that this approach is effective to improve students' motivation, engagement, attitudes towards learning, knowledge acquisition and academic skills' development.	+ Be aware of and receptive to the representation of certain groups in the course content and avoid stigmatising views of such groups and give serious consideration to adoption of alternative examples and materials in parts of the curriculum when these inaccurately portray students' social identity groups, ethnicities or cultures. Remember to include multiple perspectives on each topic of the course and use them appropriately. + When working with a controversial topic, anticipate possible responses and how you might deal with dissenting views on that topic. Be prepared to correct stereotypes and challenge assumptions. + Consider your own responses and emotions, using this awareness to appraise the planning process: consider that you may hold assumptions about the learning behaviours and capacities of your students, these may manifest in your interactions with students. + Establishing agreed-upon guidelines early on within the class as they can be an important aspect of productive class discussion. + Show care and genuine concern for your students. Investing some time and energy into informing yourself and becoming more aware and knowledgeable about the issues that affect your students can lead to more positive in-class experiences.

Sub-theme	Key lessons	Top tips
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Resource 1: student collaboration and teamwork evaluation framework

Structured around five key principles, related challenge areas and success measures, the following framework provides a structure for recording simple notes about what is known or known about the student experience. Some examples are provided and can be deleted.

Principle	Challenge area	Success measures	Known	Unknown
Teamwork is used purposefully with clearly defined aims and intended outcomes.	Students can be unclear about what is expected of them when collaborating or working in groups and teams.	Students understand what they need to do and the importance of teamwork for their studies and future careers.	Eg students are assessed through groupwork in 'X'.	Eg whether students are assessed in terms of their work in groups is uncertain.
Methods for working in teams are clearly introduced and explained including focus on skills and competencies.	Students can be uncertain about how or where to collaborate or work in teams.	Students understand how to work in teams and where to access further guidance and support.	Eg students are engaged with team learning in 'X'.	Eg students are directed to study skills support services for support with their teamwork. Engagement is uncertain.
Account is taken of individual student circumstances, structured support is provided to overcome engagement challenges, and clear expectations are established regarding conduct and behaviour.	Students can find working with others difficult for personal and contextual reasons, especially if they have not 'met'.	Students feel safe, supported, and can access practical help to develop their engagement with their studies.	Eg students are provided with clear guidance about relevant code of conduct in learning and information about relevant secondary support services.	Eg engagement with secondary support services is uncertain. Understanding of regulations or code of conduct is unclear.
Tools for coordinating and engaging with teamwork are carefully selected, introduced and explained.	Students can find tools for collaboration difficult to use.	Students are actively supported in using tools for teamwork and in developing digital capabilities relevant to their studies.	Eg students are provided with a central IT account including access to a range of Microsoft software tools.	Eg students are directed to central IT support services. Engagement is uncertain.
Clear mechanisms are established to monitor and manage student teamwork activities including procedures for addressing and resolving difficulties.	Students can find teamwork challenging especially when connected with summative assessment.	Teamwork positively supports the development of student networks and structured processes are in place to resolve difficulties.	Eg students have information about how to resolve difficulties in collaborative learning activities.	Eg resolution of any difficulties relies on student/s requesting support of tutors.

Resource: what we know works in student collaboration and teamwork

Challenge area	Principle	What we know works	Success measures
Students can be unclear about what is expected of them when collaborating or working in groups and teams.	Teamwork is used purposefully with clearly defined aims and intended outcomes.	Being explicit about the function, purpose, and reason for collaborating with peers, and active guidance and preparation for related activities. Being explicit in module specifications and guidance to students about the skills and competencies being developed and assessed. Being clear for students about the value of team learning. Inviting students from later stages of study to provide peer mentoring as a teamwork induction. Involving University Careers and/or Placement Team in explaining the professional value of teamworking skills. Explore and adapt the Team Learning Framework.	Students understand what they need to do and the importance of teamwork for their studies and future careers.
Students can be uncertain about how or where to collaborate or work in teams.	Methods for working in teams are clearly introduced and explained including focus on skills and competencies.	Providing clear instructions and structure for group activities including specific notes about listening and communicating. See Team Learning Framework. Including active preparation activities for teamwork including reflective activity considering team roles (Belbin)[1]. Including some formative teamwork activities (‘dry run’). Publish details of useful information and guidance.	Students understand how to work in teams and where to access further guidance and support.

Challenge area	Principle	What we know works	Success measures
Students can find working with others difficult for personal and contextual reasons, especially if they have not 'met'.	Account is taken of individual student circumstances, structured support is provided to overcome engagement challenges, and clear expectations are established regarding conduct and behaviour.	Focusing on the importance of intercultural awareness and emotional intelligence, expected conduct and behaviours, and ensuring students can access further help and support where required. Taking active control over group allocations and be mindful of group size (max x five). Including relevant ice-breaking activities. Reviewing student study circumstances to ensuring safe and inclusive approaches. Establishing a clear framework for reviewing student study circumstances, gradual release of responsibility to students, and protocols for communications within teams and with tutors. Highlighting guidance for students – 'We realise it can be daunting speaking to students you may not have met in person but getting actively involved is an important way of developing new connections in your learning and with each other.' Focusing on conduct in online learning and netiquette. Publishing information about how to access further help and support.	Students feel safe, supported, and can access practical help to develop their engagement with their studies.

Challenge area	Principle	What we know works	Success measures
Students can find tools for collaboration difficult to use.	Tools for coordinating and engaging with teamwork are carefully selected, introduced, and explained.	Providing students with opportunity to access, test and practice using tools, and relevant additional help and guidance. That resolution of technical and other issues in collaborative work are built into teaching and learning activities. Ensuring appropriate tools are selected to support collaboration and teamwork. Ensuring students are supported in their application and use of tools and technologies. Ensuring students are actively engaged with guidance about assistive technologies.	Students are actively supported in using tools for teamwork and in developing digital capabilities relevant to their studies.
Students can find teamwork challenging especially when connected with summative assessment.	Clear mechanisms are established to monitor and manage student teamwork activities including procedures for addressing and resolving difficulties.	Acknowledging that teamwork can be challenging – it's meant to be - but being mindful of individual student experience and group dynamics. Giving active attention to risks including 'social loafing', 'groupthink', and 'choice-shift' in teamwork (North-Samardzic, 2021). Working cautiously with peer-assessment and complaints processes and emphasising developmental and supportive approaches. Publishing details of useful information and guidance. Taking a strengths-based rather than ranking or rating approach to peer evaluation in teamwork. Focusing on personal reflection and individual responsibility for evidence of contribution to teamwork.	Teamwork positively supports the development of student networks and structured processes are in place to resolve difficulties.

Resource 2: co-study, collaboration, teamwork, and social learning guidance

Group work is valued because it supports development of teamworking skills. 'Group' nevertheless implies a collection or assemblage, 'team' has perhaps more dynamic and diverse associations and therefore teamwork is a preferable term to use.

> "Teams are composed of individuals who share several defining characteristics: they (1) have a shared collective identity, (2) have common goals, (3) are interdependent in terms of their assigned tasks or outcomes, (4) have distinctive roles within the team, and (5) are part of a larger organizational context that influences their work and that they in turn can influence."
> *(Morgeson, et al, 2009; Kozlowski and Ilgen, 2006, in Hughes and Jones, 2011).*

If you want to assess students involving teamwork activities, you will need to include this in the curriculum. **If you want students to work in teams, you will need to teach them how to work in teams.**

If you want teams to work effectively and avoid 'group-hate' (Sorenson in Burke, 2011), you will need to think carefully about:

+ Task/assessment design in terms of fostering integration and collaboration (HEA, 2014).
+ Assessment criteria and the link to learning outcomes in terms of assessment of process, product, or both.
+ Assessment methodology (peer-evaluation can be effective but can also be divisive).
+ Team selection (noting that random approaches can support greater heterogeneity and that allocation is best managed by the tutor).
+ Team size (smaller groups tend to work more effectively).
+ Team training (considering the guidance provided and supporting learning and teaching activities).
+ Monitoring and supporting team progress (mitigating for issues with group dynamics and including clear progress measures and formative support activity).
+ Team activity duration (noting that the more diverse the team, the longer it takes to work well).

When planning teamwork activity, set up project teams early in the term. Consider getting students to work in their teams during regular group activities throughout the module, for example during break-out activities in your webinars. This will give students the opportunity to get to know each other, build trust and working relationships.

Consider introducing students to frameworks and models of teamwork, for example Belbin's Roles or Tuckman's Stages of Team Formation (Tuckman, 1965), or any other model you consider suitable. While such models can appear somewhat simplistic, and they have their limitations, they can also be a useful platform for discussion of the complexities of teamwork and how they can be addressed.

Set up 'check-in points' throughout the module during which students will report on how their team project is progressing and any challenges they have encountered so far – particularly if related to assessment activities.

Integrate regular reflection activities, linked with stages of working on the team project.

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Learning and teaching activity:

Adapting a team learning framework

Key dimensions of the PSF: A1-4, K2. K3, V1-4.

Overview

The purpose of this exercise is to consider the role of competency frameworks as a scaffold for structuring approaches to the development and application of new skills and learning activities. Directly applicable in the context of designing approaches to teamwork activities, the framework is also configurable as an individual self-reflection exercise and/or adapted as a way of articulating competency development in other disciplinary contexts.

Activity

The activity is to develop a competency framework related to teamwork and/or team learning in a defined disciplinary context. Working either individually or in groups, roles, areas of competency, and/or related competency descriptors from the *Team learning framework* resource can be adapted and used as required. This activity can work as a hypothetical or real-world exercise depending on the participants involved.

Step 1:

Identify an area of the curriculum where team learning currently takes place or where teamwork is relevant as an area of professional development. Consider current approaches and how more structured practice could be developed.

Step 2:

Review the *Team learning framework*. Noting that the resource provided is adapted from a framework normally applied in postgraduate business programmes where explicit focus on related competencies is common, key points of consideration include:

+ Disciplinary context
  - Team roles (learner, leader, and entrepreneur) may need adjusting for different disciplines but are designed to be generally applicable in terms of the related competencies.
+ Alignment with level
  - Reference to professionalism and mastery may not be applicable at undergraduate level.

Step 3:

Reviewing areas of the curriculum identified in Step 1, identify what aspects of the team learning framework (roles, areas of competency, competency frameworks) could be adapted and applied.

Develop a provisional team learning framework plan for a specific disciplinary context. This could be at module or programme level and orientated as:

+ A formative learning activity aligned with personal tutoring or related group activities.
+ A teaching activity to introduce team learning activity.
+ A self-reflection activity signposted to relevant professional development and/or study skills development opportunities.
+ A summative assessment activity using elements of the framework as a criteria map.

Step 4:

Provisional team learning frameworks can then be shared, presented and discussed among participants.

Guidance for facilitators

There is significant flexibility in how the activity can be structured and organised. Step 3 nevertheless requires sufficient time to engage with in detail.

Relevant case studies

Compassionate micro skills of communication (CMSC).

Relevant key lessons and top tips

Sub-theme	Key lessons	Top tips
Psychologically safe learning environments	+ In a psychologically safe classroom, students feel safe to make mistakes, take risks to further their learning and thinking and ask for help and support when needed. + Psychological safety makes it more likely that students will engage in classroom activities and debates – this supports learning and helps develop a sense of community and belonging. + An unsafe environment can raise anxiety and lead to class avoidance and/or disengagement. + Psychological safety must be planned for, and time must be devoted to establishing and maintaining a healthy classroom culture. + Students will need to witness a safe environment being maintained consistently before they will trust it.	+ Use induction/orientation and/or the first class of term to focus on creating cohort identity, a safe social environment and social rules. + Provide positive feedback to students who contribute early, encourage debate and be willing to show your own learning. + Discuss your own mistakes and highlight them in class to show that they are a normal part of the learning process.

Sub-theme	Key lessons	Top tips
Inclusivity	+ An inclusive curriculum is accessible to all students and represents multiple perspectives and experiences, it is presented in a way to reduce marginalisation and discrimination, and it promotes respect and academic excellence. + Inclusivity in the classroom is related to sense of belonging, which is shown to be positively linked with academic performance, motivation, and learning. + Inclusivity and sense of belonging are also significantly related to students' mental health and wellbeing. Instead, lack of inclusivity and of sense of belonging lead to issues with mental health, feelings of alienation, psychological distress and consequently to a decrease in cognitive functions. + Adoption of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and Universal Design for Instruction (UDI) strategies support the learning process, curriculum design, and course delivery in a way to provide equal opportunities to ALL students for succeeding in education. + Research on UDL showed that this approach is effective to improve students' motivation, engagement, attitudes towards learning, knowledge acquisition, and academic skills' development.	+ Be aware of and receptive to the representation of certain groups in the course content and avoid stigmatising views of such groups and give serious consideration to adoptions of alternative examples and materials part of the curriculum when these inaccurately portray students' social identity groups, ethnicities, or cultures. Remember to include multiple perspectives on each topic of the course and use them appropriately. + When working with a controversial topic, anticipate possible responses and how you might deal with dissenting views on that topic. Be prepared, to correct stereotypes and challenge assumptions. + Consider your own responses and emotions using this awareness to appraise the planning process: consider that you may hold assumptions about the learning behaviours and capacities of your students, these may manifest in your interactions with students. + Establishing agreed-upon guidelines early on within the class as they can be an important aspect of productive class discussion. + Show care and genuine concern for your students. Investing some time and energy into informing yourself and becoming more aware and knowledgeable about the issues that affect your students can lead to more positive in-class experiences.

Sub-theme	Key lessons	Top tips
Clearly defined roles and responsibilities	+ There is a lack of clarity about the relationship between academic staff and students, where the boundaries lie and how they can be communicated and maintained. + Students cannot be expected to accurately work out and understand these relationships without explicit, clear guidance. + These relationships would benefit from being defined at a university level and communicated to staff via development and training. + Academic staff can then communicate these boundaries at the beginning of each year and throughout the year.	+ The definition of these relationships may benefit from co-creation between academics, students, learning and teaching staff, student services staff and university leaders. + For the definition of relationships to work, it needs to move beyond abstract language and deal in specifics. + To maintain boundaries, academic staff must be empowered with the resources and skills to signpost students supportively and effectively.
Classroom culture	+ Classroom culture (online and in person) is crucial to student learning, persistence, and wellbeing. + Students can benefit from a sense of psychological safety, social group identity and helpful and health social norms and rule. + Creating a healthy classroom culture requires explicit attention and should be a feature of curriculum design.	+ Use induction/orientation and/or the first class of term to focus on creating cohort identity, a safe social environment, and social rules. + Provide positive feedback to students who contribute early, encourage debate and be willing to show your own learning. + Discuss your own mistakes and highlight them in class to show that they are a normal part of the learning process.

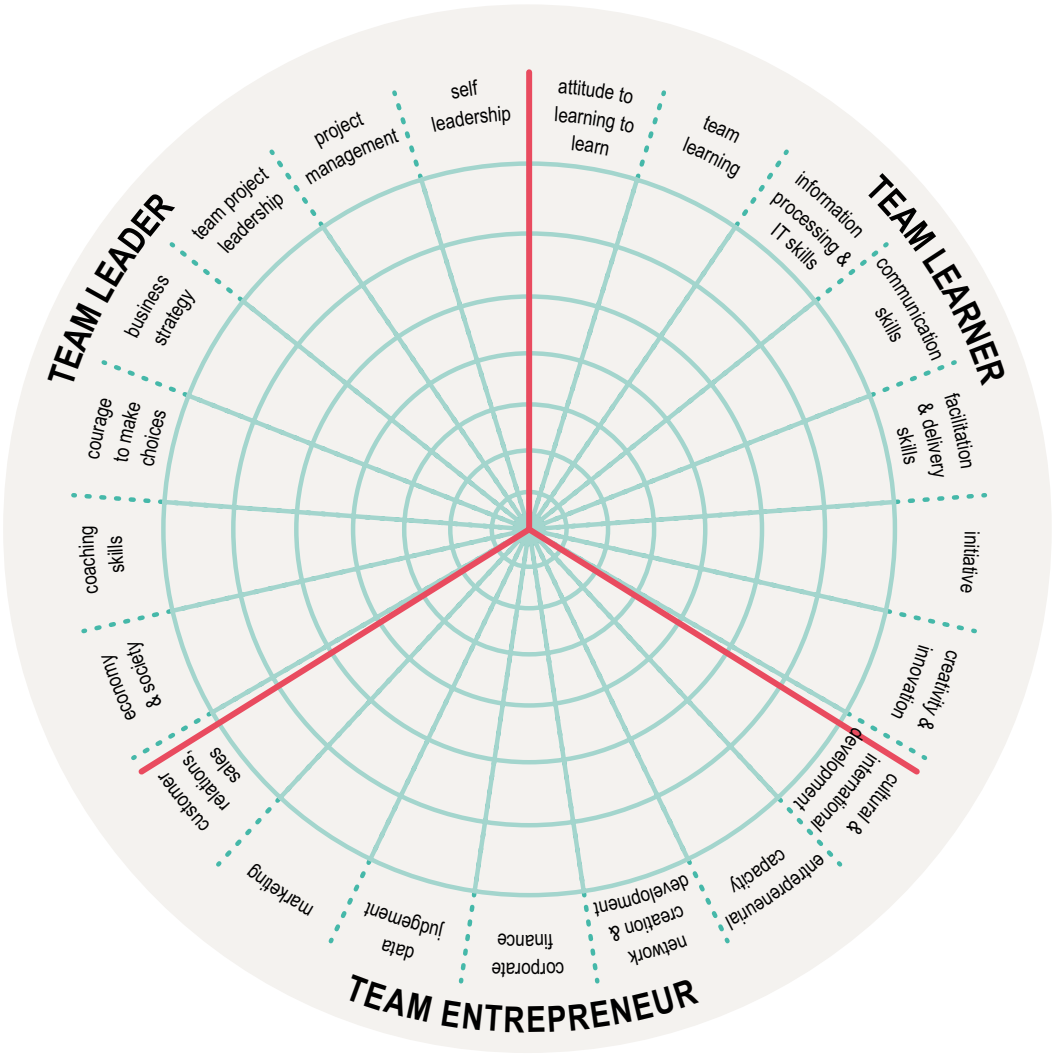
Sub-theme	Key lessons	Top tips
Defining boundaries	+ Students cannot be expected to understand the academic/student relationship and its boundaries if it is not explicitly explained and implicitly modelled. + When students do not understand the nature of the relationship this can cause them to avoid seeking appropriate support or lead to them seeking inappropriate support from their academics. + Students benefit when staff demonstrate genuine care for them within consistent, appropriate boundaries. + During transition, benefit can be gained by academics explicitly explaining the nature of the relationship, how students can contact them, what they can expect and what types of issue will need to be referred to colleagues in student services.	+ Send a video to new students before term; start introducing yourself, outlining your well founded hopes for them and explaining the academic/student relationship. + In induction or the first meeting with tutee, articulate the nature and boundaries of the relationship. If, at any time, a student appears to be moving beyond those boundaries, you can then remind them of this conversation and then signpost them appropriately. + Set an automated email which clearly defines your response time, how to book an appointment with you (if that is a different process) and signposts to other services – including out of hours support. + Only respond to student emails within your defined office hours (you can set emails to send later).

Sub-theme	Key lessons	Top tips
Explicit preparation for learning and assessment tasks	+ If we want students to know, understand or be able to do something, we must teach it. We cannot assume that all students possess the knowledge or skills required by a programme of study unless they have explicitly had the opportunity to acquire those skills. + Some students may also lack the underlying skills and understanding necessary to acquire new knowledge and skills for themselves. + Any assumption of knowledge or skills rewards those who have been lucky enough to have received previous preparation and punishes those who have not had the same luck. + Additional classes tend not to attract those students who most need the intervention, because of other commitments, lack of awareness or anxiety, necessary knowledge, understanding or skill must therefore be taught and embedded in the curriculum.	+ Provide students with a glossary of common terms – both disciplinary terms and terms related to the language of learning and assessment. + Use learning outcomes to identify the key knowledge, understanding and skills students will require to achieve these outcomes, then ensure these are explicitly taught within the curriculum. + Use worked examples in the classroom to demonstrate how students can complete academic work successfully. + Embed meta-learning into the taught curriculum.

Resource: team learning framework

This framework is adapted from the Business Enterprise Development competencies skills wheel of Team Academy Aston. The framework provides a structure for tracking the development of entrepreneurial, subject, and social competences to defined skills profiles: team learner, team leader and team entrepreneur. These are combined in the skills wheel figure below.

Figure 4: Team Learning Skills Wheel



The skills wheel comprises five concentric circles emerging from a central starting point. As competence and confidence in each of the categories grows, this development can be monitored and/or recorded using the skills wheel, enabling tracking of progress, set learning and action goals, and analysis of performance and progress of team members. The expectation is that structured activity will enable students to move up to the top-most circle in approximately two thirds of the competences. Assessment of skills development can be done through evidence gathering, through team coaching sessions, through peer feedback, self-reflection, and also feedback from others.

Each category of the wheel (team learner, team entrepreneur and team leader) has clear criteria to follow, and it is important that these are considered carefully before deciding where competence at any given point is best located.

This first ring of the skills wheel indicates a novice level of understanding and ability. At this level, there is no notional knowledge, experience or ability in this area of competence. Moving outwards from this, the table below shows what each ring of the model indicates:

1	**Beginner**	Understands the basics of the competence but has little practical experience.
2	**Advanced beginner**	Understands the theoretical background and has a little more profound knowledge. Has some experience in using this competence, for example, has completed a project in which the skill area has been practiced significantly.
3	**Practitioner**	Has profound knowledge of the competence and experience in using the skill, for example, has developed two or three projects in which the skill has been practiced and/or has a leadership position in the skill area.
4	**Advanced practitioner**	Has diverse and comprehensive knowledge of the competence and has significant experience of using the skill, for example, in several projects and/or leadership positions.
5	**Professional**	Has extremely strong mastery of the competence in both theory and practice. Can work as an initiating expert in the area.

Skill profile one: team learner

Attitude to learning

Ability to make effective learning choices, to achieve results in competency development, and to undertake personal development to create maximum opportunity to learn.

Beginner	Knows and has put into practice different learning tools, for example, learning contracts, learning journal. Experienced the different sources of skill and knowledge building (participation in dialogue sessions, training sessions, individual resource reviews, inspiring meetings, etc). Can give and receive feedback and demonstrates a willingness to learn new things. Is developing habits that will support effective learning.
Advanced beginner	Ability to explore the skills wheel and other diagnostic tools to support the learning contract development with the support of the team coach and put it into practice. Understands and uses the various learning tools (learning journal, skills wheel, reflective articles, etc.). Connects learning contract to resource reviews to acquire knowledge and projects to develop skills. Can explain their strengths and areas of development as a learner. Knows and understands the basic theories of personal skills development. Has developed useful habits to support effective learning.
Practitioner	Adequately plans, develops, and evaluates personal competencies (experiences in preparing several learning contracts, in their implementation and in the self-assessment of results). Manages on this basis their self-development by being aware of the complementarity of the skills targeted and the systemic and progressive aspect of the different levels. Has adopted a personal learning style and has maintained effective habits to support learning.
Advanced practitioner	Is autonomous in their professional development. Has a strong intrinsic motivation to learn (no need for external instructions). Ability to combine a variety of theoretical knowledge/tools and mobilise several skills to solve problems at various stages of their learning journey.
Professional	Has tested several theoretical models and is able to coach or lead in the field of skills development, such as building and/or evaluating competency profiles.

Team learning

Ability to learn together with other team members, to create new knowledge and to support the development of colleagues in a team.

Beginner	Knows the basics of dialogue and listens to others in a caring way. Ability to detect their own judgments. Makes an effort to replace their own judgments with the expression of personal needs. Has team experience in transforming tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge so that it can be transmitted to an audience. Brings in knowledge from outside to fertilise the team.
Advanced beginner	Uses dialogue on a regular basis (listening, suspension of judgment, benevolence). Uses action as the usual means of learning. Experiment with the use of team learning contracts to guide the team's choices of actions and learning.
Practitioner	Experience with tools to facilitate solution finding, decision-making and team knowledge sharing in different contexts. Understands and can explain the basic theories of team learning. Brings business opportunities, good practices, models, theories, etc. into the team and has experience in organising environments and processes that focus on team learning.
Advanced practitioner	Team learning is fluid in different environments (eg co-construction / long-term relationships). Has a very good theoretical level and the ability to pass on the basics of team learning to others. Ability to lead team learning (objectives, atmosphere, discipline, etc) and achieve results.
Professional	Knows the main theoretical models and has tested their applicability in practice. Can lead and coach collaborative learning.

Information processing and IT skills

Ability to find and use various sources of information, regular use of digital tools and critical analysis of the information collated within a project/company.

Beginner	Knows the basics of using information processing, eg writing emails, preparing presentations, using search engines etc. Knows the basics of using simple computer tools and applications (Word, PPT, Excel, MSP, etc). Can search and process information from a variety of sources, digital or not.
Advanced beginner	Fluently uses information processing, research and analysis of specific knowledge through various sources. Has acquired knowledge and experience in monitoring and structuring information (eg summarising, synthesising, using and quoting various sources (academic literature, books, videos, press, blogs, scientific articles, etc). Controls access to open access or paid databases.
Practitioner	Uses different sources of information in a broad way, considers information in a critical and comparative way (eg for reflective articles), structures information for different targets (professional context and/or academic). Ability to describe the research methods used for this purpose. Ability to set up monitoring tools (monitoring plan) to collect relevant information and obtain results by using them.
Advanced practitioner	Has theoretical knowledge of research methods, monitoring and other related topics. Effectively uses information processing and strategic intelligence to develop new projects for the team. Information management and processing are traceable and measurable.
Professional	In a business as well as academic context, ability to coach or direct a mandate related to research and information processing as well as strategic monitoring.

