

Session Overview

In this session we explored some of the challenges that students face when embarking on work placements or study abroad (one of LivUni's Curriculum Principles), and put forward ideas about how students could be better supported to respond to these challenges.

Description of the Game

What you need:

- Space to mark out a grid on the floor. Our grid had 12 squares – 3 rows (3 challenges to face/scenarios) and 4 columns.
- To support considerations of inclusion/additional needs, we included student persona cards in each grid square (4 personas, randomly placed in each row face down).
- Masking tape (we used pretty colours)
- Post-its
- Accessible wallspace/board divided into 2 halves (or however many aspects you want to include). For us: Wellbeing/Teaching and Learning. (Wall of support).
- Tables/chairs for teams to work on
- 'Quest' support items (e.g. scarf, sword, shield, mirror etc. - be as creative as you can!)
- Something to win (in our case, crystals)
- To have worked out what your learning outcomes for players are, so that you can make sure vital information is covered during the game/facilitate the 'scoring process' (feedback).

We created the basic gameplay to explore placement issues, but it could easily be repurposed for different themes and areas, particularly where you want players to explore themes through different types of stakeholder viewpoints.

Before the game:

- Split players into teams of approx. 6 (max) - you need at least 2 teams
- Allocate the perspective from which they will put forward solutions to the scenarios: (in our game: 2 groups = group 1: Wellbeing perspective. Group 2: teaching & learning perspective.
- Each group chooses 3 items to support them through the quest.

Gameplay:

The game starts by each team choosing one of the four squares in the first row of the grid and turning over the persona card to reveal the persona of the student that they will support in this challenge.

'Placement Guides' (people running the game) read out the challenge facing teams for this row – (see the PowerPoint) – challenges relate to issues/barriers students commonly face when embarking on work placement or study abroad (see below).

Teams have just 2.5 minutes to:

- think of possible solutions to support their student through the challenge
- write each idea on a separate post-it note, and post these on the 'wall of support' board.
- Choose one of their items to symbolise or represent one of their ideas or general approach.

A timer indicates when the time is up and the constrained timing gives a fun, quick-fire, aspect to the game.

After the time is up, the post-it notes are read out by the guides, with an explanation given by a nominated team player who will also explain how their chosen item relates to an answer. The guides and the other team can 'challenge' and supplement ideas to gain extra points, and if particularly strong answers come up (e.g. answers which cover multiple perspectives of Teaching and Learning and Wellbeing) here also is an opportunity to pick up extra points, or mention things which haven't been considered (sneaky learning).

If the answers are strong enough, teams progress to the next square on the grid. If not, they have to 'pay' to move forward by surrendering a support item (worth a crystal) before progressing.

Gameplay continues repeating the above steps for the remaining two rows.

- At the end of gameplay the guides award up to ten crystals for the room (not to each team, although you could if you liked).
- With 2 teams: for each completed challenge they are given one crystal – so the whole group can gain 6 crystals. They lose crystals for having to use their support items to progress.
- Up to 4 crystals (discretionary) can be awarded for successful challenging between teams (2 crystals) and strong ideas (2 crystals).
- We were looking for engagement with the ideas of the other team (e.g. listening to their ideas and then augmenting them via a 'supplemental challenge', and ideas that were proactive, providing support before, during or after placement with a holistic approach from a teaching & learning and also wellbeing perspective.

Themes covered

The student personas were taken from the 4 overall student personas for the day, exploring key characteristics that represent the student population. The three scenarios we chose to focus on through the challenges were:

- Lack of confidence in applying for a placement, which might relate to lack of confidence, or other lifestyle or family commitments acting as a barrier.
- Problems arising during the placement, such as students finding that the placement was not what they expected or feeling isolated or overwhelmed.
- Fears over assessment on placement.
- Through one of the student personas (an XJTLU student), we also recognized the challenge presented to international students coming to Liverpool to study.

Links to Resources

University of Liverpool study abroad resources for students <https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/study-abroad/>

Study abroad blog by past students <https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/study-abroad/blog/>

JISC Transnational Education project <https://www.jisc.ac.uk/rd/projects/transnational-education>