Communication skills

Ability to communicate and inform verbally and non-verbally, in order to have a positive and effective impact on audiences in diverse situations.

Beginner	Ability to introduce themselves and their team in the form of an *elevator pitch* (say the essential in one minute). Can write documents (flawless form) such as emails, reflective articles, reports, etc.
Advanced beginner	Is able to adapt their oral and written communication to different audiences and obtains timely responses. Can give an oral and written presentation on a professional field to specific audiences. Has acquired a theoretical basis in communication.
Practitioner	Can present and write various documents on a professional field to demanding audiences and in pressure situations (fundraising, selection panel). Knowledge of public speaking techniques (can explain their oratory choices during a presentation).
Advanced practitioner	Knows the main theoretical models of communication and has tested their applicability in practice. Can present and communicate effectively on their project/company in unexpected situations. Can make presentations in front of demanding assemblies (TEDx, for example).
Professional	Ability to coach others to communicate effectively, ie to have a measurable impact on the audience (ability to communicate and/or convince).

Facilitation and delivery skills

Ability to create and deliver learning experiences through a range of methods.

Beginner	Actively engages in team learning experiences and has experience of taking the facilitation or scribe role in coaching or training sessions. Supports colleagues who are facilitating sessions.
Advanced beginner	Can co-facilitate learning experiences with colleagues using a variety of techniques and strategies. Understands and can begin to effectively use questioning, challenging and coaching in their facilitation and delivery approach.
Practitioner	Understands and can apply a good level of theory, models and techniques relating to effective learning experience design. Knows how to interact and engage the audience, and effectively creates opportunities for emergent learning through session planning.
Advanced practitioner	Has several examples of creating and delivery high quality learning experiences and facilitating the learning of others. They have made a considerable impact on their team and the Team Academy Aston community through facilitating rich and deep learning experiences.
Professional	Is highly proficient in developing learning experiences catered to the needs of the audience; generating revenue from facilitation and delivery of learning. Can coach others in facilitation and delivery.

Initiative

Ability to work and initiate projects independently based on strengths and an entrepreneurial mindset.

Beginner	Actively participates in the life of their team company: dialogue and coaching sessions, training sessions, project sessions and events organised within the Business Enterprise Development (Team Academy Aston) programme. Demonstrates a willingness to start doing things and act.
Advanced beginner	Develops themselves and contributes to the development of their team company: experiments to create value, mobilises the resources at their disposal, goes out of their comfort zone and agrees to take risks.
Practitioner	Has a very good self-awareness. Proposes and implements new experiments that require boldness and/or courage. Knows how to seize opportunities, can create value in a specific market and learns from mistakes and/or failures.
Advanced practitioner	Discovered several theoretical models in terms of “entrepreneurship” or “leadership” and confronted them with practice. Has several experiences and entrepreneurial initiatives. Has a strong intrinsic motivation, only needs little advice or guidance from external people.
Professional	Demonstrated a strong entrepreneurial spirit. Initiated and led several high-impact projects.

Creativity and innovation

Ability to generate ideas, solve problems and think laterally about issues. Ability to manage the ideation process from idea to innovation.

Beginner	Experienced brainstorming, or other idea-generating methods. Has taken initiatives to find solutions to a concrete problem. Is aware of their personal creative abilities and begins to implement them. Also helps to bring out the creativity in others.
Advanced beginner	Knowledge of various creative techniques and applied them in practice. Has the theoretical foundations of innovation management, including the “lean start-up” approach. Understands the difference between creativity, product/service innovation and business model innovation. Can identify an innovative initiative and knows the different types of innovation, from incremental to disruptive. Understands how innovations are created and how to create value for a customer.
Practitioner	At a good theoretical level on how to direct creativity towards innovation. Mastery of the entire process from ideation to innovation. Knows how to pose a creative problem, set up an ideation session, evaluate and select ideas according to given criteria, set up an action plan to test / prototype the most promising ideas. Has field experience in a project or a method of developing a product/service that has generated value.
Advanced practitioner	Tested several approaches to innovation management with persistence and discipline. Has made innovations that have enabled the development of a sustainable business model and generated revenue for the Team Company. Has a very good theoretical level in the innovation literature and other related topics such as design thinking, organisational innovation, and business strategy.
Professional	Is able to set up and manage a remit in the field of creativity and innovation. Can manage the team and process from the idea to a viable solution.

Skill profile two: team entrepreneur

Relationships and negotiation

Ability to interact and achieve results in relationship building and maintenance, negotiation and team learning situations.

Beginner	Ability to approach others (make appointments, conduct meetings, and study activities). Has the basic theoretical level in the field. Can use some techniques (know how to prepare an appointment, how to build a meeting plan, etc).
Advanced beginner	Has successful experience in different types of learning relationship and situations. At a basic theoretical level through resource reviews in the negotiation (preparation, objectives etc).
Practitioner	Has the knowledge and skill level of a professional new to team learning, negotiation, and disciplinary collaboration. Ability to plan and implement projects in the field (eg team leader of a team working on projects).
Advanced practitioner	Has acquired a good comfort in team learning projects. Can manage dissatisfied team members. Ability to use different types of team management and planning tools (presentations, planning, etc) and has at least basic experience in each of them. Has experience in negotiations in different contexts.
Professional	Has a diversified theoretical knowledge (techniques), has experience in different types of team learning and project organisation, negotiation and collaborative situations. Can do persistent and long-term team planning work and knows how to evaluate information and data.

Cultural and international development

Ability to navigate entrepreneurial activity in a multi-cultural context.

Beginner	Demonstrates basic inter-cultural understanding and skill, such as interest in students and projects from other Team Academies. Ability to make initial contacts with these people for professional exchanges.
Advanced beginner	Has a basic level of knowledge of theories in international economics (eg on the globalisation of international trade and its effects) and economic development. Understands the challenges of working with people from other cultural and linguistic environments.
Practitioner	Has taken initiatives internationally. Has practical experience working in a multicultural team, such as collaborative projects, physical or virtual learning journeys/expeditions, or other socio-economic approaches with an international dimension.
Advanced practitioner	Can identify cultural differences and their impacts on project management. Has several work experiences in different cultural and linguistic environments. Acquired the theoretical bases related to the management of multicultural teams and was able to test them in projects.
Professional	Has a very good theoretical level and has carried out, and led, projects (or other socio-economic approaches) in an international and multicultural context.

Promotion

Ability to promote the team's activities and products/services – communication, marketing strategies and plans, customer knowledge and management.

Beginner	Understands the theoretical foundations of marketing and promotion, actively participates in small-scale projects, understands the importance of customers and/or stakeholders through early field experiences. Knows how to create the positioning of an offer / value proposition that meets stakeholder needs.
Advanced beginner	Read about different marketing themes (eg consumer insights, value proposition, etc). Has set up a complete marketing and promotion plan (advertising action plans, distribution and promotion around a project or product). Customer needs and benefits are at the heart of projects through the collection and analysis of quantitative and/or qualitative information. Has the ability to transform a marketing concept into an image-carrying product, via graphic and advertising identity. Ability to build and execute a simple marketing campaign using various promotional channels, understands the roles of sales and advertising in marketing.
Practitioner	Read about strategic marketing. Ability to launch products in line with existing brand positioning, customer needs and market opportunities. Understands the place of online and offline marketing in the company's strategy: size and customer loyalty in the targeted segments, its propensity to spend and induce profits for a company.
Advanced practitioner	Has a wide range of marketing knowledge, specialises in a particular type of marketing, has a strong professional identity as a "marketer" has experience in "significant marketing acts" (eg a campaign to launch a new product/service).
Professional	Has the knowledge and skill level of a novice marketing professional and can coach others in online and offline marketing strategies and tools.

Network creation and development

Ability to establish human relationships, partnerships, business relationships, and connect people with each other.

Beginner	Understands the meaning of networks in learning and project development. Perceives their own network and has networked in their local environment.
Advanced beginner	Ability to build networks independently and spontaneously. Identifies the different networks in their operational environment and can use them in promoting their projects and the team company.
Practitioner	Has an active and curious approach to building and maintaining their network. Ability to activate networks, both locally and internationally. Ability to effectively use the information generated by their network in the team company. Ability to establish business relationships and partnerships through their network.
Advanced practitioner	Knows and applies different theoretical networking models. Has a large network and many contacts in different types of networks. Can choose appropriate networks for themselves and acts as a network developer.
Professional	Has established a professional networking strategy and can measure its impact (network engagement rate).

Data management

Ability to create, store, process, analyse, archive, share and reuse corporate data with a focus on digitisation and validation of data.

Beginner	Can collect and structure data and analyse it using a simple spreadsheet (eg Excel). Understands the legislation concerning GDPR and applies it. Understands the importance of IT and the challenges of digitalisation in companies.
Advanced beginner	Understands the importance of statistics and data management to be able to use decision dashboards with ease. Has acquired theoretical knowledge and has sometimes experienced data creation and analysis in their own projects (eg market research, satisfaction surveys, sales analysis, etc.)
Practitioner	Knows the main statistical tests and their potential use in projects and the company. Knows the basics of descriptive statistics (univariate and bivariate) necessary to understand and use dashboards. Knows the data life cycle and can act, with the right tools and methods, to digitise and enhance the company's data through the various indicators (financial and others).
Advanced practitioner	Regularly practices data creation and analysis in their projects and within the team company. Understands and knows probabilistic models and data mining principles. Knows and has tested some tools. Understands the potential and risks of “artificial intelligence” in the context of a digitalised, automated economy supported by high-performance and learner algorithms.
Professional	Has a very good theoretical level in the field of data management and the use of business intelligence tools. Can prepare and/or make decisions based on analysed and “intelligent” data.

Entrepreneurial capacity

Entrepreneurial and voluntary skills in which beliefs and barriers limiting reflection and action are overcome in a positive and sustainable way.

Beginner	Has become aware of the potential for autonomous “entrepreneurship” within their team company. Ability to identify the essential drivers for the success of any human achievement: curiosity, initiative, dialogue, collaboration, courage, and action.
Advanced beginner	Ability to observe things from many different angles. Explore a new socio-economic field by combining its “self-initiative” with emerging needs to create concrete solutions. Beginning to understand their relationship to risk. Ability to effectively combine elements of various kinds (human, technical, material, intellectual, etc.) to solve problems with social, economic and/or ecological dimensions.
Practitioner	Acts entrepreneurially on a regular basis. Includes theoretical models such as “disciplined entrepreneurship”, “execution” (or others) and has tested/applied them in practice. Understands and explores informed risk. Ability to write a business plan and find the means (financial and human) to implement it.
Advanced practitioner	Has been able to persevere in their entrepreneurial actions and evolve despite the difficulties. Has a very good theoretical level on financing and business creation. Ability to transform opportunities by implementing profitable and viable business models.
Professional	Is a pioneer. Thanks to the courage to make choices, they have regularly broken known borders. Actively develops and implements an entrepreneurial project to ensure its sustainability beyond the Team Academy programme.

Skill profile two: team leader

Self-leadership

Ability to optimise self-organisation to determine and achieve one's own objectives. Ability to critically reflect on behaviours, experiences, and attitudes to develop self- awareness.

Beginner	Knows how to prioritise their actions and learning activities, understands their own strengths and weaknesses in personal organisation. Can set short-term personal goals and document progress to achieve them. Can describe learning situations and evaluate them.
Advanced beginner	Knows the theoretical foundations of time management, knows how to choose, or create self-management tools that facilitate their work (shared calendar, learning diary, action indicators, feedback, etc). Understands their needs, coping with stress / work pressure and demonstrates self-discipline. Can reflect on learning situations and the part they played in them.
Practitioner	Uses planning tools that work well. Knows how to direct their actions to achieve their objectives. Clarifies their professional identity. Tested and/or created their own personal management tools and efficiently conducted their action plans. Demonstrates strong self-discipline even in very challenging situations. Can analyse and critically reflect on their behaviours, attitudes and practices indicating self-awareness.
Advanced practitioner	Knows how to set long-term motivating goals, has identified, and knows how to deal with stress and different types of emotions caused by the work environment. Knows how to identify their areas of influence and concentrate their actions there. Demonstrates perseverance and finds many types of solutions to achieve objectives and continuously optimise his/her personal organisation. Can critique their experiences against theory and practice and act upon the outcome, demonstrating critical self-awareness.
Professional	Has a strong professional identity. Can support others in the development of critical self-reflection and leadership. Can use their self-awareness in relevant ways and has demonstrated the ability to capitalise on successes and face failures.

Project management

Ability to design, assume operational management of, implement and evaluate a project.

Beginner	Have participated in all stages, from design to implementation of at least three projects within the team company.
Advanced beginner	Has theoretical knowledge and has used project management and planning tools (eg GANTT, task breakdown, critical path, deadlines/milestones, risk management, budget, etc.) in at least one project. Knows the most important principles of project team organisation (recruitment/profiling of the people involved, skills/responsibility management).
Practitioner	Managed several projects from beginning to end (assembly, planning, resource budgeting, management, indicators). Can design a motivating objective for a project team and direct action towards results. Has led a project as the leader and is able to write a complete and synthetic final project report (deliverables, financial results, communication, and marketing).
Advanced practitioner	Ability to adapt project planning to regular contingencies and dynamically manage resources and risks. Can motivate a project group in various ways and to successfully deal with crises and conflicts. Knows the main theoretical models in project management and can apply them in a wide variety of contexts.
Professional	Ability to lead complex projects and coach other team members in project management. Ability to write professional project reports.

Team/project leadership

Ability to build a team that operates over a long period of time, and to lead that team.

Beginner	Functioned as an active member of an active team for at least six months. Knows the basics of team functioning (eg roles in the team, the importance and management of diversity, the importance of common objectives, common rules, etc)
Advanced beginner	Can apply theories in practice in teamwork and team management. Can build a shared vision and common values that guide team action. Has experience in team management as a leader or committee member.
Practitioner	Knows the main theoretical models of team leadership. Has a good experience of teamwork. Ability to actively develop and lead team actions (eg conflict management/motivation, goal formulation, consideration of people's values/ profiles via Quest, Belbin or others).
Advanced practitioner	Has different types of experience working with different teams (eg team companies, project groups etc). Ability to build multi-skilled and potentially geographically distanced teams, lead them over the long term and maintain purpose, productivity, engagement and energy within the team. Ability to confront their own leadership learning with different professional and academic environments.
Professional	Has a very good theoretical level in leadership. Demonstrated ability to support crisis or difficult transition phases. Has been asked to lead teams other than their own.

Courage to make choices

Ability to make decisions even when they mean going out of one's comfort zone, or when the outcome might prove challenging to manage.

Beginner	Explains their own short-term objectives (six months). Has created a learning contract adapted to their own needs and ideas and analysed their own choices and objectives. Is aware that their decisions have an impact.
Advanced beginner	Has a solid understanding of their own short-term objectives (has completed at least one cycle of the learning contract and its implementation) and to guide a large part of their actions according to their objectives. Ability to explain their long-term objectives (one to two years). Ability to explain their comfort zone and identify barriers/strategies to get out of it.
Practitioner	Initiated the achievement of their own short and long-term objectives. Demonstrated their ability to discern important things from less important things, prioritised their actions accordingly and made several key decisions in difficult contexts. Has gone out of their comfort zone a few times.
Advanced practitioner	Has adopted difficult managerial choices (eg in project management or leadership) by also anticipating the emotional impact of their choices and organising the corresponding support for the teams and projects concerned. Regularly goes out of their comfort zone and manages / assumes the impact of their choices.
Professional	Has a very strong professional vision, has demonstrated a real ease in adopting demanding managerial decisions that they have managed in a dynamic development of projects and project teams.

Coaching skills

Ability to using team and individual coaching to increase learning and enhance performance of teams and/or individuals.

Beginner	Understands the theoretical foundations of coaching that are based on skills such as listening, dialogue, coaching, counselling, encouragement, and planning people's development. Has basic experience in a coached position and has participated regularly in dialogue sessions.
Advanced beginner	Mastered the basics of coaching and put them into practice. Ability to assist a coachee in identifying the skills acquired, to be developed, and/or to be acquired. Participated as a coach in individual coaching sessions.
Practitioner	Mastered the theoretical foundations of individual and group coaching. Ability to establish a culture of dialogue and lead in different types of team and/or group sessions. Has some experience in group coaching (eg clients or a project team).
Advanced practitioner	Mastered the coaching of individuals, teams and groups in theory and practice. Based on the principles of dialogue and coaching, is able to prepare and execute competency development plans for individuals, teams and groups.
Professional	Demonstrated a theoretical and practical level of a professional starting in the management of a coaching process and in the implementation of a real culture of dialogue within an organisation.

Economy and society

Ability to understand the macroeconomic and societal issues evident in contemporary society.

Beginner	Ability to identify the key factors of socio-economic issues at the national and international level such as: the climate crisis, ecological and energy transition, tensions on international trade, wealth distribution, industry 4.0 and employment, etc. Bring such topics for reflection and debate within the team company.
Advanced beginner	Understands the theoretical foundations of political economy as well as the main features of a market economy system. Contributes to and participates in national and international microeconomic news debates within the team company.
Practitioner	Understands the national government policies relating to the economy, as well as the fundamentals of monetary policy. Ability to be critical of issues of economic growth and its short- and long-term impacts. Has reviewed at least two reflective macroeconomic texts or articles.
Advanced practitioner	Ability to understand the instruments used by governments to intervene in markets (public and economic policies) as well as the behaviour of companies in different types of markets. Contributes to, and participates in, current affairs debates on economic policies within the team company.

Learning and teaching activity:

Considering an inclusive practice framework

Key dimensions of the PSF: A1, A2, A3, A4, K2, K3, K4, V1, V2, V4.

Overview

This activity is designed to structure consideration of inclusivity as a principle of curriculum design. The key aim of the activity is to ensure participants are aware of key responsibilities in teaching and supporting learning, to consider the implications of curriculum design choices for equality, accessibility and inclusion, and their relevance for maintaining wellbeing in study. Emphasis is placed on inclusivity being a moderating influence and beneficial focus for staff and student wellbeing both in its development and in practice.

Universities have responsibilities regarding student protection and safety (OfS, 2021b), legal obligations regarding accessibility relating to the Equality Act 2010 and established guidance related specifically to inclusive teaching and learning in higher education (Disabled Student Sector Leadership Group, 2017). However, there are, nevertheless, evident variations in patterns of access and educational outcomes correlating with gender, ethnicity, disability and socio-economic status (Lewis, Bolton and Hubble, 2021) highlighting perceived barriers to participation and experienced inhibitory factors in study and graduate careers. Issues related to access and equality of opportunity to participate also have obvious implications for sense of belonging, agency in study, and consequently, wellbeing. Ultimately an ethical concern, inclusive education ensures accessibility, equity and equality of opportunity to participate and belong within the academic community. Inclusivity is about ensuring equality of opportunity, not outcomes.

It is important to note that inclusivity is not defined here in terms of intellectual safety, much less implies maintenance of space in which students are protected from specific ideas or learning experiences. Study in higher education requires adjustment, engagement with new ways of working and thinking, and purposefully involves difficult experiences. Inclusivity is not about removing anything that makes students uncomfortable. It is about precluding discrimination and ensuring all can thrive and achieve potential without having to contend with unfairness or individually experienced barriers to learning.

Presenting a framework of points for consideration relevant to curriculum design, participants are invited to develop a curriculum plan to situate inclusivity in the context of their own teaching and/or higher education practice in support of student learning. Inclusive education matters because it can improve wellbeing and educational outcomes for all students (Molina Roldán et al, 2021).

Guidance for facilitators

The activity is presented in a purposefully adaptable outline form. Recognising that universities increasingly have sophisticated approaches to the development of inclusive practice embedded in staff development programmes and teaching qualifications, a framework of inclusive practice considerations is outlined to structure planning and/or reflection on practice. A commonly applied audit-based approach, participants are invited to review the list of statements and descriptions and to make note of areas of development, development needs and/or questions for further discussion. It is not designed to be an exhaustive list and can be adapted and extended to include additional focus on subject specialist activities such as laboratory and/or work-based learning activities.

Working most effectively as a self-reflection exercise, the activity can also work as a programme evaluation framework undertaken by small groups. The activity typically benefits from one to two hours to review and complete detailed notes.

Activity

There are multiple factors to consider with respect to inclusivity in curriculum design. Some, such as equality and accessibility, come with clearly defined legal responsibilities and objectively measurable threshold requirements (eg Equality Act 2010; WCAG accessibility standards, UK Government, 2018), and therefore require time to review and understand but require more straightforward operational interpretation. Others, such as mitigation for unconscious bias, assurance of representation, and design for participation and belonging, require more nuanced consideration and interpretation.

Using the Inclusive Practice Checklist presented in the resource below, review the key statements and related descriptions and make notes about areas of development or points for further discussion and consideration in the development notes section. Pay specific attention to any areas of challenge or uncertainty.

Following time for individual completion or group discussion of the checklist, participants are invited to share key insights as a context for wider discussion. Useful questions to frame plenary discussion include:

+ What are current strengths and routine in practice?
+ What are the most clearly defined areas of necessary development?
+ What are the key challenge areas?
  - Are there areas identified as beyond the control of an individual or programme team?
  - Is capacity or expertise available?
+ Are there any areas with ambiguity or uncertainty?
  - Are individual responsibilities regarding accessibility of information clearly defined?
  - Have reading lists been refreshed or reviewed?

Noting, for example, the very specific requirements relating to accessibility in published information and study materials, participants can then be encouraged to formulate a simple action plan alongside signposting of relevant institutional policies, procedures, guidance and support structures. Common development areas include:

+ Formatting and accessibility using authoring tools including Microsoft Office software.
+ Reviewing, accessing and applying relevant institutional accessibility tools – updating materials.
+ Reviewing and updating reading lists and checking the accessibility of specific journal and publications used.
+ Reviewing formative and summative assessment activities for opportunity to improve inclusivity through additional flexibility.

Relevant case studies

Wellbeing in London
Clinical humanities and wellbeing
Field trips case study

Relevant key lessons and top tips

Sub-theme	Key lessons	Top tips
Psychologically safe learning environments	+ In a psychologically safe classroom, students feel safe to make mistakes, take risks to further their learning and thinking and ask for help and support when needed. + Psychological safety makes it more likely that students will engage in classroom activities and debates - this supports learning and helps develop a sense of community and belonging. + An unsafe environment can raise anxiety and lead to class avoidance and/or disengagement. + Psychological safety must be planned for, and time must be devoted to establishing and maintaining a healthy classroom culture. + Students will need to witness a safe environment being maintained consistently before they will trust it.	+ Use induction/orientation and/or the first class of term to focus on creating cohort identity, a safe social environment, and social rules. + Provide positive feedback to students who contribute early, encourage debate and be willing to show your own learning. + Discuss your own mistakes and highlight them in class to show that they are a normal part of the learning process.

Sub-theme	Key lessons	Top tips
Inclusivity	+ An inclusive curriculum is accessible to all students and represents multiple perspectives and experiences, it is presented in a way to reduce marginalisation and discrimination, and it promotes respect and academic excellence. + Inclusivity in the classroom is related to sense of belonging, which is shown to be positively linked with academic performance, motivation, and learning. + Inclusivity and sense of belonging are also significantly related to students' mental health and wellbeing. Instead, lack of inclusivity and of sense of belonging lead to issues with mental health, feelings of alienation, psychological distress and consequently to a decrease in cognitive functions. + Adoption of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and Universal Design for Instruction (UDI) strategies support the learning process, curriculum design, and course delivery in a way to provide equal opportunities to ALL students for succeeding in education. + Research on UDL showed that this approach is effective to improve students' motivation, engagement, attitudes towards learning, knowledge acquisition and academic skills' development.	+ Be aware of and receptive to the representation of certain groups in the course content and avoid stigmatising views of such groups and give serious consideration to adoptions of alternative examples and materials part of the curriculum when these inaccurately portray students' social identity groups, ethnicities or cultures. Remember to include multiple perspectives on each topic of the course and use them appropriately. + When working with a controversial topic, anticipate possible responses and how you might deal with dissenting views on that topic. Be prepared, to correct stereotypes and challenge assumptions. + Consider your own responses and emotions using this awareness to appraise the planning process: consider that you may hold assumptions about the learning behaviours and capacities of your students, these may manifest in your interactions with students. + Establishing agreed-upon guidelines early on within the class as they can be an important aspect of productive class discussion. + Show care and genuine concern for your students. Investing some time and energy into informing yourself and becoming more aware and knowledgeable about the issues that affect your students can lead to more positive in-class experiences.

Sub-theme	Key lessons	Top tips
Classroom culture	+ Classroom culture (online and in person) is crucial to student learning, persistence, and wellbeing. + Students can benefit from a sense of psychological safety, social group identity and helpful and health social norms and rule + Creating a healthy classroom culture requires explicit attention and should be a feature of curriculum design.	+ Use induction/orientation and/or the first class of term to focus on creating cohort identity, a safe social environment, and social rules. + Provide positive feedback to students who contribute early, encourage debate and be willing to show your own learning. + Discuss your own mistakes and highlight them in class to show that they are a normal part of the learning process.
Defining boundaries	+ Students cannot be expected to understand the academic/student relationship and its boundaries if it is not explicitly explained and implicitly modelled. + When students do not understand the nature of the relationship this can cause them to avoid seeking appropriate support or lead to them seeking inappropriate support from their academics. + Students benefit when staff demonstrate genuine care for them within consistent, appropriate boundaries. + During transition, benefit can be gained by academics explicitly explaining the nature of the relationship, how students can contact them, what they can expect and what types of issue will need to be referred to colleagues in student services.	+ Send a video to new students before term; start introducing yourself, outlining your well founded hopes for them and explaining the academic/student relationship. + In induction or the first meeting with tutee, articulate the nature and boundaries of the relationship. If, at any time, a student appears to be moving beyond those boundaries, you can then remind them of this conversation and then signpost them appropriately. + Set an automated email which clearly defines your response time, how to book an appointment with you (if that is a different process) and signposts to other services – including out of hours support. + Only respond to student emails within your defined office hours (you can set emails to send later).

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Resource: Inclusive practice checklist

The checklist below presents a series of statements and descriptions. Using the development notes section, participants are asked to make notes of areas of development or questions for further discussion.

Inclusive practice statement	Description	Development notes
Information and learning resources are formatted for accessibility	'Styles' used in Microsoft Word to structure document layout and heading structure.	
	PDF documents checked for optical character recognition (OCR).	
	Accessible sans serif fonts used (eg Arial, Helvetica, Calibri).	
	Font size and line spacing selected for readability (eg 12-pt font size in documents, larger for presentation slides).	
	Accessibility checker used in Microsoft Word/PowerPoint and alternative text provided for images, labels included for tables and figures, and any identified accessibility issues related to contrast or layout updated.	
	Use of language is clear and concise, avoiding euphemisms, colloquialisms, or jargon, such as institutional acronyms, or words or phrases that could reinforce stereotypes (noting protected characteristics of age, gender, relationship status, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation).	
	Alternative records of teaching activities such as transcripts and/or captioned audio/video recordings are provided.	
	Students can configure or access alternative versions of key documents and information (eg download an MP3 audio version of a Word document).	
	Information is presented using a range of formats.	
Online study information and materials are structured and presented for accessibility	Online learning environments are compliant with WCAG 2.1 web accessibility requirements. Relevant accessibility checker applied.	

Inclusive practice statement	Description	Development notes
	Assistive technologies are available and accessible for all students.	
	Access to online information and study does not rely on personal devices but is accessible via personal devices.	
	Key information is provided in advance of teaching activities.	
	Learning materials are organised logically and in a clearly defined sequence.	
	Menu structure, folder and file titles are clearly and consistently presented across a student's programme of studies. Students understand how to use online information and study materials.	
	Important information is clearly identified and presented.	
	Journal papers are accessible via links to library reading lists and reflect an international perspective.	
Information and communications are inclusively designed	Communications with/to students related to their studies is managed proportionately, consistently, and via clearly defined channels.	
	Students can filter and configure communications and alerts relevant to their studies.	
Teaching activities are designed to foster an effective academic community	Teaching spaces are physically accessible for all students and/or reasonable anticipatory adjustments made where required.	
	Induction loop systems are used as routine.	
	Students can use captioning technology on their own devices.	
	Presentation slides and/or learning resources are formatted for high contrast and clarity.	
	Charts, tables, images, and/or diagrams, include alternative text explanation and additional text explanation of meaning.	

Inclusive practice statement	Description	Development notes
	Teaching activities are clearly introduced and explained, including recap on previous study activities (where relevant).	
	Teaching activities are structured and sequenced to enable all to participate.	
	Regular and accessible opportunities for reflection and to ask questions are provided.	
	Student rights and responsibilities in study are clearly explained and subject to discussion.	
	The full breadth and diversity of subjects and topics of study are considered.	
Learning activities are clearly explained and inclusively designed	Clear expectations and ground rules are established for any collaborative learning activities.	
	Specific competencies related to collaborative work are highlighted and explained.	
	Groups or teams are allocated by the tutor with specific reasonable adjustments made where necessary. Group size is designed to maximise opportunity to participate (normally four to five per group).	
Assessment activities and processes are inclusively designed.	Formative and summative assessment activities are designed to preclude the need for individual adjustment as far as possible.	
	Assessment activities incorporate relevant flexibility and choice to enable students to meet clearly defined learning outcomes in effective ways.	
	Assessment incorporates specific approaches to improve the integrity of judgements made. These may include anonymous marking or dual marking.	
	Feedback is accessible in multiple formats with available opportunity for direct discussion.	
Student representation and student voice	Systems are in place to ensure all students have the opportunity ask questions, share their ideas, perspectives and experiences, or raise concerns anonymously.	

Theme 3: learning focused

University study is purposefully difficult, clearly identified as such, and about developing and demonstrating new capabilities from existing abilities. Noting that wellbeing is best served through an effective balance between purpose, challenge and individual opportunity, this theme considers how shared understanding and clear appreciation of the challenges involved can frame approaches to curriculum design and operation.

Key areas of focus in this theme are:

+ student journey
+ workload
+ assessment for learning.

Learning activities and resources:

Sub-theme	Aims	Learning outcomes	Activity	Synopsis
Deep learning	To explore the contrast between deep and surface learning and the implications for wellbeing.	To apply a student journey focused approach to curriculum design and/or evaluation.	The hero's journey exercise	This activity structures application of a narrative framework to reflection on the journey and experience of students and teachers in higher education.
Meaning	To share perspectives regarding meaning in learning.	Confidently situate meaning in learning as a legitimate pedagogical concern.	See: The hero's journey exercise	
Internal cohesion	To explore the significance of curriculum coherence for student and staff experience in study.	Apply constructive alignment principles to the design of curricula.	See: Developing a programme design framework	The purpose of this activity is to explore the design of a core programme framework. Working in reverse through programme rationale, philosophy, aims and learning outcomes, the activity provides an opportunity to focus on the principles of backwards design and constructive alignment, as well as institution-specific requirements and expectations.
Sustainable challenge	To reflect on the importance and value of proportionate challenge in learning.	Articulate how challenge is situated in curriculum design.	See: Scaffolding in the curriculum: guided vs unguided study exercise	This activity focuses attention on notions of control and guidance in teaching and learning. The key aim is to structure participant consideration of the responsibilities of both teacher and student and how this is positioned in curriculum design.
Workload	To support participants in applying a project management approach to curriculum planning.	Embed time and motion thinking in curriculum design approaches.	What, when and how much? – Exploring notional learning and teaching hours	The focus of this activity is time and effort in study, and the role of the curriculum as a regulator of workload for students and staff.

Sub-theme	Aims	Learning outcomes	Activity	Synopsis
Assessment for learning	To apply an assessment for learning approach to the evaluation and/or design of assessment.	Apply a learning focused approach to the evaluation and/or design of assessment.	Assessment for learning	Recognising the distinctiveness of institutional context and approaches to assessment, this activity outlines a summary of key functions and types of assessment and their implications for learning and teaching. A series of questions and prompts are included to structure individual reflection or discussion among participant groups. The aim of the activity is to encourage participants to position assessment as a central consideration in curriculum design and to recognise the implications of related design choices for student and staff experience in study.

Summary of key lessons and top tips:

Sub-theme	Key lessons	Top tips
Deep learning	+ Deep and surface learning are two important concepts in understanding how students approach learning. + Deep learning can provide students with a source of positive wellbeing, while surface learning can increase anxiety and erode students' ability and confidence to engage with future learning. + The curriculum can support students to move towards deep learning via content, exercise and assessment strategy.	+ Create space in the curriculum to develop students' understanding of learning approaches and how deep learning can be of benefit. + Use assessments to push students towards deeper learning, focussing on assessing 'know how' eg by using vivas to explore student understanding of concepts, the connections between them and how they can be applied in other contexts. + Use retrieval practice in the classroom (online or in person) to guide students towards studying for deeper understanding + Consider using the first sessions of a module to help students connect to concepts that are meaningful or may have practical application for them.

Sub-theme	Key lessons	Top tips
Meaning	+ Students can derive positive wellbeing from the curriculum when they find content and activities meaningful. + Students find learning meaningful when it has personal significance, creates connections between curriculum content and students' own lives, interests and values and impacts on personal growth. + Many students report that they do not find their learning meaningful. + Deliberate practice within the curriculum can help students develop the ability to find meaning in learning and tasks, which can help protect their wellbeing in future, whether as a student or in the workplace.	+ Begin new subjects by exploring connections between the topic and wider agendas and by helping students find a personal connection to some element of what will be covered. + Encourage deep learning and the construction of meaning, rather than rote memorisation. + Use scaffolding in assessment to allow students to pursue questions and aspects of each subject that they find meaningful to their value, interests, and experiences – eg by providing a range of questions, allowing students to shape their own questions, or providing questions that allow students to follow their interests.
Curriculum coherence	+ An internally coherent curriculum is one in which content is sequenced and connections between facts and concepts are made explicitly for students. It develops logically, providing a narrative path for students to follow. + An internally coherent curriculum benefits student wellbeing by supporting the development of mastery, self-efficacy, self-narrative within discipline, deep learning and meaning. + An incoherent curriculum can leave students disengaged and lead to surface learning of apparently unconnected subjects. + Curriculum must be coherent between and across modules and years of study, this requires co-ordination in design and delivery across the teaching team.	+ In design, map the expected development of students' understanding of key concepts and ensure that this is carried out across modules. + Provide students with additional material that supports their ability to link content. + Use formative summative assessment to build students' ability to connect concepts and focus assessment on 'know how' knowledge.

Sub-theme	Key lessons	Top tips
Desirable difficulty	+ Academic challenge and difficulty can support learning, motivation, and wellbeing. + The level of difficulty must be calibrated to students' current levels of knowledge, understanding or skill, or students may become overwhelmed, disengage and experience negative impacts on wellbeing. + This desirable difficulty can be supported by curriculum design and delivery through techniques such as interleaving subject matter, using different learning methods and retrieval practice. + The curriculum can also create a culture in which students feel safe to find new learning difficult at first.	+ Use a variety of tasks to explore each subject – even teaching the same material in a different room can strengthen memory and retrieval. + Use retrieval exercises in the classroom to enhance students' memory and retrieval and to help you identify students' current learning and any gaps in understanding. + Use regular retrieval exercises to establish and maintain a culture in which students can acknowledge gaps in knowledge and misunderstandings, safe in the knowledge that the response will be to support their learning rather than criticise or chastise. + Interleave subjects and help students find the connections between them to enhance understanding and curriculum coherence.
Workload	+ While hard work can be good for wellbeing, the structure of a student's workload can have negative consequences for wellbeing and the depth of their learning. + Deadline bunching can cause students to become overwhelmed and to adopt surface level strategies. Bunching can also undermine motivation and self-belief. + Negative impacts can be greater for students with other commitments who have less flexibility in their time. + Workload structures need to be planned into curriculum design and across modules to produce sustainable challenge.	+ Consider the structure and spread of student workload across the curriculum in design. + Ensure students understand how to approach assessments, to create greater confidence that they can complete it competently and reduce perceptions that workload is too great. + Ensure students have stretching academic activity across the whole of term, to build sustainable challenge.

Sub-theme	Key lessons	Top tips
Assessment for learning	+ While assessment is often associated with risks to wellbeing, if well designed it can support learning and wellbeing. + Assessment for learning places a priority on promoting student learning, rather than on measuring ability to meet predetermined criteria. + Assessment for learning is seen as a component part of teaching and learning. Learning can be supported through the design of the task, through feedback and through accompanying meta-cognitive exercises. + An assessment for learning strategy can support a performance-focused culture, that is beneficial for learning and wellbeing.	+ Identify key knowledge, understanding and skills that students should develop and ensure the assessment task is designed to stretch and develop these. + Use assessment briefs to highlight the learning and development students can expect by completing the task. + Provide accompanying meta-cognitive tasks, such as requiring students to reflect on their own work or provide responses to feedback detailing how they will apply it in future learning. + Use feedback to highlight the learning and development students have gained from completing the task.

Learning and teaching activity:

The hero's journey exercise

Key dimensions of the PSF: A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, K2, K3, V1, V2, V4

Synopsis

Constructivist theories of learning originating from the work of Piaget having been increasingly validated by neuropsychology research, narrative-based learning and use of narrative as a framework for instructional design have seen increasing attention in educational research (Szurmak and Thuna, 2013).

Capable of being applied in self-study activity or individual assessment, these activities are conceived primarily for use in a workshop setting framed around conversation and dialogue among peers. Focusing as it does on a familiar literary trope, use of the hero's journey metaphor – otherwise referred to as the monomyth – is designed to structure consideration of student-centred approaches to curriculum design while confronting possible misconceptions about learning as being either a linear or uniform process, or of effective teaching being primarily a matter of delivery or transmission of content.

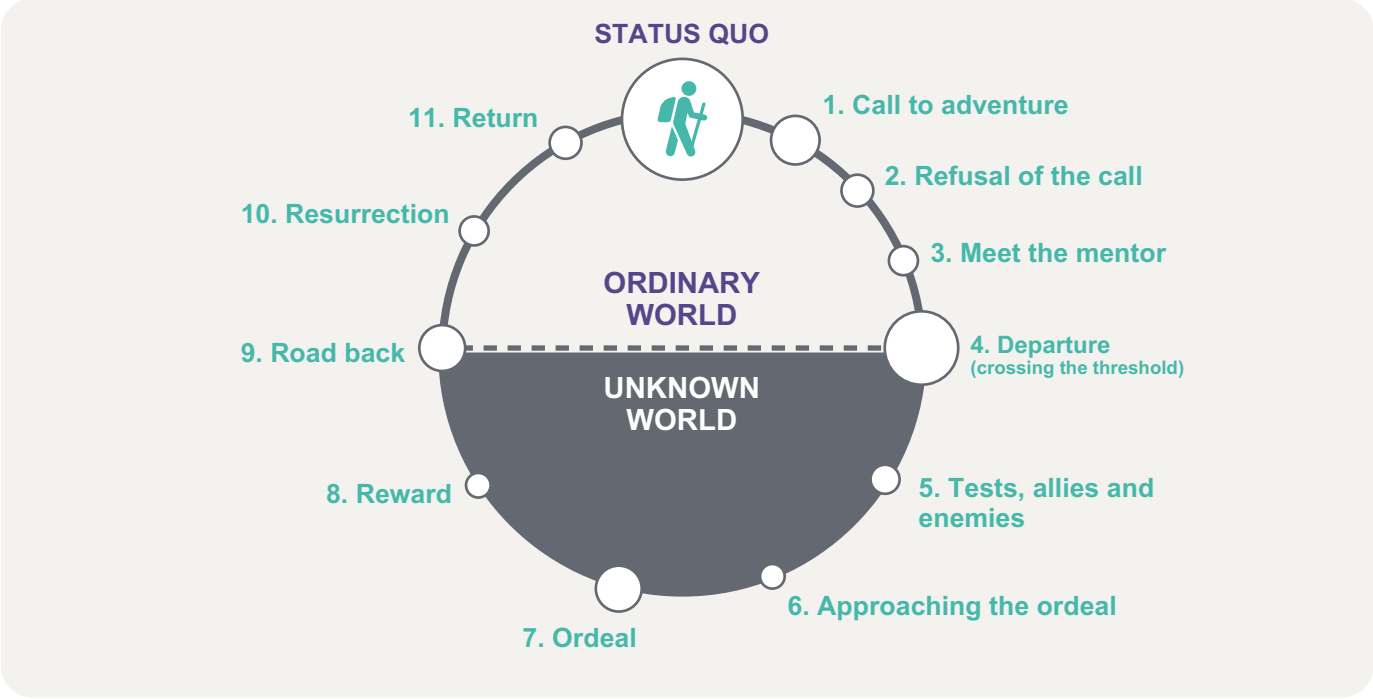
Focusing consideration on individual student learner experience while enabling participants to make and share connections with their own experiences and interests in literature, the activities presented here are ultimately designed to frame consideration of learning as a process of meaning making rather than simply knowledge acquisition.

Overview

There can be a tendency in curriculum thinking for focus to be more actively on the what than the who. The simple aim here is to reinforce the significance of and potential for deep learning, mastery and meaning in study (Hughes and Spanner, 2019) and the legitimacy of high ambitions for student learning experience. Never forget that when the curriculum works in an optimal way, 'flow' states in learning can emerge, increasing motivation, satisfaction, creativity, and, ultimately, personal fulfilment (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996).

The purpose of these activities is to support participants in applying a narrative-based and student-centred approach to processes of curriculum design. In no way intended to imply normalisation of life-threatening challenge in learning, the activity is nevertheless framed recognising that the development of mastery necessarily involves some form of meaningful trial and ordeal, benefits significantly from appropriate mentoring, and incorporates defined stages and point of resolution. In these respects, the emphasis here is on meaning in learning, for learners, mentors and those involved in designing and facilitating learning, and on encouraging a shift of perspective away from content to experience in curriculum thinking.

Figure 5: The hero's journey



Activities and guidance for facilitators

The hero's journey is an archetypal and familiar story trope. As present in ancient mythology as modern literature and cinema – from Ulysses to Harry Potter – most if not all participants of learning and teaching qualifications or related CPD programmes in universities will be familiar with, if not have direct and resonant experience of, the narrative form. Most, however, will not normally have equivalent experience of curriculum design, much less experience of applying a narrative focused approach to the process.

A narrative-focused perspective and specific focus on the hero's journey metaphor can be used to frame study activities in many ways. Useful as a context setting or an initial ice-breaking activity, collation of examples drawn from participant suggestions can aid in the sharing of individual insights and support development of common understanding and connection with the topic. Activities presented here are designed to structure attention on student learning experience in study but are equally applicable in considering staff experience in teaching.

Some more structured activity examples include:

ACTIVITY 1: the hero's journey as a conceptual framework for module design

An excellent example of how the hero's journey can be applied as a conceptual framework for module design is explored in detail by Farmer (2019). Identifying value in focusing clearly on starting points, stages of progress, individual experience and significance of defined closure, the potential for increased affective motivation, self-efficacy and promotion of active learning are described as key benefits of the approach. Farmer's article incorporates an example mapping of key stages of the hero's journey narrative to descriptions of specific learning and teaching activities.

In terms of narratology, the conventions associated with the hero's journey have been described in various ways. Frequently represented graphically as in Figure 5 above, a structure modelled on Vogler's mythic structure for writers (2007) and Farmer's adaptation (2019) is as follows:

	Narrative stage	Farmer's module interpretation model	Module plans (activities)	Success measures?
Ordinary world	Status quo	Building learning community		
	Call to adventure	Engaging students with learning		
	Refusal of the call	Dialogue with students about hopes and fears		
	Meet the mentor	Reassurance and guidance from tutor/s		
Unknown world	Departure (crossing the first threshold)	Start of learning and teaching		
	Tests, enemies and allies	Formative assessment and challenge in learning		
	Approaching the ordeal	Preparing students for assessment		
	Ordeal	Mid-module assessment		
	Reward	Reflecting on feedback and knowledge from mid-module assessment		
Ordinary world	Road back	Students complete final assessment (autonomy)		
	Resurrection	Completing module study and assessment		
	Return	Reflecting, reviewing and development planning		

Activities can be sequenced and structured as follows:

Papers by Szurmak and Thuna (2013) and Farmer (2019) can be provided as a preparatory reading exercise to frame discussion or practical development activity in a subsequent group session.

The incorporated narrative approach model (summarised above) individually adapted and extended to include a detailed module plan (specifics of learning and teaching activities at each stage for a specific module of study). Note that alternative interpretations of activities associated with narrative stages is entirely appropriate. Preparatory work can then be shared for discussion in corresponding group activities.

Placing the emphasis more on success measures, participants can be tasked with considering how the impact of approaches taken at each stage can be evaluated, or how their relative success can be determined.

ACTIVITY 2: The hero's journey as a conceptual framework for programme design or model for programme evaluation

Recognising the clear synergies between the hero's journey model and student experience in an individual module of study, this activity focuses application on programme-level curriculum design and in programme-level evaluation.

	Narrative stage	Example programme design consideration	Programme evaluation example
Ordinary world	Status quo	Eg competition and market demand analysis	Eg competition and market demand analysis
	Call to adventure	Eg seek approval for proposal	Eg advertising and recruitment
	Refusal of the call	Eg strategies to engage underrepresented groups and/ or gain support for ideas	Eg student engagement – strategies to engage underrepresented groups and/ or external organisations
	Meet the mentor	Eg seek guidance and support for development	Eg student engagement with personal tutoring
Unknown world	Departure (crossing the first threshold)	Eg begin the development	Eg enrolment and start of studies
	Tests, enemies and allies	Eg reconciling aspirations against constraints (competing ideas and approval processes)	Eg supporting wider student experience, engagement, and mechanisms for managing student difficulties

	Narrative stage	Example programme design consideration	Programme evaluation example
	Approaching the ordeal	Eg preparing final design for approval	Eg mechanisms to prepare for or address challenge areas (periods of intensity)
	Ordeal	Eg critique, scrutiny and evaluation	Eg managing periods of intensity
	Reward	Eg successful formal approval	Eg mechanisms for assuring integrity of practice
Ordinary world	Road back	Eg preparing for launch	Eg learning from the smooth-running periods
	Resurrection	Eg successful implementation and launch	Eg reflecting on completion points
	Return	Eg reflections and planning	Eg reflecting and development planning

For programme design, an indicative mapping to the narrative stages is outlined above. The activity can be to work to a blank piece of paper – 'Can you map the key stages of a programme development and approval process to the key stages of the hero's journey?'– or the example presented as a general scaffold for more open conversation and discussion. An interesting point to consider in this context is that of whether there is, and who might be, the hero when a new programme is approved.

For application in programme evaluation, as with the programme design example, participants can either be invited to work from the narrative framework alone, or the examples presented to facilitate more general conversation. The key in this example is to emphasise operational aspects including staff experience and to consider where clearer definition of ordeals might inform changes in approach.

ACTIVITY 3: the hero's journey as a conceptual framework for reflecting on the teaching journey

For workshop or taught programme participants new to teaching in higher education or moving into teaching roles, the hero's journey metaphor can also be related to the experience and journey of the teacher. Indeed, there are many examples of how the model has been used in teacher development programmes (Farmer, 2019).

	Narrative stage	Teacher development journey
Ordinary world	Status quo	Outside teaching
	Call to adventure	Opportunity to move into teaching
	Refusal of the call	Uncertainties or concerns about the teaching role
	Meet the mentor	Gaining and support and seeking guidance
Unknown world	Departure (crossing the first threshold)	Becoming a teacher
	Tests, enemies and allies	Preparing to teach, building new professional networks, working with complex and unfamiliar systems, new professional challenges
	Approaching the ordeal	Finalising planning and preparation to teach
	Ordeal	First teaching activities
	Reward	Successful impact and feedback
Ordinary world	Road back	Students complete final assessment (autonomy)
	Resurrection	Completing module study and assessment
	Return	Reflecting, reviewing and development planning

Given potential sensitivities associated with any focus on professional identity, this activity is most sensibly undertaken as self-study or as a private dialogue with facilitators or tutors. Consideration relating to the 'tests, enemies, and allies' stage, for example, has potential to connect with significant emotional experience. Teaching in universities can be a daunting experience and it is not uncommon for confidence to be severely tested for colleagues new to teaching roles.

Part of the purpose of this exercise being to acknowledge the challenge and challenges of becoming a teacher and to open dialogue about lived experience, it is therefore important to ensure clear understanding of how to access any necessary additional support.

In simple terms, the activity can be presented using the framework provided above. Participants can be tasked with reflecting on their experience of becoming a teacher, articulating their journey, and adding detail and description to narrative stages from their experience. Anonymisation of collated or aggregated outcomes from groups and related summarisation can frame more open debate and discussion. Common themes that emerge include:

+ motivations and aspirations as teachers
+ initial doubts or concerns
+ the challenge of 'becoming' a teacher and confidence in that professional identity
+ first experiences and their impact
+ the transformational significance of affirmation.

Summary

General consideration about how narrative forms and media tropes may be used as scaffolds for engaging with concepts and ideas in teaching, or as devices for enriching aspects of teaching practice, can be extremely productive. For example, the potential value of post-credit scenes or teaser trailers for significant lectures or talks, the use of flashback as a structure for exploring important scientific discoveries, or episodic nature of many engaging TV series, related character arcs and plot twists, and associated recap summaries at the start of episodes, all have identifiable synergies with the weekly rhythm of lectures, tutorials or laboratory sessions.

More nuanced consideration of narrative concepts such as 'plot armour' (convenient devices or coincidences that serve only to save the protagonist or main character), or 'Phlebotinum' (impossible or imaginary substance or device to cause a required effect, eg discovered invisibility cloak), also open opportunity to consider advantage and disadvantage in learning and to explore the reality that many characters capable of developing rich and compelling stories nevertheless have their journeys end before they reach their intended destination either by refusing the call, never meeting the mentor they need, or by succumbing to tests, trials or ordeal, for reasons beyond their control but under control for others.

Relevant case studies

Wellbeing in London
Clinical humanities and wellbeing
Field trips case study
War studies
Graduate attributes
Issues in international politics

Relevant key lessons and top tips

Sub-theme	Key lessons	Top tips
Transition	+ Transition is a crucial element for student success, persistence, and wellbeing. + Curriculum should be designed with a specific focus on the process through which students must travel during transition. + The curriculum must be appropriately scaffolded and must explicitly prepare all students for success, no matter their previous experience or learning. + During transition students need support, via the curriculum, to socially integrate, academically integrate, develop self-belief, and manage their wellbeing. + It is easier to achieve all of this within curriculum design if the design process is genuinely collaborative, involving colleagues from across the university.	+ Begin meaningful engagement with the curriculum as soon as possible – preferably during induction/ orientation eg with no stakes tasks that engage students with aspects of their discipline that are interesting, exciting, fun etc. + Group tasks centred on disciplinary content can provide a focus for conversations and social connections. + Acknowledge the normality of transition experiences and provide reassurance – if possible, by giving concrete examples of steps students can take to feel more connected and settled in. + Academics and colleagues in student services can work together to provide psycho-education and guidance to support students to navigate transition successfully.
Deep learning	+ Deep and surface learning are two important concepts in understanding how students approach learning. + Deep learning can provide students with a source of positive wellbeing, while surface learning can increase anxiety and erode students' ability and confidence to engage with future learning. + The curriculum can support students to move towards deep learning via content, exercise, and assessment strategy.	+ Create space in the curriculum to develop students' understanding of learning approaches and how deep learning can be of benefit. + Use assessments to push students towards deeper learning, focussing on assessing 'know how' eg by using vivas to explore student understanding of concepts, the connections between them and how they can be applied in other contexts. + Use retrieval practice in the classroom (online or in person) to guide students towards studying for deeper understanding. + Consider using the first sessions of a module to help students connect to concepts that are meaningful or may have practical application for them.

Sub-theme	Key lessons	Top tips
Meaning	+ Students can derive positive wellbeing from the curriculum when they find content and activities meaningful. + Students find learning meaningful when it has personal significance, creates connections between curriculum content and students' own lives, interests and values and impacts on personal growth. + Many students report that they do not find their learning meaningful. + Deliberate practice within the curriculum can help students develop the ability to find meaning in learning and tasks, which can help protect their wellbeing in future, whether as a student or in the workplace.	+ Begin new subjects by exploring connections between the topic and wider agendas and by helping students find a personal connection to some element of what will be covered. + Encourage deep learning and the construction of meaning, rather than rote memorisation. + Use scaffolding in assessment to allow students to pursue questions and aspects of each subject that they find meaningful to their value, interests, and experiences – eg by providing a range of questions, allowing students to shape their own questions, or providing questions that allow students to follow their interests.
Curriculum coherence	+ An internally coherent curriculum is one in which content is sequenced and connections between facts and concepts are made explicitly for students. It develops logically, providing a narrative path for students to follow. + An internally coherent curriculum benefits student wellbeing by supporting the development of mastery, self-efficacy, self-narrative within discipline, deep learning and meaning. + An incoherent curriculum can leave students disengaged and lead to surface learning of apparently unconnected subjects. + Curriculum must be coherent between and across modules and years of study, this requires coordination in design and delivery across the teaching team.	+ In design, map the expected development of students' understanding of key concepts and ensure that this is carried out across modules. + Provide students with additional material that supports their ability to link content. + Use formative and summative assessment to build students' ability to connect concepts and focus assessment on 'know how' knowledge.

Sub-theme	Key lessons	Top tips
Desirable difficulty	+ Academic challenge and difficulty can support learning, motivation, and wellbeing. + The level of difficulty must be calibrated to students' current levels of knowledge, understanding or skill, or students may become overwhelmed, disengage and experience negative impacts on wellbeing. + This desirable difficulty can be supported by curriculum design and delivery through techniques such as interleaving subject matter, using different learning methods and retrieval practice. + The curriculum can also create a culture in which students feel safe to find new learning difficult at first.	+ Use a variety of tasks to explore each subject – even teaching the same material in a different room can strengthen memory and retrieval. + Use retrieval exercises in the classroom to enhance students' memory and retrieval and to help you identify students' current learning and any gaps in understanding. + Use regular retrieval exercises to establish and maintain a culture in which students can acknowledge gaps in knowledge and misunderstandings, safe in the knowledge that the response will be to support their learning rather than criticise or chastise. + Interleave subjects and help students find the connections between them to enhance understanding and curriculum coherence.
Workload	+ While hard work can be good for wellbeing, the structure of a student's workload can have negative consequences for wellbeing and the depth of their learning. + Deadline bunching can cause students to become overwhelmed and to adopt surface level strategies. Bunching can also undermine motivation and self-belief. + Negative impacts can be greater for students with other commitments who have less flexibility in their time. + Workload structures need to be planned into curriculum design and across modules to produce sustainable challenge.	+ Consider the structure and spread of student workload across the curriculum in design. + Ensure students understand how to approach assessments, to create greater confidence that they can complete it competently and reduce perceptions that workload is too great. + Ensure students have stretching academic activity across the whole of term, to build sustainable challenge.

Sub-theme	Key lessons	Top tips
Assessment for learning	+ While assessment is often associated with risks to wellbeing, if well designed it can support learning and wellbeing. + Assessment for learning places a priority on promoting student learning, rather than on measuring ability to meet predetermined criteria. + Assessment for learning is seen as a component part of teaching and learning. Learning can be supported through the design of the task, through feedback and through accompanying meta-cognitive exercises. + An assessment for learning strategy can support a performance focussed culture, that is beneficial for learning and wellbeing.	+ Identify key knowledge, understanding and skills that students should develop and ensure the assessment task is designed to stretch and develop these. + Use assessment briefs to highlight the learning and development students can expect by completing the task. + Provide accompanying meta-cognitive tasks, such as requiring students to reflect on their own work or provide responses to feedback detailing how they will apply it in future learning. + Use feedback to highlight the learning and development students have gained from completing the task.

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Learning and teaching activity:

What, when, and how much? – exploring notional learning and teaching hours

Key dimensions of the PSF: A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, K2, K4, V1, V1, V2, V3, V4

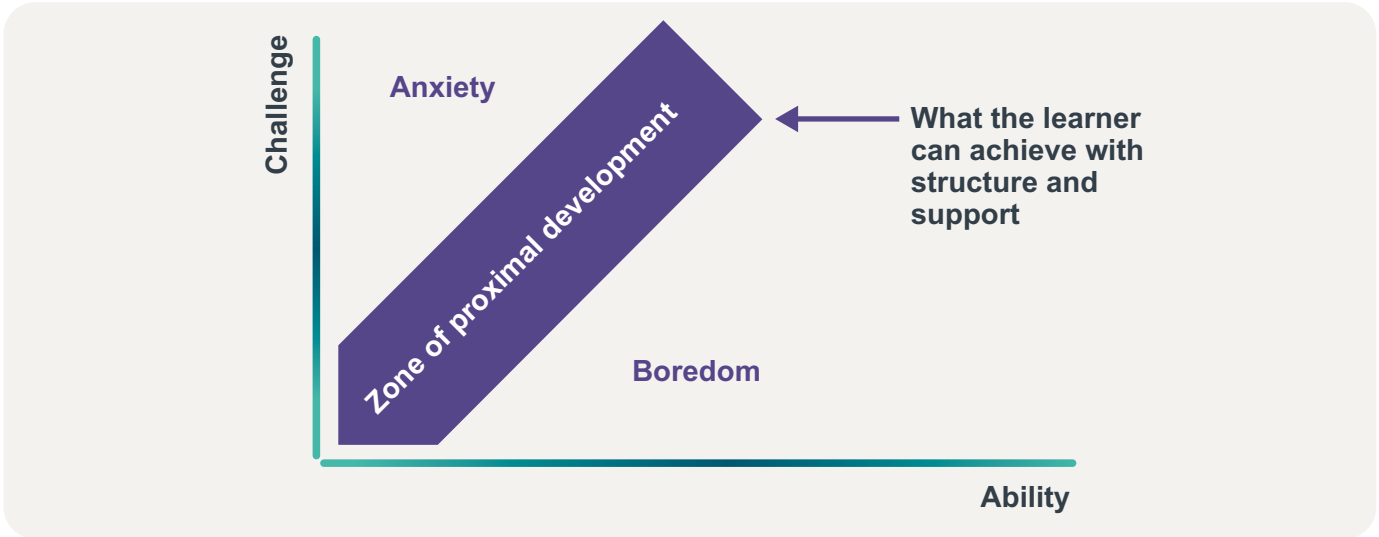
Overview

University study is routinely the primary cause of stress for those in study (Thorley, 2017), and a key aspect of curriculum experience that can act as a wellbeing inhibitor is workload. Consistently identified as a significant wellbeing issue by students (Mental Health Innovations, 2021), the situation for academic staff can be understood in equivalent terms (UCU, 2019). Noting that lower levels of workload does not equate to higher levels of wellbeing in and of itself (Brown, 2016), too little, and engagement can become peripheral or meaningless, too much, and study and work patterns can be disrupted, become inefficient and unhealthy (Smith, 2019). The focus of this activity is therefore on time and effort, and the role of the curriculum as a regulator of workload for students and staff.

Recognising that workload, time in class and class size vary by discipline (Neves and Hillman, 2017), consideration is focused on how overload of working memory can inhibit learning (Sweller, 1988, 2011), how 'extraneous cognitive load' can often be associated with factors or experiences secondary to the study of discipline, and how this understanding can inform curriculum design thinking.

Hard work, difficulty and challenge are legitimate aspects of purposeful educational experience, and there are recognised interdependencies between productivity and student attainment (Moore, 2018). There is also known connection between effective time management, improved academic performance, and lower levels of anxiety (Adams and Blair, 2019). Therefore, the emphasis here is on the regulatory function of the curriculum and how this guides students through their studies within their individual zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978).

Figure 6: zone of proximal development. Adapted from Vygotsky (1978).



Activities and guidance for facilitators

A key focus in these activities is consideration of areas of control. This relates to the expectations placed on students with respect to their ability to manage their learning and the support required to enable this, the experience of control that students experience in their learning, and the perceived and practiced control teaching staff in universities experience in their support of students. Rather than focus simply on ways of working more efficiently or of managing workloads in different ways, the aim is to explore strategies for making time productive and using time meaningfully.

The activity is presented in two parts. Part 1 focuses on curriculum design implications for staff workload and is designed primarily to be useful for colleagues new to teaching in higher education and planning for specific teaching responsibilities. Structured as a self-reflection exercise, this activity focuses on workload planning for teaching and ways of improving workload management in teaching. This can be used to structure a wider group discussion.

The second part focuses on curriculum design implications for staff and student workload and can be applied in a group learning context or undertaken as an individual learning activity. Both parts work most effectively being undertaken in combination.

Part 1: planning ahead for teaching

Assuming a defined set of teaching responsibilities are in place, the objective is to develop a pragmatic perspective of the potential range of working time required to support and manage related work.

Firstly, teaching responsibilities are accompanied by a lot of clearly defined numbers. These take time to consider in and of themselves and typically include:

+ The number of students.
+ The indictive learning hours for the module or unit of study.
+ The number of timetabled teaching sessions and activities.
+ The number of weeks of delivery (including start and end dates – and potential/inevitable referral or deferral for individual students).
+ The number of assessment points.
+ The number of related assessment boards meetings and related reports.

There are also some commonly less clearly defined but nevertheless equally significant numbers. These include:

+ Preparation time for teaching activities.
+ Marking, moderation and feedback time.
+ Time supporting individual students and related correspondence.

+ Time maintaining online learning resources, activities, systems and/or information.
+ Time managing week-by-week general administration (eg a teaching session needs rescheduling, a timetable change needs to be made, liaison with wider programme team and/or administrative colleagues).

These can be quite daunting when explored in detail. For example, if you have a standard 20-credit module associated with a typical expectation of 200 hours of related individual learning time and 100 registered students, you are notionally presiding over and curating 20,000 hours of learning activity. That's a big number. If the timetable affords opportunity to spend between 30 to 50 hours with students in a teaching context to support this learning (timetabled teaching sessions and activities), for example, the difference is an order of 400:1. That's a big variation. Even accounting for all the work undertaken by tutors 'behind the scenes', at least on paper, students are typically expected to manage the overwhelming majority of workload in any given learning and teaching context. Time for the teacher to support this is short and therefore needs to be carefully designed and coordinated.

So, let's try to map these numbers out as a starting point for planning, noting identification of start dates and main end date/s (including referral and deferral activities). Using the table below and the accompanying notes, add a number against each activity.

Activity	Hours
Total timetabled teaching activities (timetabled teaching time plus prep and follow-up/ physical transition to/from learning spaces)	
Teaching preparation time	
Assessment, feedback and moderation (number of students x number of assignments x time per assignment/assessment activity)	
Maintaining online learning resources	
General administration and correspondence	
Individual student support	
Moderation reports, exam board administration, student feedback	
Other (eg coordinating field trips, guest speakers, configuring lab sessions)	
TOTAL	0

Teaching time should be relatively straightforward to determine. Note to factor in some allowance for transition time between teaching activities or initial preparation/set-up time in classroom spaces as appropriate.

Preparation time can vary significantly. At one extreme, some preparation time for teaching activities will need to be factored into planning on a week-by-week basis. Correspondingly, where teaching materials require full development (eg lecture notes, presentations, workshop activities, lab exercises), more significant time may need to be allocated. It will take significantly longer than an hour to develop a one-hour lecture for a new area of the curriculum, for example.

Assessment activity can be a significant component of overall workload. For example, using the 20-credit module example with 100 registered students, if this included two assessment components each requiring one hour to mark, write feedback and complete moderation, assessment would involve 200 hours of work. Noting also to consider formative assessment activities in this calculation and to factor some for any possible investigation of issues related to academic integrity or regulatory breaches, take a pragmatic but realistic approach to allocating time for assessment activities. Check with colleagues about what is typical. Seek support if help is required to operate at that level of efficiency.

Maintaining online learning resources or virtual learning environments will also vary according to the context of study. Depending on the teaching modalities involved, this may include simple publication of alerts and learning materials, or more focused curation of online discussion boards, online student team learning activities, or development of more sophisticated online learning materials.

General administration and correspondence may be coordinated in different ways depending on the institutional context. If correspondence is encouraged via email, time will need to be allocated to manage this. If office hours are published for supplementary support, these need to be scheduled accordingly and planned on the basis these will be used. At the very least, some time will need to be factored in on a week-by-week basis for monitoring of student engagement and participation and liaison with colleagues.

Individual student support can vary from short corridor conversations and occasional direct correspondence, through to more time-consuming follow-up activities or liaison with colleagues. While always seeking to keep student support appropriately and effectively contained within formal teaching and student support activities, some affordance in planning for exceptions is important. For example, if there are 100 registered students and a conservative 20 minutes is allocated per student for individual support during a module (eg considered response to one email, one 20-minute conversation outside class), that still requires more than 33 hours.

Administration related to teaching is also significant but will vary according to institutional processes. This may include development of moderation reports, module reports, examination board preparation, coordination of student feedback activities, and/or liaison with external examiners or accrediting bodies.

Other relevant activities can be interpreted according to individual circumstances. It is useful to ensure any further relevant activities not covered in other areas are included.

When the table has been completed, a provisional total can be determined. Noting that some time may be required in managing exceptions (student referrals and/or deferrals), having established start and end dates, the total number can then be divided by the number of main teaching weeks to produce a general per-week number.

Noting that institutions may use specific workload models to determine time allocation for teaching, these should be referred to whenever relevant to ensure in alignment. If the numbers vary significantly, further discussion with colleagues to adjust approaches may be required.

Following any adjustment of the numbers and related planning, the final part of this activity is to schedule all areas of identified work noting key factors including assessment deadlines, associated periods of marking and moderation, and relevant distribution of preparation time (spread out or concentrated).

Whether undertaken individually or as a group activity, shared reflections and insights can help to develop understanding of the need to be pragmatic in approaches taken to the management of student time in study, and realistic and transparent about staff time in teaching.

Summary and reflections:

+ It is useful to consider where the detailed reflection on numbers varies from initial assumptions, or where common activities that routinely take longer than anticipated are identified.
+ It is important to have candid and constructive dialogue with colleagues to develop meaningful solutions whenever the work required exceeds the available capacity.
+ Rather than focusing on where time might be saved, a focus on where time is most valuably invested can prove more positive and developmental.
+ Note the balance between investment and payoff. More time focused on preparing students ahead of study and supporting students actively during the initial stages of study, can reduce the time required later in study and overall. Equally, more time invested in preparing for assessment (eg generating a large question bank for tests or quizzes, preparing detailed feed-forward or feedback rubrics, structing additional study activity focusing on assessment literacies), can improve the efficiency by which assessment can be reviewed when submitted. If available capacity during week-by-week teaching timetables is limited, time may be more valuable invested before the teaching begins.
+ Planning is extremely valuable. Establish what work needs to be done, where support may need to be accessed, and put the time in the diary. Plan to plan.

Part 2: curriculum planning for staff and student workload

This activity focuses more directly on workload and curriculum design.

There being notional association between workload and academic credit (eg The Higher Education Credit Framework, QAA, 2021), typical undergraduate bachelor's degrees comprise 360-credits across three 120-credit stages of study. With one academic credit conventionally equated with 10 hours of learning time, this is 3,600 learning hours or 1,200 hours per stage of study. This equates to 50 hours per week over a 24-week academic year, 40 hours per week over 30 weeks, or just over 33 hours per week over a 36-week year.

Depending on how institutional calendars are configured, if you consider that some full-time undergraduate students in extreme circumstances can spend 23 hours per week commuting to study, managing the same or more in the way of caring and/or part-time work responsibilities, and want time to engage in worthwhile extra-curricular activities and wider university life, it can be clear why some students highlight workload as a concern.

Only a small minority of students invest the full notional time associated with credits. A significant caveat to note at this stage is the importance of ensuring clarity of information for students about the expectations and requirements of study and managing robust systems for any individual disruptions in study (eg absence through illness). While flexible modes of engagement can be factored into curriculum design, if a student is unable to invest the necessary time, there are no design solutions available to mitigate for this.

Noting the notional time associated with university study and the responsibilities of students, the following questions and prompts are designed to structure a self-reflection exercise or group discussion.

Key questions regarding staff and student workload:

+ Where does 'how to engage with the curriculum' sit within the curriculum?
  - Noting the routine availability of secondary or central 'Study Skills' support for students, for example, consider how best to structure support for students in managing their time.
+ Are difficult or complex tasks clearly scaffolded?
  - Are detailed examples or annotated models available to help students understand what is required?
+ Are learning activities and directed study requirements clearly explained and presented accessibly?
  - Do students understand their responsibilities in their learning?
  - Are tutors able to monitor key aspects of students' independent learning?
  - Are mechanisms in place to intervene quickly where student engagement and participation in their studies indicates risk?
+ Are there areas of valueless inefficiency in the curriculum?
  - Is assessment proportionate?
  - Is there a more efficient way of assessing students that might also improve student engagement and participation, and/or efficiency of assessment processes?
  - Is there a risk of over-preparation or of inadvertently drifting into doing the learning for the students? Why spend hours reading and synthesising the literature and carefully crafting a presentation if that would be an activity best undertaken by students either individually or in teams?
+ What activities in teaching are most effective in terms of student academic performance?
  - How do you know this or how would you determine this?
  - How can you allocate more time for these activities?

Other points may emerge through consideration. Sharing of insights among peers can help to develop awareness of the implications of design choices in the curriculum and the potential areas of control that can be exerted to improve time management and the efficiency of time invested in teaching and in study.

Guidance and summary for facilitators

There being evident potential for deviation between workload expectations and lived experience in university study, the key aim in this activity is therefore to advocate for workload to be an explicit consideration in curriculum design.

Key takeaway points for staff about teaching:

+ Plan time to plan time.
  - Teaching responsibilities come with a lot of numbers. Take time to review and process these
  - Do the calculations, work out the deadlines, plan, and use your calendar/planner. Put the marking, administration and preparation into the calendar, not just the teaching.
  - Be proportionate in approach. Some assignments may require more time to review than others, for example, but be mindful should that become more routine or indicative of miscalculation. Be mindful of activities that take more time than intended or of overinvesting in related preparatory work.
  - Never expect to be 100% efficient with your time. An eight-hour working day does not necessarily mean 16 assignments can be marked taking 30 minutes each. Exceeding productivity expectations is a wellbeing moderator. Failing to achieve productivity expectations is not.
  - Defend your time or seek support if you have difficulty doing so. If you must return feedback to students within a specified period, you need the time to complete this.
+ Focus on teaching experience in quality assurance and/or enhancement processes.
  - Weed out things that waste time or take time and serve no function. The best part of the curriculum is a part that does not need to be planned or supported directly.
+ Remember that teachers are allowed to enjoy teaching. There is clear evidence that students are more likely to enjoy and benefit from their studies if their tutors can share the same experience.

Key takeaway points for staff about teaching students:

+ Teach students how to study.
  - Work in dialogue with students but be explicit about work that is required.
  - Be careful about assuming students know how to study in universities. If they are new to higher education, they almost certainly don't.
  - Highlight the challenge areas and be explicit with students about expectations in study.
  - Situate workload management and self-study as taught elements of the curriculum and embed reflection points related to progress. The more effectively students can engage positively and autonomously with their studies, the better the student experience and the more efficient the investment of staff time.
+ Ensure that mechanisms are in place for students to ask questions and access additional help or support.
  - Ensure mechanisms are in place to identify where additional support may be required rather than rely on students seeking this out.

+ Scaffold teaching activities and expectations of students.
  - Provide exemplars to model against.
  - Demonstrate how to undertake tasks as a central teaching activity. For example, 'how to read a journal article' is a perfectly reasonable activity for students new to university study. Related consideration about how to access journal articles, how to evaluate their relative importance, how to take notes or develop an annotated bibliography, can all flow from the first.

Recognising wider systematic challenges relating to workload in higher education, the curriculum represents an area of control through which we might situate thinking and actions to address this challenge.

Relevant key lessons and top tips

Sub-theme	Key lessons	Top tips
Deep learning	+ Deep and surface learning are two important concepts in understanding how students approach learning. + Deep learning can provide students with a source of positive wellbeing, while surface learning can increase anxiety and erode students' ability and confidence to engage with future learning. + The curriculum can support students to move towards deep learning via content, exercise and assessment strategy.	+ Create space in the curriculum to develop students' understanding of learning approaches and how deep learning can be of benefit. + Use assessments to push students towards deeper learning, focussing on assessing Know How eg by using vivas to explore student understanding of concepts, the connections between them and how they can be applied in other contexts. + Use retrieval practice in the classroom (online or in person) to guide students towards studying for deeper understanding + Consider using the first sessions of a module to help students connect to concepts that are meaningful or may have practical application for them.

Sub-theme	Key lessons	Top tips
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Curriculum coherence	+ An internally coherent curriculum is one in which content is sequenced and connections between facts and concepts are made explicitly for students. It develops logically, providing a narrative path for students to follow. + An internally coherent curriculum benefits student wellbeing by supporting the development of mastery, self-efficacy, self-narrative within discipline, deep learning and meaning. + An incoherent curriculum can leave students disengaged and lead to surface learning of apparently unconnected subjects. + Curriculum must be coherent between and across modules and years of study, this requires coordination in design and delivery across the teaching team.	+ In design, map the expected development of students' understanding of key concepts and ensure that this is carried out across modules. + Provide students with additional material that supports their ability to link content. + Use formative summative assessment to build students' ability to connect concepts and focus assessment on 'know how' knowledge.

Sub-theme	Key lessons	Top tips
Desirable difficulty	+ Academic challenge and difficulty can support learning, motivation, and wellbeing. + The level of difficulty must be calibrated to students' current levels of knowledge, understanding or skill, or students may become overwhelmed, disengage and experience negative impacts on wellbeing. + This desirable difficulty can be supported by curriculum design and delivery through techniques such as interleaving subject matter, using different learning methods and retrieval practice. + The curriculum can also create a culture in which students feel safe to find new learning difficult at first.	+ Use a variety of tasks to explore each subject – even teaching the same material in a different room can strengthen memory and retrieval. + Use retrieval exercises in the classroom to enhance students' memory and retrieval and to help you identify students' current learning and any gaps in understanding. + Use regular retrieval exercises to establish and maintain a culture in which students can acknowledge gaps in knowledge and misunderstandings, safe in the knowledge that the response will be to support their learning rather than criticise or chastise. + Interleave subjects and help students find the connections between them to enhance understanding and curriculum coherence.
Workload	+ While hard work can be good for wellbeing, the structure of a student's workload can have negative consequences for wellbeing and the depth of their learning. + Deadline bunching can cause students to become overwhelmed and to adopt surface level strategies. Bunching can also undermine motivation and self-belief. + Negative impacts can be greater for students with other commitments who have less flexibility in their time. + Workload structures need to be planned into curriculum design and across modules to produce sustainable challenge.	+ Consider the structure and spread of student workload across the curriculum in design. + Ensure students understand how to approach assessments, to create greater confidence that they can complete it competently and reduce perceptions that workload is too great. + Ensure students have stretching academic activity across the whole of term, to build sustainable challenge.

Sub-theme	Key lessons	Top tips
Assessment for learning	+ While assessment is often associated with risks to wellbeing, if well designed it can support learning and wellbeing. + Assessment for learning places a priority on promoting student learning, rather than on measuring ability to meet predetermined criteria. + Assessment for learning is seen as a component part of teaching and learning. Learning can be supported through the design of the task, through feedback and through accompanying meta-cognitive exercises. + An assessment for learning strategy can support a performance focussed culture, that is beneficial for learning and wellbeing.	+ Identify key knowledge, understanding and skills that students should develop and ensure the assessment task is designed to stretch and develop these. + Use assessment briefs to highlight the learning and development students can expect by completing the task. + Provide accompanying meta-cognitive tasks, such as requiring students to reflect on their own work or provide responses to feedback detailing how they will apply it in future learning. + Use feedback to highlight the learning and development students have gained from completing the task.

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Learning and teaching activity:

Assessment for learning

Key dimensions of the PSF: A3, K2, V1, V2

Overview

Assessment represents a critically important and complex challenge in curriculum design. It is routinely identified in surveys of student experience as among the least satisfactory aspects of study. For example, responses to National Student Survey (OfS, 2021a) questions related to assessment experience (Q.8 – The criteria used in marking have been made clear in advance, Q.9 – Marking and assessment has been fair, Q.10 – Feedback on my work has been timely, and Q.11 – I have received helpful comments on my work), remain stubbornly resistant to improvements despite concerted effort across the sector. A context abundant with opportunity for disappointment, regret and experience of perceived unfairness, the non-completion of assessment or failure to achieve required threshold standards can have significant negative implications for students in study and, in many cases, for future careers. Assessment can therefore be an obvious focus point for underlying anxieties or concerns about capability or performance.

Often undertaken under considerable pressure and requiring completion of significant related administrative work, assessment activities also involve considerable workload and challenge for staff. Marking, moderation and feedback activities, occupying a significant proportion of overall working time in a given unit or module of study, depending on the cohort size and institutional approach to assessment design, it is not uncommon for marking tutors to spend more time reviewing work produced by students for assessment purposes than with them supporting their development of it, and for a considerable proportion of this time to be concentrated in bursts, under pressure, challenging a healthy work-life balance at key periods of the year.

Correspondingly, assessment is also the context through which staff can have the opportunity to engage most deeply with students as individual leaners through the products of their learning, and a process through which achievement is formally recognised and celebrated, often leading to transformational impact. Ultimately a balancing act between challenge and recognising the psychological threats this can entail (Jones et al, 2020), assessment can enhance wellbeing through affirmation and sense of purpose and value or act as a destabilising rather than enabling factor in learning for students and staff.

Recognising the distinctiveness of institutional context and approaches to assessment, this activity outlines a summary of key functions and types of assessment and their implications for learning and teaching. A series of questions and prompts are included to structure individual reflection or discussion among participant groups. The aim of the activity is to encourage participants to position assessment as a central consideration in curriculum design and to recognise the implications of related design choices for student and staff experience in study.

While coursework deadlines and exams can be a significant source of stress (Brown, 2016), authentic and constructively aligned assessment can enhance learning experience (Wiggins, 1998).

Activity

This activity focuses on assessment design and assessment practice. Related design choices have significant implications for student experience in study. A series of questions are presented as prompts. These are designed to structure individual reflection or discussion among participant groups.

What is assessment for?

Activities leading to formal attainment of academic credit are what universities signal to students as being important, and what universities therefore invest most time, energy and attention in supporting. The significance associated with grades, classifications, and awards, can therefore lead to assessment being considered in relatively narrow terms, as being primarily a matter of measuring the outcomes of learning. A more constructive approach is to consider assessment as being 'for' learning.

Type of assessment	Description	Purpose
Formative	Assessment for learning (does not record formal marks or grades).	To support learning towards summative assessment.
Summative	Assessment of learning (generates formal marks or grades).	To evaluate and formally record levels of attainment.
Diagnostic	Assessment of learning needs.	To guide learning effort and focus.
Dynamic	Assessment through unfamiliar challenges and contexts.	To determine ability to adapt.
Ipsative	Assessment of individual progress.	To determine individual learning progress.
Synoptic	Assessment of the synthesis of knowledge (eg programme level projects).	To evaluate ability to make connections and combine knowledge and ideas in action.
Prescriptive	Closed or tightly defined competencies or outcomes.	To measure against defined standards.
Negotiated	Flexibility in determining what and how of assessment (eg, student co-creation).	To empower and engage students.
Traditional	Assessment through standardised tests including recall of knowledge.	To assure consistency and for administrative efficiency.
Authentic	Contextual, applied, professional, and/or 'real-world' assessment.	To develop professional competencies and meaning in study.

Considering the table above:

+ How are the types of assessment reflected in your curriculum/curriculum plans?
+ How explicit are your approaches/intended approaches to formative assessment?
+ Are there types of assessment activity that don't 'fit' a given disciplinary context, or are particularly relevant in others?
+ Are there approaches to assessment that would be valuable but are challenging to implement? What would be required to overcome these challenges?
+ How could different types of assessment be applied to improve student wellbeing in study?

Plenary discussion among participant groups of key perspectives and ideas can serve to develop a map of key themes. Opportunity is provided to ensure that key points about the diversity of assessment types and purposes and focus on assessment for learning are assured.

Consideration can then be applied to the following success framework. Key points of focus are interpretation and consideration relating to curriculum development planning and/or current practice.

What defines successful assessment?

Summative assessment works most effectively when it is:

+ **Proportionate** (meaningful but manageable challenge for students and staff).
+ **Equitable and accessible** (does not require adjustments according to individual needs).
+ **Transparent and fair** (clear criteria are provided and defined approaches to marking and moderation).
+ **Organised and coordinated** (clear schedule of related activities for students and staff).
+ **Structured, guided, and accompanied by supported preparatory activities** (clear schedule of support activities and development progress milestones).

In addition, formative assessment works effectively when it is:

+ **Visible, flexible, and accessible** (directly embedded in the curriculum, clearly defined, and scaffolded to encourage active engagement and participation).
+ **Efficient and immediate** (designed to be efficient and manageable for teaching staff, and directly useful for students).
+ **Low risk and high value learning activity** (stimulates engagement with challenge and effort on task for clearly identifiable and realisable benefit).
+ **Developmental and encourages action** (is designed to be motivational, encouraging aspiration and action in learning, and to foster self-esteem).
+ **Dialogic and informative** (generates useful and actionable information for tutor and student).

Feedback works most effectively when:

+ **Accessible** (easy to access and to understand).
+ **Constructive** (focused on areas that can or need to be further developed rather than deficiencies including clear guidance on how and where improvements can be applied in future).
+ **Constructively aligned** (directly articulated with clearly defined assessment criteria).
+ **Proportionate** (note that more does not necessarily mean better. Accessibility and clarity of key information can be improved by reducing feedback word count).
+ **Dialogic** (feedback is conversational, not transactional).

Considering the descriptors outlined above:

+ How does your perception, practice, experience, or plans for assessment align with these statements?
+ What areas of your current practice or plans for assessment design could be strengthened or developed further?
+ Are there key challenge areas?

Guidance for facilitators

This activity is ultimately designed to structure consideration of student and staff experience of assessment in university study. Capable of being extended into more structured action planning, the success measures can be applied either as an evaluative or developmental framework.

Key summary points are that:

+ Assessment can have a significant influence on student and staff wellbeing. Wellbeing is therefore a legitimate consideration in assessment design.
+ Anxiety is a normal and healthy part of learning. Assessment can support the development of self-regulation in study.

Relevant case studies

Viva case study.

Relevant key lessons and top tips

Sub-theme	Key lessons	Top tips
Assessment for learning	+ While assessment is often associated with risks to wellbeing, if well designed it can support learning and wellbeing. + Assessment for learning places a priority on promoting student learning, rather than on measuring ability to meet predetermined criteria. + Assessment for learning is seen as a component part of teaching and learning. Learning can be supported through the design of the task, through feedback and through accompanying meta-cognitive exercises. + An assessment for learning strategy can support a performance focussed culture, that is beneficial for learning and wellbeing.	+ Identify key knowledge, understanding and skills that students should develop and ensure the assessment task is designed to stretch and develop these. + Use assessment briefs to highlight the learning and development students can expect by completing the task. + Provide accompanying meta-cognitive tasks, such as requiring students to reflect on their own work or provide responses to feedback detailing how they will apply it in future learning. + Use feedback to highlight the learning and development students have gained from completing the task.
Scaffolded control of assessment	+ Providing students with choice, in relation to assessments, can lead to increased motivation and students finding more meaning in their discipline. + However, research also shows that too great a level of choice can decrease motivation and cause unhelpful anxiety. + For choice to be beneficial for learning, students must be prepared over time to make choices that support their learning. + Developing students' ability to make good choices can be scaffolded across the curriculum, with the range of choices be gradually extended until students are able to take control as skilled independent learners.	+ Use meta-learning to help students develop insights into how to make choices that support their learning and wellbeing. + Support this learning through feedback on the choices students have made. + Provide little choice to begin with and then gradually extend choice over the course of a degree as students' ability to make good choices develops. + Remind students in assignment briefs about the importance of taking a learning focused approach to assessment and finding meaning in their choice of assessment.

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Theme 4: scaffolded design

Overview

How successfully the curriculum is structured for purposeful release of responsibility at an appropriate pace and in clearly defined stages can have a significant impact on wellbeing in learning. This requires careful attention in the design of learning outcomes and their alignment with well-defined assessment requirements, consideration of how these inform purposeful learning and teaching activities, and how the curriculum can support the 'transitional nature' of university study (Piper and Byrom, 2017) acknowledging the multiple transitions students experience in study (Hughes and Spanner, 2019).

This theme focuses on the value of scaffolding of learning as a conceptual framework in curriculum design and the legitimacy of focusing on inspiration and support (Kift, Nelson and Clarke, 2010) in curriculum thinking.

Key areas of focus in this theme are:

+ student and staff transitions
+ scaffolding in the curriculum.

Learning activities and resources:

Sub-theme	Aims	Learning outcomes	Activity	Synopsis
Transition	To consider the research related to student transitions in higher education and the implications for curriculum design.	Apply conceptual understanding of student transitions in the design of curricula and/or learning activities.	Scales of transition and design choices exercise	This activity is presented in two parts. The first uses a defined success framework to structure consideration of curriculum planning and/or review of established programmes. The second focuses on transitions within study and the role of curriculum in supporting these effectively.
	To reflect on the range of transitions and micro-transitions in the curriculum.	Identify key transitions in and through the curriculum including those relevant to particular to disciplinary contexts.		
	To explore the principles of scaffolded learning in curriculum design for mental health and wellbeing.	Articulate a scaffolded learning approach to wellbeing in the curriculum.	Scaffolding in the curriculum: guided vs unguided study exercise	This activity focuses attention on notions of control and guidance in teaching and learning. The key aim is to structure participant consideration of the responsibilities of both teacher and student and how this is positioned in curriculum design.
Connection to pre-learning and experience	To consider how the curriculum sequences.	Define plans for supporting effective connection with student pre-learning and experience.	See: Scales of transition and design choices exercise	This activity is presented in two parts. The first uses a defined success framework to structure consideration of curriculum planning and/or review of established programmes. The second focuses on transitions within study and the role of curriculum in supporting these effectively.

Sub-theme	Aims	Learning outcomes	Activity	Synopsis
			See: Adapting a team learning framework	The purpose of this exercise is to consider the role of competency frameworks as a scaffold for structuring approaches to the development and application of new skills and learning activities. Directly applicable in the context of designing approaches to teamwork activities, the framework is also configurable as an individual self-reflection exercise and/or adapted as a way of articulating competency development in other disciplinary contexts.
Explicit preparation for assessment tasks	To consider the importance of preparation for assessment as a factor in assessment design.	Design assessment incorporating detailed consideration of assessment preparation.	See: Assessment for learning	Recognising the distinctiveness of institutional context and approaches to assessment, this activity outlines a summary of key functions and types of assessment and their implications for learning and teaching. A series of questions and prompts are included to structure individual reflection or discussion among participant groups. The aim of the activity is to encourage participants to position assessment as a central consideration in curriculum design and to recognise the implications of related design choices for student and staff experience in study.
Preparing students for progression	To reflect on the importance of completion and progression in learning.		See: Scales of transition and design choices exercise	This activity is presented in two parts. The first uses a defined success framework to structure consideration of curriculum planning and/or review of established programmes. The second focuses on transitions within study and the role of curriculum in supporting these effectively.

Sub-theme	Aims	Learning outcomes	Activity	Synopsis
Assessment: how and why	To explore the function and purposes of assessment and to consider their implications for assessment design.	Articulate a clear rationale for design approaches to assessment in terms of function and purpose.	See: Assessment for learning	Recognising the distinctiveness of institutional context and approaches to assessment, this activity outlines a summary of key functions and types of assessment and their implications for learning and teaching. A series of questions and prompts are included to structure individual reflection or discussion among participant groups. The aim of the activity is to encourage participants to position assessment as a central consideration in curriculum design and to recognise the implications of related design choices for student and staff experience in study.
Preparation for non-classroom learning spaces	To consider the importance of preparing students for unfamiliar learning environments and/or activities.	Describe clear strategies for supporting students in preparing for unfamiliar learning spaces.	See: Scales of transition and design choices exercise	This activity is presented in two parts. The first uses a defined success framework to structure consideration of curriculum planning and/or review of established programmes. The second focuses on transitions within study and the role of curriculum in supporting these effectively.

Summary of key lessons and top tips:

Sub-theme	Key lessons	Top tips
Transition	+ Transition is a crucial element for student success, persistence and wellbeing. + Curriculum should be designed with a specific focus on the process through which students must travel during transition. + The curriculum must be appropriately scaffolded and must explicitly prepare all students for success, no matter their previous experience or learning. + During transition students need support, via the curriculum, to socially integrate, academically integrate, develop self-belief, and manage their wellbeing. + It is easier to achieve all of this within curriculum design if the design process is genuinely collaborative, involving colleagues from across the university.	+ Begin meaningful engagement with the curriculum as soon as possible – preferably during induction/orientation eg with no-stakes tasks that engage students with aspects of their discipline that are interesting, exciting, fun etc. + Group tasks centred on disciplinary content can provide a focus for conversations and social connections. + Acknowledge the normality of transition experiences and provide reassurance – if possible, by giving concrete examples of steps students can take to feel more connected and settled in. + Academics and colleagues in student services can work together to provide psycho-education and guidance to support students to navigate transition successfully.

Sub-theme	Key lessons	Top tips
Explicitly preparing students for learning and assessment tasks	+ If we want students to know, understand or be able to do something, we must teach it. We cannot assume that all students possess the knowledge or skills required by a programme of study unless they have explicitly had the opportunity to acquire those skills. + Some students may also lack the underlying skills and understanding necessary to acquire new knowledge and skills for themselves. + Any assumption of knowledge or skills rewards those who have been lucky enough to have received previous preparation and punishes those who have not had the same luck. + Additional classes tend not to attract those students who most need the intervention, because of other commitments, lack of awareness or anxiety, necessary knowledge, understanding or skill must therefore be taught and embedded in the curriculum.	+ Provide students with a glossary of common terms – both disciplinary terms and terms related to the language of learning and assessment. + Use learning outcomes to identify the key knowledge, understanding and skills students will require to achieve these outcomes, then ensure these are explicitly taught within the curriculum. + Use worked examples in the classroom to demonstrate how students can complete academic work successfully. + Embed meta-learning into the taught curriculum.
Provide clarity in design, teaching, and tasks	+ Clarity in curriculum design and delivery has a significant impact on student learning and wellbeing. + Students do not have the disciplinary knowledge of academics so curriculum must, therefore, be designed and delivered so that novice students can understand the process of learning and negotiate the programme at a reasonable pace. + Clarity in design can be delivered by learning focussed outcomes, logically sequenced lessons building from students' current knowledge and a coherent curriculum that explicitly explains and connects concepts to each other. + Clarity in delivery can be ensured by appropriate pacing, use of voice and gestures, exploring concepts through multiple techniques and exercises and checking for student understanding as an ongoing practice. + Clarity in assessment will ensure students know what to do and how to do it, that they will have the required skills and understand how the assessment supports learning. Academic stretch will come from the disciplinary learning required by the assessment.	+ Be clear about what students must learn and ensure these are mastery rather than performance focussed goals. + Provide clear and carefully planned explanations for abstract ideas and theories, using a variety of techniques eg stories, worked examples etc. + Ask questions throughout to ensure students have understood and adjust and recover material if necessary. + Check students have understood assessment briefs, how they should approach them and how the assessment will support their learning.

Sub-theme	Key lessons	Top tips
Prepare students for progression	+ Progression between levels of academic study is important for future success and wellbeing. + The curriculum must explicitly prepare students for the transition to the next level of study and for the transition out of university. + If students are not adequately prepared, they can encounter gaps between the knowledge and skills they have and that they require. This can impact negatively on wellbeing creating doubt, anxiety, and loss of motivation. + To prepare students for progression, the curriculum must be scaffolded across all levels, providing internal coherence, and ensuring each level prepares students for the next level.	+ Design the curriculum to ensure it is scaffolded across all levels and that learning outcomes build sequentially over the programme. + Work collaboratively with professional colleagues to create progression and re-induction events, to provide additional support and preparation. + Use peer mentoring to tackle myths and provide good behavioural models to students in the year below. + Develop out-duction practice, within the curriculum, to support students to prepare for their exit from university.
Assessment: how, not what	+ Students can experience anxiety as a result of assessment, but assessment can also support good wellbeing and learning. + The type of assessment matters less for wellbeing than how well students have been prepared for it, their self-belief in relation to the task and the meaning it contains for them. + Well-structured assessment can be positive for wellbeing if it has clarity, students legitimately believe they can be successful, the outcomes have potential benefits, and the task is meaningful to them. + Assessment can have significant, negative impact on wellbeing if it lacks clarity, is not understood and students are poorly prepared, students doubt their ability to be successful, they fear the consequences and the content lacks meaning, leading them to engage in surface level, survival strategies.	+ Identify the skills and knowledge (factual and conceptual) students will need to begin work on an assessment and ensure they can learn them explicitly within the curriculum. + Used work examples of assessment in the classroom to build student clarity and confidence. + Use formative assessment to build student familiarity, develop skills and knowledge and increase their self-efficacy. + Design assessment to engage students in deep, meaningful learning.

Sub-theme	Key lessons	Top tips
Preparing students for non-classroom learning spaces	+ Having more rest breaks, downtime and social time built into the field trip schedule. Building a community in the evenings or planned days off may help the students feel less isolated and help to reduce stress. + Preparing for the students for the field trip. + Give students leaflets about the country. + Discuss what the environment will be like on the field trips, for example, will there be toilets, bushes or a hole in the floor? Outline what to do if a student is menstruating out in the field. + Support the students own coping strategies. + Show photos of previous field trips. + Give a rough itinerary. + Provide the students with equipment lists eg which brands are best. + Inform students about what their accommodation will be like and what they will be expected to do. For example, cook their own meals. + Students work in groups as they support each other.	+ Students having mentors (such as a student buddy system) while on placement can help to increase wellbeing, support, and give opportunities to connect with their peers. Additionally, formal wellbeing 'check in' two weeks into any placement. + Workshops to support students with: – Imposter syndrome, to improve their wellbeing, feelings of liberation and empowerment. – The importance of self-care, stress awareness and emotion management. – To develop their career pathways and professional identity. – To develop coping strategies to balance the demand of physical capabilities, personal resources, income, and time. + Reviewing the undergraduate curriculum to incorporate mental wellbeing self-help.

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Learning and teaching activity:

Scales of transition and design choices exercise

Key dimensions of the PSF: A1, A2, A3, A4, K2, K3, K4, V1, V2, V4

Overview

The significance of first year experience (FYE), related transition into university study, and role of the curriculum as both academic and social 'organising device' is widely acknowledged (McInnis, 2001 in Kift, 2009). Identified as of increased importance where preceding educational experience has been disrupted, Pownell et al (2021) highlights the continued relevance of Lizzio's (2006) five senses of student success in terms of key determining factors:

+ capability (acclimatisation, clarity of expectations and flexibility in study)
+ connectedness (relationships, collaboration, and belonging)
+ purpose (realistic goals and sense of personal connection)
+ resourcefulness (balancing life and study, autonomy in learning)
+ culture (values, ethics, equality, inclusivity).

Relating directly to key areas of focus in transition pedagogies – curriculum that engages learning, active and accessible learning and life support, active strategies to support a sense of belonging, and sustainable academic professional partnerships (Kift, Nelson and Clarke, 2010) – while not confined to initial experiences in university study, the process of developing a sense of belonging in an academic community remains significant, but all aspects are intersectional with issues of wellbeing in study. Effective transition leads to better learning and wellbeing. Transition is therefore a legitimate pedagogical concern and an important consideration in curriculum design.

This activity is presented in two parts. The first uses an annotated adaptation of Lizzio's five senses of success framework to structure consideration of curriculum planning and/or review of established programmes. The second focuses on transitions within study and the role of curriculum in supporting these effectively. These can be undertaken individually but are primarily designed to structure discussion among small groups.

Activity

Acknowledging the significance of the major transitions into study, through study, and out of study, this activity also focuses consideration on micro transitions within study and the design implications of these for the curriculum.

Firstly, using the Effective transition and the curriculum resource, participants are invited to review a series of descriptors related to Lizzio's five senses of student success (2006). The activity can be undertaken focusing on planning for curriculum design – what the curriculum needs to do – or as an audit of existing curricula. If the latter, preparatory work can also include collation of relevant information for analysis including module and/or programme reports, student feedback and other

relevant metrics and data. Consideration could also be given to this being undertaken as a co-creation activity with students in programme teams.

Collated notes and key areas of discussion can then be shared between groups.

The second part of the activity relates to the Mapping student transitions, challenges, and strategies resource. Participants are invited to review the table of micro transitions into, through and out of study, and to make notes about the most relevant, including consideration of the implications for curriculum design.

It is perfectly legitimate to consider some transitions as being outside the mandate of the curriculum. Where expertise is accessible via central support services, attention may be better served considering how the curriculum articulates with these.

Collated notes and key areas of discussion can then be shared between participating groups.

Guidance for facilitators

Depending on the nature of the participating group, this activity is designed to structure consideration and understanding of student experience in different aspects of university study. The curriculum lies at the heart of student experience. Attention to key student transitions in study can therefore positively inform approaches to curriculum design.

Relevant case studies

Graduate attributes programme
Clinical humanities and wellbeing
Personal tutoring
Academic families
Time to thrive
Issues in international politics

Relevant key lessons and top tips

Sub-theme	Key lessons	Top tips
Transition	+ Transition is a crucial element for student success, persistence and wellbeing. + Curriculum should be designed with a specific focus on the process through which students must travel during transition. + The curriculum must be appropriately scaffolded and must explicitly prepare all students for success, no matter their previous experience or learning. + During transition students need support, via the curriculum, to socially integrate, academically integrate, develop self-belief, and manage their wellbeing. + It is easier to achieve all of this within curriculum design if the design process is genuinely collaborative, involving colleagues from across the university.	+ Begin meaningful engagement with the curriculum as soon as possible – preferably during induction/orientation eg with no stakes tasks that engage students with aspects of their discipline that are interesting, exciting, fun etc. + Group tasks centred on disciplinary content can provide a focus for conversations and social connections. + Acknowledge the normality of transition experiences and provide reassurance – if possible, by giving concrete examples of steps students can take to feel more connected and settled in. + Academics and colleagues in student services can work together to provide psycho-education and guidance to support students to navigate transition successfully.

Sub-theme	Key lessons	Top tips
Explicitly preparing students for learning and assessment tasks	+ If we want students to know, understand or be able to do something, we must teach it. We cannot assume that all students possess the knowledge or skills required by a programme of study unless they have explicitly had the opportunity to acquire those skills. + Some students may also lack the underlying skills and understanding necessary to acquire new knowledge and skills for themselves. + Any assumption of knowledge or skills rewards those who have been lucky enough to have received previous preparation and punishes those who have not had the same luck. + Additional classes tend not to attract those students who most need the intervention, because of other commitments, lack of awareness or anxiety, necessary knowledge, understanding or skill must therefore be taught and embedded in the curriculum.	+ Provide students with a glossary of common terms – both disciplinary terms and terms related to the language of learning and assessment. + Use learning outcomes to identify the key knowledge, understanding and skills students will require to achieve these outcomes, then ensure these are explicitly taught within the curriculum. + Use worked examples in the classroom to demonstrate how students can complete academic work successfully. + Embed meta-learning into the taught curriculum.

Sub-theme	Key lessons	Top tips
Provide clarity in design, teaching, and tasks	+ Clarity in curriculum design and delivery has a significant impact on student learning and wellbeing. + Students do not have the disciplinary knowledge of academics so curriculum must, therefore, be designed and delivered so that novice students can understand the process of learning and negotiate the programme at a reasonable pace. + Clarity in design can be delivered by learning focussed outcomes, logically sequenced lessons building from students' current knowledge and a coherent curriculum that explicitly explains and connects concepts to each other. + Clarity in delivery can be ensured by appropriate pacing, use of voice and gestures, exploring concepts through multiple techniques and exercises and checking for student understanding as an ongoing practice. + Clarity in assessment will ensure students know what to do and how to do it, that they will have the required skills and understand how the assessment supports learning. Academic stretch will come from the disciplinary learning required by the assessment.	+ Be clear about what students must learn and ensure these are mastery rather than performance focused goals. + Provide clear and carefully planned explanations for abstract ideas and theories, using a variety of techniques eg stories, worked examples etc. + Ask questions throughout to ensure students have understood and adjust and recover material if necessary. + Check students have understood assessment briefs, how they should approach them and how the assessment will support their learning.
Prepare students for progression	+ Progression between levels of academic study is important for future success and wellbeing. + The curriculum must explicitly prepare students for the transition to the next level of study and for the transition out of university. + If students are not adequately prepared, they can encounter gaps between the knowledge and skills they have and that they require. This can impact negatively on wellbeing creating doubt, anxiety and loss of motivation. + To prepare students for progression, the curriculum must be scaffolded across all levels, providing internal coherence, and ensuring each level prepares students for the next level.	+ Design the curriculum to ensure it is scaffolded across all levels and that learning outcomes build sequentially over the programme. + Work collaboratively with professional colleagues to create progression and re-induction events, to provide additional support and preparation. + Use peer mentoring to tackle myths and provide good behavioural models to students in the year below. + Develop out-duction practice, within the curriculum, to support students to prepare for their exit from university.

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Resource: effective transition and the curriculum

Situated at either module or programme level, as a planning or audit and review framework, the following table is mapped to Lizzio's (2006) five senses of student success. Participants are encouraged to review the descriptors and make notes in the relevant section.

	Experience is negative	Experience is positive	What does your module and/or programme do/need to do?
Capability	Systems, environment, and/or expectations in study are unclear and/or confusing or inflexible. Limited understanding of what to expect in advance (module or programme).	Expectations in study are clearly defined and understood, and wider systems and processes are clearly articulated and flexible. Students know clearly what to expect and what to do.	Eg pre-induction study activities; peer mentoring; study skills support.
Connectedness	The curriculum isolates students and/or provides no opportunity for peer learning. Group activities, if used, are unstructured and unguided. No connection between the curriculum and wider study and/or student experience.	The curriculum structures learning community and builds competency in collaborative learning.	
Purpose	Study is ambiguous, of limited if no personal interest of the student, and/or unmanageable or requiring too much or too little time.	Study is purposeful, personal student connection with study is a structured feature of the curriculum, and workload is manageable and in balance.	Eg real-world study activities.
Resourcefulness	Students feel actively disempowered in their learning, reliant on ad-hoc secondary information and/or systems are confusing to navigate or understand. No connection between how to learn and the curriculum.	Students are actively connected and engaged with relevant information, resources, and guidance in study through the curriculum and empowered as autonomous learners through the curriculum.	
Culture	Study is inaccessible, inequitable and/or alienating.	Study is accessible, inclusive and ethical, fostering a sense of belonging.	

Resource: mapping student transitions, challenges, and strategies

Adapted from work undertaken by QAA Scotland (2015) and structured around the key transitions of entering study, moving through study, and leaving university, the following table outlines key macro and micro transitions in university study. Participants are invited to make notes about key challenges, current institutional support strategies and key considerations for curriculum design. Some examples are included and these can be deleted.

Macro transition	Micro transitions	Challenges	Strategies	Curriculum considerations
Moving to University	Travel and relocation			Eg not relevant?
	Orientation		Eg induction activities.	
	Budget management		Eg student support services.	
	Changing healthcare systems		Eg student support services.	
	Development of new social structures		Eg students' union clubs, societies, and social spaces.	
Moving into studies	First teaching activities and navigation to place			
	First interaction with peers in study			
	First interactions with teaching staff			
	First meeting with personal tutor			
	First interactions with support staff			
	First directed study tasks			
	First navigation of learning resources			
	First use of learning technologies			
	First practical study activities including labs and fieldtrips			

Macro transition	Micro transitions	Challenges	Strategies	Curriculum considerations
	First engagement with study support services			
	Re-engaging students following a break in study			
Moving into assessment	First formative assessment and feedback activity			
	First summative assessment and feedback activity			
	First experience of formal results			
Moving between units and stages of study	First completion of a module or stage of study			
	First completion of a stage of study			
	Moving between stages of study			
Moving between study and work placement	Preparing for work placement			
	Entering the work placement			
	Returning to study from work placement			
	Preparing for final year study			
	Entering final year study			
	Entering final semester study			
	Preparing for end of studies			
Moving out of study	Leaving university			

Learning and teaching activity:

Mapping extremes: the guided vs unguided study exercise

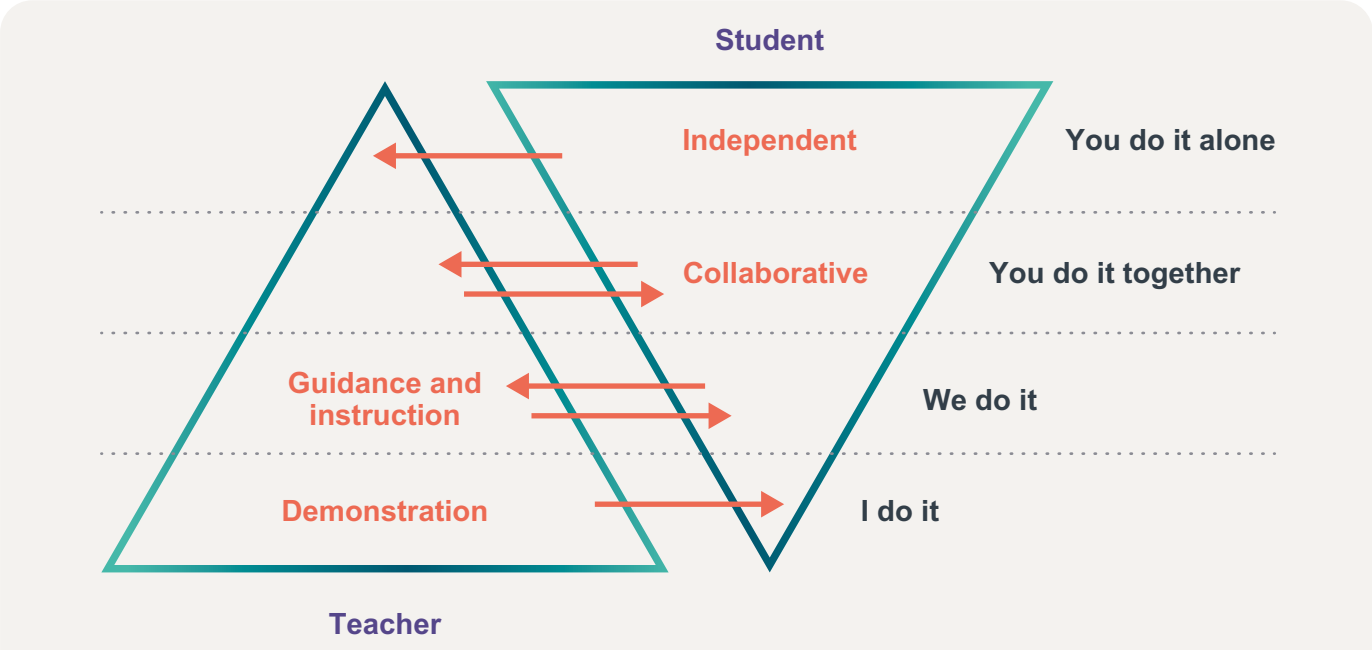
Key dimensions of the PSF: A1, A2, A4, K2, K3, K5, V1, V2

Overview

This activity focuses attention on notions of control and guidance in teaching and learning. The key aim is to structure participant consideration of the responsibilities of both teacher and student and how this is positioned in curriculum design.

There is clear evidence of the importance of scaffolding in learning – of releasing responsibility gradually through active demonstration, modelling, collaborative work, towards individual autonomy (see figure below) – and of disconnection between assumed preparedness of students to learn and expectations of students of experience in study (Kift, 2009). However, there is also clear evidence of the efficacy of problem-based learning (Barrows and Tamblyn,1980) and value of engaging students with purposeful ambiguity and opportunity to contend with unresolved problems. Unclear expectations can create disruptive uncertainty, inefficiency and anxiety in learning, but 'tick-box' transactional experience can drive surface-level approaches. Effective challenge and responsibility in learning is a significant consideration in curriculum design.

Figure 7: scaffolded learning or gradual release of responsibility model. Adapted from Fisher and Frey (2008).



Learning can be defined as the act of resolving the right kind of problems. These actions build self-esteem and increase self-efficacy. The purpose of this exercise is to consider the balance between structure, guidance, and the responsibilities of student and teacher in learning in university study.

Capable of being undertaken individually, the activity is designed primarily to work most effectively as a framework for discussion among participant groups comprised of a range of disciplinary perspectives. Structured around a series of questions and illustrative examples, participants are invited to reflect on how scaffolding works in the context of their own teaching and/or curriculum design thinking, and how purposeful challenge and ambiguity might be applied.

Activity

Underpinning all university study is an expectation of specific responsibilities of students to manage aspects of their learning independently. This activity frames a series of questions to structure consideration of how this is interpreted in different learning and teaching contexts and situated in practice.

Students beginning university study now expect to access detailed information, structure and support in their learning. Timetables, assessment information, lecture notes and curated reading lists are normally available at the touch of a button or the click of a mouse. A lack of understanding or uncertainty about any aspect of study normally treated as a communication problem that needs to be resolved, responsibility for student learning has become a more active concern for teachers.

In a small group discussion context, participants are initially invited to consider the following questions:

+ What are student responsibilities in study?
+ What responsibility do teachers have to ensure student learning?

Establishing some initial thoughts and ideas, participants are then invited to read the short article by Hill (2011) outlining a distinctive approach to devolving responsibilities to students in learning. Subsequent discussion points include:

+ What are your general thoughts about the approach taken?
+ What are the key risks?
+ What are the key potential benefits?
+ What capabilities in teaching are required to make this approach work effectively?

Having shared perspectives and gathered some notes about key points, participants are invited to consider the benefits and potential disbenefits of approaches to supporting and scaffolding student learning.

Considering the illustrative examples in the table below, participants are invited to consider how approaches to scaffolding learning for students may have unintended implications for other aspects of their university experience.

Scaffold	Unintended experience loss?	Unintended learning loss?
Reading lists and journals curated online via established reading lists.	Reduced use of physical library or direct interaction with subject librarians.	Missed opportunities for accidental discovery or positive social interactions.
Directed study activities are structured via workbooks and timetabled support.	Reduced need for student planning.	Missed need for peer learning and cohort problem solving.
Alternative assessment formats.	Reduced engagement with areas of challenge.	Lack of confidence or competency in some areas not addressed.
Teaching activities accessible online and asynchronously.	Lack of cohort socialisation.	Reduction in interpersonal skills development.

Drawing feedback from multiple groups together in a plenary activity, key outcomes from discussion will tend to highlight some of the following points:

+ Teaching staff have absorbed responsibilities that were once devolved entirely to students. A series of lectures and advice to 'go to the library' now falls short of student expectations.
+ There is a positive reason to scaffold learning for students, but also to ensure that student responsibilities in learning are clearly defined.
+ There is clear value in engaging students with the right kind of problems in their learning, and in supporting their reflection on the experience of overcoming these.

Guidance for facilitators

The key aims of this activity being to structure consideration of the balance between student and teacher responsibilities, participants can be encouraged to further explore problem-based learning (PBL), scaffolding in learning design and the value of challenge in study.

Relevant case studies

Wellbeing in London
Film studies
Skills and support for your English degree
Time to thrive
War studies

Clinical humanities and wellbeing

Relevant key lessons and top tips

Sub-theme	Key lessons	Top tips
Transition	+ Transition is a crucial element for student success, persistence and wellbeing. + Curriculum should be designed with a specific focus on the process through which students must travel during transition. + The curriculum must be appropriately scaffolded and must explicitly prepare all students for success, no matter their previous experience or learning. + During transition students need support, via the curriculum, to socially integrate, academically integrate, develop self-belief, and manage their wellbeing. + It is easier to achieve all of this within curriculum design if the design process is genuinely collaborative, involving colleagues from across the university.	+ Begin meaningful engagement with the curriculum as soon as possible – preferably during induction/orientation eg with no stakes tasks that engage students with aspects of their discipline that are interesting, exciting, fun etc. + Group tasks centred on disciplinary content can provide a focus for conversations and social connections. + Acknowledge the normality of transition experiences and provide reassurance – if possible, by giving concrete examples of steps students can take to feel more connected and settled in. + Academics and colleagues in student services can work together to provide psycho-education and guidance to support students to navigate transition successfully.

Sub-theme	Key lessons	Top tips
Explicitly preparing students for learning and assessment tasks	+ If we want students to know, understand or be able to do something, we must teach it. We cannot assume that all students possess the knowledge or skills required by a programme of study unless they have explicitly had the opportunity to acquire those skills. + Some students may also lack the underlying skills and understanding necessary to acquire new knowledge and skills for themselves. + Any assumption of knowledge or skills rewards those who have been lucky enough to have received previous preparation and punishes those who have not had the same luck. + Additional classes tend not to attract those students who most need the intervention, because of other commitments, lack of awareness or anxiety, necessary knowledge, understanding or skill must therefore be taught and embedded in the curriculum.	+ Provide students with a glossary of common terms – both disciplinary terms and terms related to the language of learning and assessment. + Use learning outcomes to identify the key knowledge, understanding and skills students will require to achieve these outcomes, then ensure these are explicitly taught within the curriculum. + Use worked examples in the classroom to demonstrate how students can complete academic work successfully. + Embed meta-learning into the taught curriculum.

Sub-theme	Key lessons	Top tips
Provide clarity in design, teaching, and tasks	+ Clarity in curriculum design and delivery has a significant impact on student learning and wellbeing. + Students do not have the disciplinary knowledge of academics so curriculum must, therefore, be designed and delivered so that novice students can understand the process of learning and negotiate the programme at a reasonable pace. + Clarity in design can be delivered by learning focused outcomes, logically sequenced lessons building from students' current knowledge and a coherent curriculum that explicitly explains and connects concepts to each other. + Clarity in delivery can be ensured by appropriate pacing, use of voice and gestures, exploring concepts through multiple techniques and exercises and checking for student understanding as an ongoing practice. + Clarity in assessment will ensure students know what to do and how to do it, that they will have the required skills and understand how the assessment supports learning. Academic stretch will come from the disciplinary learning required by the assessment.	+ Be clear about what students must learn and ensure these are mastery rather than performance focussed goals. + Provide clear and carefully planned explanations for abstract ideas and theories, using a variety of techniques eg stories, worked examples etc. + Ask questions throughout to ensure students have understood and adjust and recover material if necessary. + Check students have understood assessment briefs, how they should approach them and how the assessment will support their learning.

Sub-theme	Key lessons	Top tips
Prepare students for progression	+ Progression between levels of academic study is important for future success and wellbeing. + The curriculum must explicitly prepare students for the transition to the next level of study and for the transition out of university. + If students are not adequately prepared, they can encounter gaps between the knowledge and skills they have and that they require. This can impact negatively on wellbeing creating doubt, anxiety, and loss of motivation. + To prepare students for progression, the curriculum must be scaffolded across all levels, providing internal coherence and ensuring each level prepares students for the next level.	+ Design the curriculum to ensure it is scaffolded across all levels and that learning outcomes build sequentially over the programme. + Work collaboratively with professional colleagues to create progression and re-induction events, to provide additional support and preparation. + Use peer mentoring to tackle myths and provide good behavioural models to students in the year below. + Develop out-duction practice, within the curriculum, to support students to prepare for their exit from university.
Assessment: how, not what	+ Students can experience anxiety as a result of assessment, but assessment can also support good wellbeing and learning. + The type of assessment matters less for wellbeing than how well students have been prepared for it, their self-belief in relation to the task and the meaning it contains for them. + Well-structured assessment can be positive for wellbeing if it has clarity, students legitimately believe they can be successful, the outcomes have potential benefits, and the task is meaningful to them. + Assessment can have significant, negative impact on wellbeing if it lacks clarity, is not understood and students are poorly prepared, students doubt their ability to be successful, they fear the consequences and the content lacks meaning, leading them to engage in surface level, survival strategies.	+ Identify the skills and knowledge (factual and conceptual) students will need to begin work on an assessment and ensure they can learn them explicitly within the curriculum. + Used work examples of assessment in the classroom to build student clarity and confidence. + Use formative assessment to build student familiarity, develop skills and knowledge and increase their self-efficacy. + Design assessment to engage students in deep, meaningful learning.

Sub-theme	Key lessons	Top tips
Preparing students for non-classroom learning spaces	+ Having more rest breaks, downtime and social time built into the field trip schedule. Building a community in the evenings or planned days off may help the students feel less isolated and help to reduce stress. + Preparing for the students for the field trip: – given leaflets about the country – discuss what the environment will be like on the field trips, for example, will there be toilets, bushes, or a hole in the floor. What to do if a student is menstruating out in the field – support the students own coping strategies – show photos of previous field trips – give a rough itinerary – provide the students with equipment lists eg which brands are best – informing the students about what their accommodation will be like and what they will be expected to do. For example, cook their own meals. + Students work in groups as they support each other.	+ Students having mentors (such as a student buddy system) while on placement can help to increase wellbeing, support, and give opportunities to connect with their peers. Additionally, formal wellbeing 'check in' two weeks into any placement. + Workshops to support students with: – imposter syndrome, to improve their wellbeing, feelings of liberation and empowerment – the importance of self-care, stress awareness and emotion management. + To develop their career pathways and professional identity. + To develop coping strategies to balance the demand of physical capabilities, personal resources, income, and time. + Reviewing the undergraduate curriculum to incorporate mental wellbeing self-help.

Sub-theme	Key lessons	Top tips
Psychologically safe learning environments	+ In a psychologically safe classroom, students feel safe to make mistakes, take risks to further their learning and thinking and ask for help and support when needed. + Psychological safety makes it more likely that students will engage in classroom activities and debates - this supports learning and helps develop a sense of community and belonging. + An unsafe environment can raise anxiety and lead to class avoidance and/or disengagement. + Psychological safety must be planned for, and time must be devoted to establishing and maintaining a healthy classroom culture. + Students will need to witness a safe environment being maintained consistently before they will trust it.	+ Use induction/orientation and/or the first class of term to focus on creating cohort identity, a safe social environment, and social rules. + Provide positive feedback to students who contribute early, encourage debate and be willing to show your own learning. + Discuss your own mistakes and highlight them in class to show that they are a normal part of the learning process.

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Theme 5: learner development

Overview

This theme considers learner development and the implications for curriculum design. Focusing specifically on how students are supported in learning how to learn, attention is also given to how responsibilities in study are managed and understood.

Recognising the value of enabling students to self-pace in study, iterative approaches to summative assessment (Ryan and Tilbury, 2013) and of flexibility and choice with respect to patterns of engagement, participation, and timing and style of assessment (Piper and Byrom, 2017, Brill, 2015), operational factors have a significant bearing on the capacity and scope for variation (Roberts, 2011), while regulatory requirements tend towards standardisation of methodology by discipline and institution. As there are inherent tensions between the most effective and the most efficient approaches in learning and teaching, between what would be ideal and what is possible, curriculum design will always involve a degree of compromise.

Acknowledging the need to structure and guide student learning, a balance needs to be struck between where responsibility and choice can empower learners in taking ownership of their studies, and where this can lead to students missing or deliberately avoiding potentially important learning experiences and parts of the curriculum.

Key areas of focus in this theme are:

+ learner development
+ personalised learning.

Learning activities and resources:

Sub-theme	Aims	Learning outcomes	Activity	Synopsis
Self-attribution and awareness	To reflect on the importance of self-attribution and self-awareness for wellbeing in learning.	Apply evidence informed approaches to the development of personalisation in the curriculum.	Personalised learning design	This activity is presented in two parts. The first uses a defined success framework to structure consideration of curriculum planning and/or review of established programmes. The second focuses on transitions within study and the role of curriculum in supporting these effectively.
			See: The hero's journey exercise	This activity structures application of a narrative framework to reflection on the journey and experience of teachers in higher education.
Developing self-efficacy	To consider the significance of self-efficacy in learning for wellbeing in study.	Articulate plans for aligning the curriculum with support for developing student self-efficacy in study.	See: The hero's journey exercise	
Self-management	To consider how self-management in learning is supported and developed by the curriculum.	Describe how the curriculum is designed to scaffold release of responsibility to students and support effective self-management in learning.	See: Scaffolding in the curriculum: guided vs unguided study exercise	This activity is presented in two parts. The first uses a defined success framework to structure consideration of curriculum planning and/or review of established programmes. The second focuses on transitions within study and the role of curriculum in supporting these effectively.

Sub-theme	Aims	Learning outcomes	Activity	Synopsis
Meta learning	To reflect on the role of the curriculum in supporting students learning how to learn.	Identify how students are supported in developing autonomy and agency in their learning.	See: Personalised learning design	The purpose of this exercise is to consider the role of competency frameworks as a scaffold for structuring approaches to the development and application of new skills and learning activities. Directly applicable in the context of designing approaches to teamwork activities, the framework is also configurable as an individual self-reflection exercise and/or adapted as a way of articulating competency development in other disciplinary contexts.
Feedback	To reflect on the role of feedback for student wellbeing in study.	Apply evidence informed approaches in the design of assessment and feedback for wellbeing.	See: Assessment for learning	Recognising the distinctiveness of institutional context and approaches to assessment, this activity outlines a summary of key functions and types of assessment and their implications for learning and teaching. A series of questions and prompts are included to structure individual reflection or discussion among participant groups. The aim of the activity is to encourage participants to position assessment as a central consideration in curriculum design and to recognise the implications of related design choices for student and staff experience in study.

Summary of key lessons and top tips:

Sub-theme	Key lessons	Top tips
Self-attribution and awareness	+ How students think about their learning and performance can have a more influential impact on future behaviour and performance than their actual level of performance. + If students attribute their performance to aspects they cannot control, they will not be motivated to improve, and this can impact negatively on their learning and wellbeing. + If students are guided to develop their ability to recognise those aspects they can control, they can more effectively self-regulate future behaviour and have greater hope and belief in their ability to succeed. + A greater sense of control over their learning and achievement can improve self-efficacy, sense of competence and motivation, thereby improving wellbeing.	+ Use feedback and feed-forward processes to focus students' attention to those aspects over which they have control – provide specific steps they can take to learn more effectively. + Use student's work in the classroom to model effective practice – reflect holistically on the process through which students produce successful work and emphasise this over innate ability. + Ensure the curriculum includes specific guidance on how to complete specific tasks effectively.
Developing self-efficacy	+ Academic self-efficacy refers to a student's belief in their ability to learn and engage in academic tasks and perform successfully. + There are clear relationships between self-efficacy and student wellbeing and self-efficacy and student learning and performance. + The curriculum can support the development of academic self-efficacy through scaffolding learning, providing a learning focus, creating a collaborative learning environment, modelling success, supporting students to explicitly develop skills and self-reflection and using evidence and feedback to build self-belief.	+ Focus feedback on learning and development, rather than performance. + Work with professional staff to embed psycho-education into the curriculum. + Use evidence to demonstrate your justified belief in their ability.

Sub-theme	Key lessons	Top tips
Holistic Self-Management	+ Student self-regulation, self-management and wellbeing all influence learning and achievement. + Students often do not know how to self-manage effectively or understand how lifestyle and self-management can influence learning and achievement. + Self-management can be developed via education embedded into the curriculum. + This offers opportunities for collaborative partnerships on curriculum design and delivery between subject academics, learning and teaching teams and student services.	+ Embed self-management into curriculum as a way of building students' understanding of the ways in which learning, and performance happen and can be supported. + Co-facilitate material on self-management with colleagues in student services. + Provide referenced evidence of the links between wellbeing and learning to build student understanding and confidence in what they are being told.
Feedback	+ Feedback is a powerful tool for supporting learning and wellbeing. + Feedback can have negative impacts if it is vague, overly critical, is perceived by the student as an attack or judgement of them and/or doesn't provide a clear way forward towards further improvement. + Students may need support to be able to understand, recognise, value, and work with feedback productively. This includes helping students recognise, accept, and regulate their own emotional responses to feedback. + Feedback is most effective if it focusses on the why of the task and the process the student has utilised.	+ Place a focus on learning throughout each module and the overall programme, to create a better platform for feedback. + Provide specific training within the curriculum to support students to utilise feedback – eg by providing worked examples of feedback or using tutorials focused on interpreting feedback students have received and using it to build an action plan. + Focus feedback on specific steps students can take to improve future learning. + Set accompanying meta-cognitive tasks, such as asking students to respond to your feedback with analysis and their own action plan.

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Learning and teaching activity:

Personalised learning design exercise

Key dimensions of the PSF: A2, A4, K3, K2, V1, V2

Overview

Personalisation is an important consideration in curriculum design as a significant factor associated with wellbeing in study. It relates specifically to processes of ensuring needs are met in ways that work effectively for individual students, with associated implications of flexibility, choice and affordance to connect individually and meaningfully with experience in study, frame opportunities to consider how the curriculum can foster the development of agency, and the value of a sense of control in study for development, attainment and wellbeing.

Acknowledging that student experience is inherently individualised, there are, of course, regulatory and operational limits to flexibility in higher education and the extent to which credit-bearing awards can incorporate variation. These can include, for example, period of registration, mode of study, and perhaps most significantly, outcome requirements related to specific subjects and associated professional bodies and organisations. Equally, noting established concerns about consumerist approaches to study in higher education (Hartley, 2012), and limits of operational capacity, it is also important to consider where personalisation has net educational benefit.

For example, there may be relevant points in the curriculum where personalisation of assessment involving either flexible and self-selected completion point, mode of submission, and/or focus of assignment, would be worthwhile and effective, but this may be prohibitive in terms of resourcing, unmanageable in terms of academic integrity or perceptions of fairness, and not aligned with clearly defined standards and expectations outlined by specific regulatory bodies in other cases.

This activity structures opportunity to reflect on the role and value of personalisation in student experience in study and ways in which this can be structured through the curriculum. Designed primarily for application in a group discussion context, the activity can be used as a self-reflection exercise or as a framework for a formal assessment with supplementary review of key literature, including the listed sources of further reading.

Activity

This activity frames consideration of personalisation in study; defined here quite broadly in terms of flexibility, individualisation, adaptability and choice. Noting the legitimacy of maintaining specific and clearly defined expectations and requirements of students regarding engagement, participation, professional behaviours and performance of specified capabilities, there is also value in considering how enabling students to configure and make informed decisions about aspects of what and how they study can support development of personal responsibility in learning, self-management, self-efficacy and wellbeing in learning.

Individual parts of the activity can be completed as a consolidated exercise or undertaken in sequence with intermediate opportunities for plenary discussion.

Part 1 – considering personalisation in study

Focusing either on an audit of current practice or planning for new curriculum development, participants are invited to review the five key aspects of personalisation of study in higher education outlined in the table below and make notes regarding the outlined points of consideration.

Aspect of personalisation	Description	Points of consideration
What	The level of choice in programmes of study related to areas of study (eg optional module structures, individually designed research and/or design projects).	How is/should responsibility/opportunity for making informed choices be situated in the curriculum?
Where	The level of choice regarding point of engagement with studies (eg whether in-person attendance at a particular geographical location is a requirement).	How is/should location of study and/or mode of engagement be mandated in the curriculum?
When	The level of choice regarding face-to-face interaction and engagement and pace of completion (eg standardised, or non-standardised assessment deadlines).	When/how much/should/is active participation and engagement (be) required in real-time?
How	The level of flexibility regarding the evidence required to demonstrate, and have formally recognised, achievement of defined learning outcomes (eg the specific requirements for achievement of a defined award).	What affordance is/should be provided for flexibility in engagement with study and/or demonstration of achievement of defined learning outcomes?
Who	Individualised academic support and development of academic partnerships (eg defined roles or individuals with whom a student receives personalised support), and nature/structure of wider academic community.	How do students make connection with individuals in their studies, and/or become known among their peers and/or become known by academics and/or receive individualised support? Where and to whom do students tell/share 'their' story?

Feedback and plenary discussion can support consideration of key emerging themes. Example responses and points of consideration are outlined below.

Potential emerging theme	Considerations
The extent to which students are equipped to make informed choices in learning.	Consider the value of increasing responsibility of students in learning (eg setting meaningful challenges in learning). Uncertainty, failure, or 'not being able to yet' are perfectly reasonable positions early in study.
Established approach to provision of different modes of study.	Challenge of developing academic community with mix of in-person and online/distance learning.
Institutional regulations and assessment schedule.	Aligning scope for flexibility within current regulations.
Established choice in project and/or dissertation activities.	Consider convention of increasing choice and personalisation in assessment through academic levels and potential value of increased personalisation at early stages of study.
Challenge of coordinating parallel modes of assessment.	Consider potential benefits of enabling students to select either a research poster presentation or a written assignment for developing variation and contrast in marking and moderation processes.

Part 2 – individualisation

Noting routine and significant effort invested in personal academic tutoring, participants are invited to review institutional policy or practice in their respective context of work. Noting whether there is a consistent institutional approach or variations in different disciplinary contexts, participants are invited initially to share their experiences and/or expectations of the role of personal tutor and/or to discuss the following key questions:

+ What is the function or purpose of a personal tutor?
  - Is this understanding shared between students and staff?
  - How can this be adjusted according to individual student need?
  - Are professional boundaries clearly defined and maintained?
+ How does personal tutoring connect with the curriculum?
+ When does personal tutoring begin in study?
+ What knowledge, skills, and attributes, does a personal tutor require?
+ What support and/or professional development is available for personal tutors?
+ What does a student gain from an effective relationship with a personal tutor?
+ What does a personal tutor gain from an effective relationship with their tutees?

Feedback and plenary discussion can support consideration of key emerging themes. Acknowledging the need for these to be situated in a given institutional context, example responses and key points of consideration are outlined below.

Potential emerging theme	Considerations
Potential uncertainties about the limits of professional responsibility and/or definition of role.	Note risk of ambiguity regarding 'pastoral' support responsibilities or role in supporting social integration and/or personal matters. Significance of role for: + ensuring students have supported opportunities to develop their social integration + helping students to manage directed independent learning and in developing positive learning behaviours + guiding students in developing understanding of university systems and processes + fostering dialogue and communication. Noting fundamental need to ensure clear understanding of professional boundaries in role.
Understanding student support systems and providing effective signposting	Need to ensure personal tutors have consistent information about points of referral for students. Value in developing dialogue and connection between academics and support professionals.
Concerns about dealing with complex or serious issues.	Need to ensure personal tutors understand and are familiar with points of referral, have access to training for dealing with students presenting in crisis, and understand professional boundaries and limits of the role.
Uncertainty about how to evaluate risk or implement support.	Need to ensure staff development and protocols in place for escalating support actions.
Potential variations in ways personal tutoring connects with the curriculum.	Potential for personal tutoring to be disconnected from the curriculum.
Significant value for personal tutors.	Recognising the challenge of supporting students experiencing challenges in their studies, also significant professional value in maintaining understanding of the student learning experience and making a difference for students in study.

For participants yet to act as a personal tutor, a simple exercise can be to collate key questions about the role and to structure responses to these. Examples of typical questions with some adaptable common responses are outlined below.

What exactly is a personal tutor?

A personal tutor is a professional/member of academic staff who takes an active interest in, and provides direct support for, their tutees. A personal tutor might also be an academic adviser, study skills tutor, mentor and/or coach.

A personal tutor is **not** a counsellor, mental health support worker or line manager. Know your boundaries and maintain them.

What do I need to do?

Make sure you are available for your tutees, that you know them and they know you.

Does it make a difference?

Yes. Students regularly report support from their personal tutor as a critical factor in their success in study. It's a role that matters, and when it matters most can prove hugely significant for tutees. It is also a role that can be deeply enriching and fulfilling for personal tutors, providing the opportunity to provide highly personalised support and to keep closely in touch with the student learning experience.

What does good personal tutoring look like?

Tutees know who you are and how to contact you, are comfortable in making contact and understand the reasons and benefits of doing so, feel more connected to the university and have a better understanding of wider support services and opportunities, and are challenged and supported to achieve their potential. It makes a difference.

Where can I get help and support?

This may vary according to individual circumstances but ensure that there is a clear answer to this question. Personal tutors should be encouraged to speak to colleagues. Student support is a team effort.

What are the key things to get right?

Get to know your tutees – meet them as soon as possible in study, close down any communication gaps, break the ice and get involved. Be clear about your availability and structure your approach to the role. More consistent and structured approaches work most effectively for students new to university study.

Help your tutees navigate – make sure your tutees know what support is available, how to access this, and have the confidence to do so.

Monitor engagement and act where necessary – if your tutee isn't attending, they might need your help. If they're highly engaged, they might really appreciate some affirmation for their efforts. Take time to check and keep in touch. Plan and schedule your time for key points in the academic year.

Record relevant details of your interactions and meetings with students. Record only facts and be transparent and open with tutees. Do not record sensitive, subjective or potentially contentious information.

How do I manage my time as a personal tutor?

Supporting tutees take time and organisation. It is important to schedule this in your diaries as you would teaching sessions. Plan ahead. Put an hour in your diary to map out the academic year ahead and focus your work on where it can have most impact. For example, during induction and the initial part of study (critical first six weeks), around key assessment points, and when assessment results are published.

What do I talk about with my tutees?

Whatever you and/or your tutee consider most important at any given time according to the circumstances and context of the learner and their studies and/or approaches in the school or department. For example, if it is an international student who has recently moved to the UK and is just starting their studies, how they are settling in, whether they have questions about their studies, are they aware of available support services, and even, have they made any interesting connections or discoveries in the city and started to develop new social networks, would all be worth exploring. If a student preparing for a placement year, how their preparations are going would be a more important focus. In all cases, how they are progressing, what they have achieved, and what they plan to do next are all relevant points of conversation and dialogue. Be yourself. Be authentic. Model practice and encourage your tutees to do the same.

I have a lot of tutees. How can I make that work?

+ Why not schedule some group meetings for all your tutees? This can provide opportunity both for you to maximise efficiency in terms of your own time, but also a chance to build community within your tutorial group. Note the potential limits of this approach. Students do need and expect personalised support on a one-to-one basis.
+ You could task your tutees with emailing you a short update on their progress and experience each week. You can then schedule time to read and respond via email.
+ Drop-in sessions in a suitable location can work effectively and depending on the space involved, support a less formal but nevertheless professional approach to the process.
+ Online tools including discussion boards or shard teams spaces can be useful in enriching asynchronous/ online activities.

What do I do if I have concerns about a tutee?

The most complex and nuanced question of all. We should of course, as personal tutors, be concerned about our tutees, but responses to perceived risk should always be proportionate and aligned to the level of risk implied by the available information. This is always a judgement call. For example:

+ If the perceived risk related to the concern is **LOW** (eg attendance or engagement has declined or you have not had a reply to a point of contact such as an email requesting a response), you should at least discuss with others, including the programme director, as soon as possible and make an informed judgement about the potential need to escalate more formally or more widely.
  The primary responsibility always remains with the learner but, when in doubt, consult and act.
  Always aim to engage with the tutee to develop a better understanding and signpost and advocate engagement with relevant support as appropriate.
+ If the risk is perceived as **MODERATE** (eg attendance or engagement has declined significantly or is substantial and/or if there is an active absence of any positive information or response to repeated contact attempts), escalate more formally as a matter of urgency within the programme team, a senior personal tutor or relevant professional services department as appropriate.
+ If the concern is **SIGNIFICANT** (eg there is active evidence of profound/serious/urgent risk to academic progression or personal wellbeing, either through direct experience, disclosed or reported information), act immediately, up to and including calling the emergency services or relevant safety and security team. If a tutee is judged to be at active risk of harm, it is all our responsibilities to act promptly and effectively.

You are not expected to take responsibility for tutees outside working hours or to respond to requests for support from tutees on this basis. Maintain your professional boundaries but take appropriate action in a timely manner whenever you have concerns about your tutees.

Guidance for facilitators

The aim in these activities being to encourage reflection on the value of personalisation in study and the significant role that peer networks and personal tutoring can play in supporting active student participation and sense of belonging within an academic community.

Key summary points are:

+ There is value in taking a purposeful approach to the design of opportunities for personalisation and choice in study.
+ Personal tutoring can provide an effective mechanism for supporting integration with peers and sense of belonging within an academic community.
+ A planned approach to managing difficult situations or supporting students in distress is important both for student and staff wellbeing.

Depending on the circumstances under which the activity is taking place, participants may be encouraged to develop an action plan to review opportunities for personalisation in study in their teaching and/or to review current practice with respect to personal tutoring.

Relevant case studies

Graduate attributes programme
Academic families
Personal tutoring

Relevant key lessons and top tips

Sub-theme	Key lessons	Top tips
Developing self-efficacy	+ Academic self-efficacy refers to a student's belief in their ability to learn and engage in academic tasks and perform successfully. + There are clear relationships between self-efficacy and student wellbeing and self-efficacy and student learning and performance. + The curriculum can support the development of academic self-efficacy through scaffolding learning, providing a learning focus, creating a collaborative learning environment, modelling success, supporting students to explicitly develop skills and self-reflection, and using evidence and feedback to build self-belief.	+ Focus feedback on learning and development, rather than performance. + Work with professional staff to embed psycho-education into the curriculum. + Use evidence to demonstrate your justified belief in their ability.
Holistic Self-Management	+ Student self-regulation, self-management and wellbeing all influence learning and achievement. + Students often do not know how to self-manage effectively or understand how lifestyle and self-management can influence learning and achievement. + Self-management can be developed via education embedded into the curriculum. + This offers opportunities for collaborative partnerships on curriculum design and delivery between subject academics, learning and teaching teams and student services.	+ Embed self-management into curriculum as a way of building students' understanding of the ways in which learning, and performance happen and can be supported. + Co-facilitate material on self-management with colleagues in Student Services. + Provide referenced evidence of the links between wellbeing and learning to build student understanding and confidence in what they are being told.

Sub-theme	Key lessons	Top tips
Clearly defined roles and responsibilities	+ There is a lack of clarity about the relationship between academic staff and students, where the boundaries lie and how they can be communicated and maintained. + Students cannot be expected to accurately work out and understand these relationships without explicit, clear guidance. + These relationships would benefit from being defined at a university level and communicated to staff via development and training. + Academic staff can then communicate these boundaries at the beginning of each year and throughout the year.	+ The definition of these relationships may benefit from co-creation between academics, students, learning and teaching staff, student services staff and university leaders. + For the definition of relationships to work, it needs to move beyond abstract language and deal in specifics. + To maintain boundaries, academic staff must be empowered with the resources and skills to signpost students supportively and effectively.
When a student presents in distress	+ It is inevitable that students will disclose mental health problems and present in distress to academics. + Being prepared can help academics respond effectively, within the boundaries of their role. + Academics are not responsible for providing qualified mental health support – a helpful structured conversation can help students access appropriate support. + Where there is potential risk, academics must tell an appropriate person by appropriate means. Confidentiality does not prevent this.	+ Explain your role and boundaries to students when you first meet, so they are not surprised when you suggest they access support from colleagues in Student Services. + Be honest about what you can and cannot do. + Give your conversation a structure and, as much as possible, let students take responsibility and control of the situation. + Know who you can contact if you are concerned about a student and how you can contact them.

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Theme 6: getting students back on track

Overview

The final theme in this toolkit focuses on the importance of student engagement and participation and the value of structured and coordinated approaches to supporting engagement and re-engagement with the curriculum.

Acknowledging major points of disengagement including discontinuation and withdrawal from study (Harvey and Szalkowicz, 2015), from short-term or occasional absences from teaching activities through to natural breaks in study between modules or stages of study, engagement, disengagement, and re-engagement, are considered as a more routine aspects of student experience in study.

The key area of focus in this theme is:

+ engaging and re-engaging learning.

Learning activities and resources:

Sub-theme	Aims	Learning outcomes	Activity	Synopsis
Re-engaging the disengaged	To consider approaches to supporting students disengaging and/or re-engaging with study.	Define structured approaches to supporting student re-engagement with student and reflect on institutional processes for supporting disengagement with study.	Engaging and re-engaging students in study	The aim of this activity is to structure consideration of engagement and re-engagement and to apply informed approaches to curriculum design.
			See: Scales of transition and design choices exercise.	This activity is presented in two parts. The first uses a defined success framework to structure consideration of curriculum planning and/or review of established programmes. The second focuses on transitions within study and the role of curriculum in supporting these effectively.
Effective signposting	To consider the importance of student navigation between and across different parts of university study and support.	Plan approaches to ensuring effective signposting for students.	See: Personalised learning design	This activity structures opportunity to reflect on the role and value of personalisation in student experience in study and ways in which this can be structured through the curriculum. Designed primarily for application in a group discussion context, the activity can be used as a self-reflection exercise or as a framework for a formal assessment with supplementary review of key literature including the listed sources of further reading.

Sub-theme	Aims	Learning outcomes	Activity	Synopsis
Collaboration between academics and support professionals	To highlight the significance of effective coordination between academics and support professionals in curriculum design and delivery.	Apply a student-centred and learning-communities approach to the design of curricula.	See: Stakeholder mapping in curriculum development	This activity is designed to support consideration of curriculum development processes in terms of leadership, process management, but most significantly, collaboration and stakeholder involvement. The key focus is on exploring who should be involved, when, and how this is best coordinated to ensure a whole university approach.
Maintaining boundaries	To consider the importance of managing and maintaining clear professional boundaries.	Articulate a clear strategy for managing and maintaining appropriate professional boundaries.	See: Personalised learning design	
When students present in crisis	To consider how to prepare for managing complex student support needs or crisis situations.	Articulate strategies for managing crisis situations in student support.	See: Personalised learning design	

Summary of key lessons and top tips:

Sub-theme	Key lessons	Top tips
Re-engaging the disengaged	+ There are many reasons why students disengage – these reasons may be internal or external to the student. It is important not to make assumptions about the causes of student behaviour without evidence. + Students can be encouraged to re-engage by providing a clear route back that they can visualise and believe will work. + Students will avoid re-engaging if they believe they will be chastised, punished or humiliated. + Some students will need additional support from colleagues in student services and should be signposted effectively.	+ Use appropriate learning technology to identify when students begin to disengage and send early communications that are supportive and understanding, encouraging them to take steps to re-engage. + Provide students with a clear path back to re-engagement, setting out achievable steps they can visualise and take. + Tell students that you believe that they can re-engage and be successful (within the limits of what is possible). + Be clear about the potential consequences if they do not re-engage. + Signpost students to student services (they may not want to tell you the real reason they have dis-engaged).
Effective signposting	+ Effective signposting is key to maintaining boundaries and appropriately supporting students. + Academics can increase the effectiveness of signposting by laying groundwork in advance – this includes clarifying boundaries, normalising the use of support, and ensuring students are aware of the support available. + Effective signposting will motivate students to access support by increasing their belief that the support on offer is likely to help them.	+ Include details of support services on all slides as standard. + Ensure academics know and understand the support that is available to students. + When signposting, academics should express their confidence in the support available and provide illustrative examples of how other students have been helped.

Sub-theme	Key lessons	Top tips
Collaboration between academics and support professionals	+ When there are gaps between academics and student services, students can fall into those gaps. + There are appropriate boundaries that must be maintained between student services and academics but within these boundaries there are opportunities for more cohesive, collaborative relationships. + When both sides understand and trust each other students are more likely to receive cohesive support, interventions and responses. + This can help academic staff to maintain their own appropriate boundaries.	+ Consider how staff can provide training to each other. + Look for natural opportunities for academics and support staff to co-create together – it may help to begin by bringing them together to map out their respective responsibilities and roles and how they can interact. + Create easy methods of communication between both.
Maintaining boundaries	+ The inter-relationship between student learning and student wellbeing can make it difficult to define and maintain boundaries. This can result in academics being drawn into supporting students beyond their role and competency. + Maintaining boundaries protects students, staff, and the university. + It is easier to maintain boundaries if they are explained in advance of students experiencing problems and if they are consistently modelled. + If academics are concerned about a student and how to maintain boundaries, they should seek support from appropriate colleagues.	+ Explain boundaries of the role in the first class/meeting. + Have a clear concept of the purpose of the academic/tutor role and where that purpose ends. This conceptualisation can help guide what to do and not do. + Be aware of, and avoid, behaviour that unconsciously indicates a change in a relationship such as sharing personal phone numbers, interacting on social media outside of the professional role, physical contact or responding to emails and messages late at night. + Seek advice from colleagues if concerned about maintaining boundaries; don't continue alone in a relationship or situation with a student that is causing you concern.

Sub-theme	Key lessons	Top tips
When students present in crisis	+ It is inevitable that students will disclose mental health problems and present in distress to academics. + Being prepared can help academics respond effectively, within the boundaries of their role. + Academics are not responsible for providing qualified mental health support – a helpful structured conversation can help students access appropriate support. + Where there is potential risk, academics must tell an appropriate person by appropriate means. Confidentiality does not prevent this.	+ Explain your role and boundaries to students when you first meet, so they are not surprised when you suggest they access support from colleagues in student services. + Be honest about what you can and cannot do. + Give your conversation a structure and, as much as possible, let students take responsibility and control of the situation. + Know who you can contact if you are concerned about a student and how you can contact them.

Reference

Harvey, A and Szalkowicz, G (2015) 'From departure to arrival: Re-engaging students who have withdrawn from university', *Journal of Further and Higher Education,* 41 (1): 79-97. Available at: doi.org/10.1080/0309877X.2015.1062852

Learning and teaching activity:

Engaging and re-engaging students in study

Key dimensions of the PSF: A1, A2, K3, K4, V1, V2

Overview

Student engagement is a significant concern in higher education (Barnacle and Dall'Alba, 2017), there being continuing challenge with respect to attrition rates despite concerted efforts to limit this (Harvey and Szalkowicz, 2015).

Learner readiness in terms of self-efficacy and domain interest (Fryer et al, 2021) are known to be significant influencing factors. Engagement and participation in study are ultimately subject to a wide range of enabling and limiting factors over time. University study also includes multiple points of re-engagement such as breaks between terms or semesters of study, modules and years of study, returning to study from international placements (Conroy and Joseph-Richard, 2021) and sandwich work placements (Jones et al, 2017).

Engagement and re-engagement with studies are therefore legitimate points of consideration in curriculum design and teaching practice. The aim of this activity is to structure consideration of engagement and re-engagement and to apply informed approaches to curriculum design.

Activity

This activity outlines a series of engagement and re-engagement scenarios and considers the implications for curriculum design. This can be undertaken individually or used to frame group discussion.

Consider the following points of engagement and re-engagement and related questions and prompts:

+ How does the curriculum actively foster and facilitate student engagement and participation?
  - What aspects of the curriculum/wider studies inhibit or have lowest student participation or engagement?
  - What mechanisms are in place to encourage, support or mandate and assure levels of student engagement and participation?
  - What is the experience of students if 'missing' elements of study experience?
+ Where does the data indicate highest levels of overall student engagement and participation?
  - Where does the data indicate student engagement falls to the lowest point in a cycle of learning and teaching?
  - How does the average student participate and does this correlate with attainment or progression?
+ What is the experience of students who have short breaks in study such as due to short-term illness?
  - How much time/number of weeks can be missed without progression being compromised?

+ What is the experience of students catching up with missed sessions, trips, or weeks of study?
+ What is the experience of students who must repeat an aspect of the curriculum including potential need to integrate within an alternative cohort or student group?
+ What is the experience of students who return to study following an extended period of absence (eg following a placement year or longer break in study)?
+ What is the experience of students and what systems are in place to support students disengaging with studies?
+ What is the experience of students seeking to re-engage with university study having previously withdrawn from another institution?

Guidance for facilitators

The aim in this activity being to consider engagement, and specifically re-engagement with study and the implications for curriculum design, plenary discussion among participant groups can lead to identification or some or more of the following emerging themes:

+ Fit-for-purpose regulatory procedures and administrative procedures relating to reporting absences or negotiating mitigations in study (eg renegotiating assessment deadlines or accessing additional support).
+ Challenges encouraging student engagement and participation.
+ Social re-integration for students returning from placement, repeating a unit or stage of study.
+ Systems for supporting students withdrawing from study and/or reengaging students who have previously withdrawn.

Key summary points are:

+ Re-engagement with study is a routine aspect of student experience.
+ There is value in considering different levels of re-engagement when designing and planning the curriculum.

Relevant case studies

Wellbeing in London

Nursing

Skills and support for your English degree

Clinical humanities and wellbeing

Personal tutoring

Viva case study

Graduate attributes

English

Time to thrive

Academic families

Compassion

Relevant key lessons and top tips

Sub-theme	Key lessons	Top tips
Re-engaging the disengaged	+ There are many reasons why students disengage – these reasons may be internal or external to the student. It is important not to make assumptions about the causes of student behaviour without evidence. + Students can be encouraged to re-engage by providing a clear route back that they can visualise and believe will work. + Students will avoid re-engaging if they believe they will be chastised, punished, or humiliated. + Some students will need additional support from colleagues in student services and should be signposted effectively.	+ Use appropriate learning technology to identify when students begin to disengage and send early communications that are supportive and understanding, encouraging them to take steps to re-engage. + Provide students with a clear path back to re-engagement, setting out achievable steps they can visualise and take. + Tell students that you believe that they can re-engage and be successful (within the limits of what is possible). + Be clear about the potential consequences if they do not re-engage. + Signpost students to student services (they may not want to tell you the real reason they have disengaged).
Effective signposting	+ Effective signposting is key to maintaining boundaries and appropriately supporting students. + Academics can increase the effectiveness of signposting by laying groundwork in advance – this includes clarifying boundaries, normalising the use of support, and ensuring students are aware of the support available. + Effective signposting will motivate students to access support by increasing their belief that the support on offer is likely to help them.	+ Include details of support services on all slides as standard. + Ensure academics know and understand the support that is available to students. + When signposting, academics should express their confidence in the support available and provide illustrative examples of how other students have been helped.

Sub-theme	Key lessons	Top tips
Collaboration between academics and support professionals	+ When there are gaps between academics and student services, students can fall into those gaps. + There are appropriate boundaries that must be maintained between student services and academics but within these boundaries there are opportunities for more cohesive, collaborative relationships. + When both sides understand and trust each other students are more likely to receive cohesive support, interventions, and responses. + This can help academic staff to maintain their own appropriate boundaries.	+ Consider how staff can provide training to each other. + Look for natural opportunities for academics and support staff to co-create together – it may help to begin by bringing them together to map out their respective responsibilities and roles and how they can interact. + Create easy methods of communication between both.
Maintaining boundaries	+ The inter-relationship between student learning and student wellbeing can make it difficult to define and maintain boundaries. This can result in academics being drawn into supporting students beyond their role and competency. + Maintaining boundaries protects students, staff, and the university. + It is easier to maintain boundaries if they are explained in advance of students experiencing problems and if they are consistently modelled. + If academics are concerned about a student and how to maintain boundaries, they should seek support from appropriate colleagues.	+ Explain boundaries of the role in the first class/meeting. + Have a clear concept of the purpose of the academic/tutor role and where that purpose ends. This conceptualisation can help guide what to do and not do. + Be aware of, and avoid, behaviour that unconsciously indicates a change in a relationship such as sharing personal phone numbers, interacting on social media outside of the professional role, physical contact or responding to emails and messages late at night. + Seek advice from colleagues if concerned about maintaining boundaries; don't continue alone in a relationship or situation with a student that is causing you concern.

Sub-theme	Key lessons	Top tips
When students present in crisis	+ It is inevitable that students will disclose mental health problems and present in distress to academics. + Being prepared can help academics respond effectively, within the boundaries of their role. + Academics are not responsible for providing qualified mental health support – a helpful structured conversation can help students access appropriate support. + Where there is potential risk, academics must tell an appropriate person by appropriate means. Confidentiality does not prevent this.	+ Explain your role and boundaries to students when you first meet, so they are not surprised when you suggest they access support from colleagues in student services. + Be honest about what you can and cannot do. + Give your conversation a structure and, as much as possible, let students take responsibility and control of the situation. + Know who you can contact if you are concerned about a student and how you can contact them.

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Capstone and summary: considering wellbeing in the curriculum

Overview

This research has identified clearly defined themes related to curriculum design, development, and delivery, of relevance to the wellbeing of key stakeholders in university study. These are:

1. **Infrastructure**
   a. Staff wellbeing
   b. Collaborative design: who designs
   c. Validation and support for curriculum development
2. **Social belonging**
   a. Psychologically safe learning environments
   b. Social community, identity and status
   c. Inclusivity
   d. Clearly defined roles and relationships
   e. Social belonging
3. **Learning focused**
   a. Deep learning
   b. Meaning
   c. Internal cohesion
   d. Sustainable challenge
   e. Workload
   f. Assessment for learning
   g. Curriculum delivery
4. **Scaffolded design**
   a. Connection to pre-learning and experience
   b. Explicit preparation for assessment tasks
   c. Preparing students for progression
   d. Assessment: how and why
   e. Preparation for non-classroom learning spaces
5. **Learner development**
   a. Self-attribution and awareness
   b. Self-management
   c. Meta learning
   d. Feedback
6. **Getting students back on track**
   a. Effective signposting
   b. Collaboration between academics and support professionals
   c. Maintaining boundaries
   d. When students present in crisis

The final exercise draws from all thematic areas and can be undertaken as a capstone activity following completion of configured combinations of preceding activities or undertaken as a stand-alone summary activity.

Albeit complex and multifaceted, the relationship between the curriculum and wellbeing provides affordance for positive action to develop improvements for learning for the benefit of the whole academic community.

Learning and teaching activity:

Considering curriculum wellbeing moderators and inhibitors

Key dimensions of the UKPSF: A1-4, K1-4, K6, V1, V2, V4

Overview

In addition to the known issues relating to student experience, research also highlights a significant and worsening problem of staff wellbeing and mental health in higher education (Morrish, 2019). Argued to be situated as "central to the nature of work in higher education" (Lemon, 2021), there are increasing calls for a 'whole university' (Hughes and Spanner, 2019), and therefore 'whole curriculum' (Jisc and Emerge Education, 2021) approach to wellbeing.

Given the sheer diversity of individual circumstances, all aspects of university curricula have the potential to intersect with issues of wellbeing. Nevertheless, there are specific aspects of the curriculum for which the relationship with wellbeing is known to be more dynamic and significant, for students and for staff.

Some areas of the curriculum, for example, are situated at key transition points and therefore take place when students are known to be more likely to experience wellbeing stressors associated with adjustment, orientation, and/or social integration. Others, such as assessment and formal recording of attainment, perform a purposefully high-stakes function and therefore frame an inescapably challenging experience given the expectations and risks associated with achievement and the related implications of failure. In both cases, the corresponding experience for staff new to teaching or with making and recording potentially high-stakes academic judgements, can be equally challenging.

Different forms of learning and teaching activity can perform moderating or wellbeing-inhibiting functions dependant on the circumstances of the individual. Teamwork or requirements generally for active involvement with unfamiliar collaborative learning activities with peers, for example, provide a valuable scaffold for the development of new social networks and interpersonal skills for the majority, while for others, can inadvertently inhibit effective engagement with learning and connect negatively with other issues of wellbeing in study.

Recognising that deliberate confrontation of learners with uncertainty, ambiguity, risk challenge, and the experience of failure and recovery, are all legitimate objectives and concerns in educational design, different aspects of the curriculum will, dependent on their design and delivery, ultimately have varying potential to exert either a net positive moderating or inhibiting effect with respect to individual wellbeing. The purpose of this exercise is, therefore, to consider aspects of curricula and its operation that may serve as wellbeing moderators or as inhibitors and to map out strategies for addressing these in constructive ways.

Guidance for facilitators

Focused on exploring where and how the curriculum fosters or inhibits wellbeing, these activities are designed to encourage dialogue between peers and frame an opportunity to share insights, perspectives, assumptions and experiences. An overarching activity mapped to all thematic areas in this research, these integrated activities focus on reviewing the mediating effect of different aspects of curriculum experience and how staff and student wellbeing can be situated as coincident concerns in approaches to curriculum design.

Note that clear information should be provided about the focus of the activities. As they involve consideration of potentially difficult personal experiences, opportunity should be provided either to withdraw from participation or to access supplementary help or support.

Activities are presented in two forms. The first can be undertaken as an efficient and self-contained ice-breaking activity or group workshop discussion exercise. The second, capable of sequencing from the first, is more structured and involves six defined steps, each of which require sufficient time to explore fully. These are designed to be flexible and adaptable but are specifically conceived to be useful as a stand-alone team-learning CPD activity, half or full-day workshop, and/or formal assessment activities for learning and teaching programmes.

Activity 1 is adaptable and can be undertaken in several ways. For example:

+ A 10-30-minute open think-note-share exercise working individually or in groups, online or in person.
  - Give participants 10-30 minutes to reflect on the activity questions and develop agreed responses.
  - Presentation of summary key points by individual groups and open discussion.
  - Sharing of key institutional insights and research evidence.
+ As a structured self-reflection exercise and/or assessed component incorporating direct engagement with relevant secondary literature.

Activity 2 is more structured and involves a series of steps requiring time to engage with fully. It can be undertaken as a half or full-day workshop activity with groups or structured as a self-reflection exercise or assignment.

Subsequent comparison with the research findings outlined in this toolkit, the wider research literature, and with local institutional insights, can provide an opportunity for sense checking where perspectives align or do not align with the research evidence.

Consequent action planning to implement steps to adjust aspects of the curriculum to improve experiences and outcomes for students and the experience for staff can be equally productive.

However structured or facilitated, these activities are designed to encourage active consideration of the relationship between wellbeing and learning and the role of the curriculum in scaffolding and guiding students in effective approaches to learning. Student learning and wellbeing exist in a transactional relationship. Approaches to curriculum design can support increased student engagement with challenge and improve educational outcomes.

Activities

There is a transactional relationship between wellbeing and learning, and consequently between wellbeing and the curriculum. These activities provide an opportunity to reflect and consider participant experiences and perspectives.

Activity 1: top five wellbeing moderators and inhibitors

This activity works effectively as a cross-disciplinary activity or as a discipline/programme-specific activity and can operate adaptatively according to the constituency of participant groups.

Working individually or in groups, participants are tasked with generating a list of what, in their experience, they consider to be the five most significant aspects of curriculum experience that serve to moderate wellbeing (foster, improve) and the five most significant that serve to inhibit wellbeing (constrain, undermine). This can incorporate time for review of key literature or general desktop research dependent on the level of experience and make up of participant groups and the available time.

Considering all aspects of the curriculum rather just what is documented in related module and/or programme specifications, the focus can be on student and staff experience, student experience alone, or staff experience alone.

Some example prompts and areas of potential significance relating to staff and/or student experience include:

+ Initial experiences of joining a new institution (entering the curriculum).
+ Orientation in university teaching/study (people, processes, systems, regulations, spaces, technologies, expectations, responsibilities).
+ Experience of teaching and learning activities (preparation, coordination/delivery, and/or participation).
+ Experience of assessment activities (preparation, coordination/delivery, and/or participation).

Sharing and pooling lists from multiple groups can then generate a shared understanding of a range of perspectives and experiences which can then be subject to more detailed discussion and compared against the research evidence and institution-specific insights.

A range of common themes, for students and staff, are likely to emerge:

+ Navigating unfamiliarity (spaces, people, systems, processes).
+ Uncertainties about how or what to study.
+ Challenging learning or teaching activities.
+ Finding meaning in learning.
+ Anxiety about workloads and/or assessment.
+ Accessing and engaging with help and support

The curriculum wellbeing framework presented in Resource 1a can be shared for discussion.

Activity 2: applying a curriculum wellbeing framework

Selecting a particular programme or course of study – either whole undergraduate course, module or short course – or focusing more generally on wider experience including department- or even institution-level concerns, participants are invited to use the curriculum wellbeing framework to structure consideration of where elements of the curriculum support a moderating or inhibiting function for the wellbeing for key stakeholders.

Recognising that it is not the responsibility or function of the curriculum to resolve wellbeing issues, the aim here is to identify changes in approach that could improve equality of opportunity in terms of participation, engagement and attainment, by mitigating for ultimately counterproductive practices.

Structured to key themes emerging through this research, participants are invited to:

I. Review the curriculum wellbeing framework (Resource 1a) and make provisional notes of known wellbeing moderators and inhibitors noting:
    a) The potential for aspects of the curriculum to perform both moderating and inhibiting functions dependent on individual student circumstances.
    b) The evidence you have or need to gather to evaluate the integrity of judgements made.

II. Using the generated notes, review and complete a wellbeing audit grid (Resource 1b) following the guidelines including those relating to determination of impact rating scores. Note that:
    a) This is based on a standard risk assessment but designed to ensure equal focus on identifying both positive and negative in a measured way.
    b) Examples are included both of how to approach the audit grid and determine impact rating scores.

III. Review the completed wellbeing audit grid and reorder impact points by impact rating score (+ and – extremes).

IV. Review and derive an adjusted priority list categorising according to urgency (needs addressing now), complexity (how simple, how quick, how much, what missing info, how many people).

V. Using the curriculum wellbeing development plan template (Resource 1c), consider and note:
   a) Actions required.
   b) Key stakeholders including points of delegation and collaboration.
   c) Success measures.
   d) Lines of reporting.
   e) Deadlines.

VI. Submit development plans, narrative commentary and/or present related work for peer evaluation and discussion.

Depending on approaches taken to the activity and the composition of participant groups, action plans can be presented and opened for general discussion and/or used as a formal assessment activity with accompanying rationale.

Summary

Enabling participants to consider the curriculum and the implications for wellbeing in study, key takeaway points are that:

+ The wellbeing of students and staff is a legitimate consideration in curriculum design.
+ Fostering deep learning and meaning in study can have a positive impact on wellbeing, for students and staff.
+ Difficulty, challenge, uncertainty and ambiguity, all have a legitimate place in educational experience, but need to be structured and organised carefully.

Relevant case studies

Wellbeing in London

Graduate attributes

International politics

Nursing

Film studies

English

Skills and support for your English degree

Time to thrive

War studies

Clinical humanities and wellbeing

Compassionate micro skills of communication (CMSC)

Academic families

Personal tutoring

Dentistry

Field trips

Compassion

Viva case study

Master's in education insights

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Resource 1a: curriculum wellbeing evaluation framework

This framework is structured around key themes emerging from this research mapped to general synopsis of related aspects of curriculum experience. This is designed to inform completion of a curriculum development plan. An adaptable template is provided (Resource 1b).

CURRICULUM WELLBEING THEME	Curriculum wellbeing sub-theme	Curriculum as a wellbeing inhibitor (students)	Impact for staff	Curriculum as a wellbeing moderator (students)	Impact for staff
INFRASTRUCTURE	Staff wellbeing	Compounds stress or workload issues leading to staff absences or unavailability. Impact on staff visible to or perceptible by students.	Curriculum overtly demanding, administratively complex, or time consuming for staff.	Positive staff engagement with teaching visible to or perceptible by students.	Positive transactional relationship between the curriculum, teaching and learning.
SOCIAL BELONGING	Psychologically safe learning environments	Aspects of the curriculum perceived as unsafe leading to disrupted engagement.	Students are disengaged and/or dissatisfied. Necessary, time consuming, distracting, and/or difficult mediating action and mitigations.	Learning is open and accessible to students and provides a sense of security in study.	Active student engagement and affirmation through successful teaching and learning activities.
	Social community, identity, and status	Curriculum experienced as providing limited opportunity to connect with peers in learning or structure opportunity for collaboration in study.	Students are disengaged and/or dissatisfied. Necessary, time consuming, distracting, and/or difficult mediating action and mitigations.	Experience in study affords opportunity to develop active connection with peers.	Positive transactional relationship between the curriculum, teaching and learning.

CURRICULUM WELLBEING THEME	Curriculum wellbeing sub-theme	Curriculum as a wellbeing inhibitor (students)	Impact for staff	Curriculum as a wellbeing moderator (students)	Impact for staff
	Inclusivity	Aspects of the curriculum are alienating, inaccessible, or require individual adjustment to engage with fully.	Students are disengaged and/or dissatisfied. Necessary, time consuming, distracting, and/or difficult mediating action and mitigations.	The curriculum is accessible to students and supports a sense of equity in learning.	Positive transactional relationship between the curriculum, teaching, and learning. One approach for all learners increases sense of equity and increases improves operational efficiency.
	Classroom culture	Aspects of the teaching activities perceived as unsafe leading to disrupted engagement or disengagement.	Students are disengaged and/or dissatisfied. Necessary, time consuming, distracting, and/or difficult mediating action and mitigations.	Classroom culture encourages engagement and participation.	Active student engagement and affirmation through successful teaching and learning activities.
	Social belonging	The curriculum provides no opportunity to develop social connection in learning or incorporates activities or experiences that actively challenge or undermine sense of belonging or social connection.	Students are disengaged and/or dissatisfied. Necessary, time consuming, distracting, and/or difficult mediating action and mitigations.	The curriculum actively structures and scaffolds opportunity to develop sense of social belonging in learning.	Increased agency among student cohorts leading to increased engagement and autonomy in learning. Active student engagement and affirmation through successful teaching and learning activities.

CURRICULUM WELLBEING THEME	Curriculum wellbeing sub-theme	Curriculum as a wellbeing inhibitor (students)	Impact for staff	Curriculum as a wellbeing moderator (students)	Impact for staff
LEARNING FOCUSED	Deep learning	The curriculum is experienced as ambiguous, overtly complex, too challenging or disinteresting, driving a surface learning approach.	Students are disengaged and/or dissatisfied. Necessary, time consuming, distracting, and/or difficult mediating action and mitigations.	Curriculum design is accessible, engaging, and fosters active learning.	Students actively engaged – positive affirmation of teaching efficacy/successful impact of teaching.
	Meaning	The curriculum does not connect with students' interests or involve consideration of the connections between the subject and wider meaning.	Students are disengaged and/or dissatisfied.	Curriculum develops positive academic emotions aiding self-regulation and students perceive an active personal connection to areas of learning.	Students actively engaged – positive affirmation of teaching efficacy/successful impact of teaching.
	Internal cohesion	Elements of study experienced in combination are uncoordinated or alignment is not assured.	Students are disengaged and/or dissatisfied – requiring time-consuming remedial actions.	Elements of study experienced in combination are carefully coordinated.	Students actively engaged – positive collegial synergy between areas of study.
	Sustainable challenge	Workload and challenge are ambiguous or not proportionate to the ability or opportunities of students (too much or not enough).	Students are disengaged and/or dissatisfied – requiring time-consuming remedial actions.	Workload and challenge are manageable, proportionate to the ability of students, and necessary resources, opportunity, and support, are accessible.	Students actively engaged – positive affirmation of teaching efficacy/successful impact of teaching.

CURRICULUM WELLBEING THEME	Curriculum wellbeing sub-theme	Curriculum as a wellbeing inhibitor (students)	Impact for staff	Curriculum as a wellbeing moderator (students)	Impact for staff
	Desirable difficulty	Perceived difficulty leads to inefficient or unproductive approaches to learning and/or disengagement.	Necessary, time consuming, distracting, and/or difficult mediating action and mitigations.	Difficulty is proportionate to the ability of students, and necessary resources, opportunity, and support, are accessible.	Students actively engaged – positive affirmation of teaching efficacy/successful impact of teaching.
	Workload	Experienced workload leads to inefficient or unproductive approaches to learning and/or disengagement.	Necessary, time consuming, distracting, and/or difficult mediating action and mitigations.	Workload and challenge are manageable, proportionate to the ability of students, and necessary resources, opportunity, and support, are accessible.	Students actively engaged – positive affirmation of teaching efficacy/successful impact of teaching.
	Assessment for learning	Assessment perceived and experienced as being 'of learning' with unclear connections between and across assessment activities, perceived relevance to longer-term professional development, or the interests and aspirations of learners.	Students are disengaged and/or dissatisfied – requiring time-consuming remedial actions.	Assessment is constructively aligned with clear learning outcomes, designed for accessibility, perceived as being 'for learning', and experienced as connected and meaningful activity.	Students actively engaged – positive affirmation of teaching efficacy/successful impact of teaching, active learning community.
	Curriculum delivery	Curriculum delivery is misaligned with student circumstances and fosters a sense of disconnection.	Students are disengaged and/or dissatisfied – requiring time-consuming remedial actions.	Curriculum delivery 'fits' student circumstances and fosters a sense of accessibility and experience of engagement and participation.	Students actively engaged – positive affirmation of teaching efficacy/successful impact of teaching, active learning community.

CURRICULUM WELLBEING THEME	Curriculum wellbeing sub-theme	Curriculum as a wellbeing inhibitor (students)	Impact for staff	Curriculum as a wellbeing moderator (students)	Impact for staff
SCAFFOLDED DESIGN	Transitions	Transitions through study are uncoordinated, supported as coincident rather than integrated curriculum concerns, or not supported across the full range of relevant in-study transition experiences.	Students are unprepared and engagement with study is disrupted – requiring time-consuming remedial actions.	Transitions through study are integrated and coordinated concerns with defined approaches related to transition into study, through assessment, between modules or units of study, between stages of study, through work placement, through completion of studies and graduation.	Students are prepared for study/activity.
	Connection to pre-learning and experience	Individual units or elements of learning are completed in isolation and no opportunities are available for students to establish connections with prior learning or experience or between learning experiences.	Students are underprepared and engagement with study is disrupted – requiring time-consuming remedial actions.	Individual units or elements of learning are clearly articulated, and structured opportunities are provided for students to establish connections in study with prior learning and experience.	Students actively engaged – positive affirmation of teaching efficacy/successful impact of teaching, active learning community.
	Preparation for learning and assessment tasks	Information, guidance and/or support for assessment is limited, overtly complex or difficult to access or interpret.	Students are underprepared and engagement with study is disrupted – requiring time-consuming remedial actions.	Information and guidance about assessment is detailed and clear, and structured support including formative assessment activity is undertaken in dialogue with students.	Students actively engaged – positive affirmation of teaching efficacy/successful impact of teaching, active learning community.

CURRICULUM WELLBEING THEME	Curriculum wellbeing sub-theme	Curriculum as a wellbeing inhibitor (students)	Impact for staff	Curriculum as a wellbeing moderator (students)	Impact for staff
	Clarity in design, teaching and tasks	The status, purpose, and/or requirements of learning tasks and/or teaching activities are ambiguous or unclear.	Students are underprepared and engagement with study is disrupted – requiring time-consuming remedial actions and clarifications.	Requirements of learners and the status and purpose of learning activities and tasks are clearly explained and defined.	Students actively engaged – positive affirmation of teaching efficacy/successful impact of teaching, active learning community.
	Preparing for progression	Support for progression is presented separately to the curriculum and/or is not provided for all key types of progression, and/or more routinely provided when progression is already underway.	Students are underprepared and engagement with study is disrupted – requiring time-consuming remedial actions.	Detailed support is embedded in the curriculum to support preparation for progression and multiple points of transition between stages of study, modules, assessment activities, different learning activities, tasks and modes of study.	Students are prepared for progression and processes experienced positively.
	Assessment: how and why (assessment for learning)	Assessment perceived and experienced as being 'of learning' with unclear connections between and across assessment activities, perceived relevance to longer-term professional development, or the interests and aspirations of learners.	Students are disengaged and/or dissatisfied – requiring time-consuming remedial actions.	Assessment is constructively aligned with clear learning outcomes, designed for accessibility, perceived as being 'for learning', and experienced as connected and meaningful activity.	Students actively engaged – positive affirmation of teaching efficacy/successful impact of teaching, active learning community.

CURRICULUM WELLBEING THEME	Curriculum wellbeing sub-theme	Curriculum as a wellbeing inhibitor (students)	Impact for staff	Curriculum as a wellbeing moderator (students)	Impact for staff
	Scaffolded control of focus and assessment	Choice in assessment is limited and where available does not include structured support relating to choices made.	Students are disengaged and/or dissatisfied – requiring time-consuming remedial actions.	Choice in assessment is increased gradually and proportionately through the curriculum, accompanied by active guidance, feedback and support, and enables students to take control as independent learners.	Students actively engaged – positive affirmation of teaching efficacy/successful impact of teaching, active learning community.
	Preparing students for non-classroom learning spaces	Limited or no constructive approaches to developing student preparedness for non-classroom learning spaces and activities.	Students are unprepared and engagement with study is disrupted – requiring time-consuming remedial actions.	The curriculum incorporates active preparation for non-classroom learning spaces.	Students actively engaged – positive affirmation of teaching efficacy/successful impact of teaching, active learning community.

CURRICULUM WELLBEING THEME	Curriculum wellbeing sub-theme	Curriculum as a wellbeing inhibitor (students)	Impact for staff	Curriculum as a wellbeing moderator (students)	Impact for staff
LEARNER DEVELOPMENT	Self-awareness, self-efficacy, and self-attribution	Students' ability to assess and feel in control over their own learning is uncertain or subject to ad hoc or informal support in the curriculum. Self-efficacy is evident is the outcomes of summative assessment but less clearly defined in learning activities working towards summative assessment.	Students are unprepared and engagement with study is disrupted – requiring time-consuming remedial actions.	Active focus in the curriculum on supporting and developing students' self-awareness and ability to assess their own learning and performance. Students are supported in feeling in control of their learning, in connecting learning experiences to positive future actions, and in developing their self-efficacy.	Students actively engaged – positive affirmation of teaching efficacy/successful impact of teaching, active learning community.
	Self-management and meta learning	Study skills support is generic rather than subject/discipline specific and/or not directly integrated within the curriculum. Curriculum design is informed by misplaced assumptions that students improve their learning behaviours through their studies.	Students are unprepared and engagement with study is disrupted – requiring time-consuming remedial actions.	Self-management and effective approaches to learning are structured and subject/disciplinary situated elements of the curriculum.	Students actively engaged – positive affirmation of teaching efficacy/successful impact of teaching, active learning community.
	Feedback	Feedback is transactional, subject to inconsistencies of approach, and uncertainty regarding student engagement and response.	Students are disengaged and/or dissatisfied – requiring time-consuming remedial actions.	The curriculum incorporates active focus on developing feedback and assessment literacy through specific training and dialogue.	Students actively engaged – positive affirmation of teaching efficacy/successful impact of teaching.

CURRICULUM WELLBEING THEME	Curriculum wellbeing sub-theme	Curriculum as a wellbeing inhibitor (students)	Impact for staff	Curriculum as a wellbeing moderator (students)	Impact for staff
GETTING STUDENTS BACK ON TRACK	Re-engaging the disengaged	Curriculum and related support are perceived as being uncoordinated or disconnected.	Students are underprepared and re-engagement with study is disrupted – requiring time-consuming remedial actions and clarifications.	The curriculum supports and scaffolds re-engagement with study.	Students actively engaged – positive affirmation of teaching efficacy/successful impact of teaching.
	Effective signposting	Curriculum perceived or experienced as disconnected from wider support needs.	Students are disengaged and/or dissatisfied – requiring time-consuming remedial actions.	The curriculum supports and scaffolds re-engagement with study and/or access or relevant support.	Students actively engaged – positive affirmation of teaching efficacy/successful impact of teaching.
	Collaboration between academics and support professionals	Curriculum and related support are perceived as being uncoordinated or disconnected.	Students are disengaged and/or dissatisfied – requiring time-consuming remedial actions.	The curriculum supports and scaffolds re-engagement with study and/or access or relevant support.	Students actively engaged – positive affirmation of teaching efficacy/successful impact of teaching.
	Maintaining boundaries	Professional boundaries are not clearly defined or perceived as ambiguous or uncertain.	Professional boundaries are tested or challenged requiring time-consuming remedial actions.	The curriculum reinforces clarity of understanding regarding professional boundaries,	Students actively engaged – positive affirmation of teaching efficacy/successful impact of teaching.
	When students present in crisis	Curriculum is perceived or experienced as an obstacle in crisis or a factor in crisis.	Professional boundaries are tested or challenged requiring time-consuming remedial actions.	The curriculum provides and enables point of access to necessary support in crisis. The curriculum is a place to turn to for support.	Crisis situations, however exceptional, are manageable as prepared for. Priorities manageable.

Resource 1b: curriculum wellbeing audit grid

The following audit grid provides a structure for reflection and a framework for determining the significance of individual development areas. Using notes generated through review of the curriculum wellbeing framework (Resource 1a), participants are invited to identify specific or general aspects of an identified curriculum that act as inhibitors and moderators related to the associated curriculum wellbeing theme. And, actively encouraging an evidence-based approach, determine an impact rating or notional significance score using the wellbeing impact matrix. Note that additional rows can be inserted to expand on significant themes as required.

Curriculum wellbeing sub-theme	Wellbeing inhibitors (-)	Evidence	Impact rating	Wellbeing moderators (+)	Evidence	Impact rating
Staff wellbeing						
Psychologically safe learning environments						
Social community, identity, and status						
Inclusivity						
Classroom culture						
Social belonging						
Deep learning	Eg compulsory study skills module ‘X’ identified as too challenging for some, insufficiently challenging or boring for others.	Student feedback, engagement, attainment, module evaluation, external examiner comments.	-36	Eg project module ‘Y’ involving students with developing solutions to real-world problems.	Student feedback, engagement, reflection, and/or attainment	+64
Meaning						
Internal cohesion						
Sustainable challenge						

Curriculum wellbeing sub-theme	Wellbeing inhibitors (-)	Evidence	Impact rating	Wellbeing moderators (+)	Evidence	Impact rating
Desirable difficulty						
Workload						
Assessment for learning						
Curriculum delivery						
Transitions						
Connection to pre-learning and experience						
Preparation for learning and assessment tasks						
Clarity in design, teaching and tasks						
Preparing for progression						
Assessment: how and why (assessment for learning)						
Scaffolded control of focus and assessment						
Preparing students for non-classroom learning spaces						
Self-awareness, self-efficacy, and self-attribution						
Self-management and meta learning						
Feedback						
Re-engaging the disengaged						
Effective signposting						
Collaboration between academics and support professionals						
Maintaining boundaries						
When students present in crisis						

Wellbeing impact matrix notes

Adapted from a standard risk matrix, the aim to structure consideration of impact significance to support prioritisation. For wellbeing moderators, this will focus on positive impact in learning (+), with lower scores indicating potential scope for curriculum development and higher scores highlighting areas of practice that could be shared or valuably adapted and applied more widely. For wellbeing inhibitors, this will focus on negative impact in learning (-). Higher scores may indicate risk where urgent action is required.

The impact score is derived by selecting a **likelihood** category (1, 2, 3, 4, or 5) and a corresponding **impact** factor (Negligible, Minor, Moderate, Major, Critical). Selecting the corresponding impact factor score, this is then multiplied with the likelihood category number. For example, as with the wellbeing inhibitor example included in the development plan related to deep learning, if the identified area/aspect of the curriculum were judged to have a **moderate** negative impact on wellbeing in learning and judged that this was **likely** to be experienced by most learners (12), it would receive a score of -48. Whereas, if an area of the curriculum were identified as being of **major** (4) moderating effect, and **likely** to be experienced by most students, it would receive a score of +64.

Impact					
Critical	5	10	15	20	25
Major	4	8	12	16	20
Moderate	3	6	9	12	15
Minor	2	4	6	8	10
Negligible	1	2	3	4	5
	Unlikely	**Rare**	**Possible**	**Likely**	**Almost certain**

Likelihood

Resource 1c: curriculum wellbeing development plan

Having identified and organised a priority list of actions, this proforma is designed to structure related planning.

Curriculum wellbeing development action	Development area	Actions required	Key stakeholders (who consulted and involved?)	Line of reporting (where flagged and reported)	Success measures (How do we determine actions have worked?)	Deadlines (by when?)
1						
2						
Etc.						

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