Learning and Teaching Conference Student Inclusion & Belonging

Timetable and abstracts

Contents

01

Timetable

10:00 - 11:00 - Keynote

Student belonging and inclusion: 'duck to water' or 'fish out of water'.

Dr Julie Hulme

11:00 - 11:15 - Break

11:15 - 12:30 - LT Parallel 1

Enterprise at the heart of the city region, a collaborative approach to creating an ecosystem that supports student start-ups by LCR Founders.

Alison Pountney

Supporting International Students in the School of Health and Life Sciences.

Dr Nicola Baker

Decolonising the curriculum: Lessons learned about supporting a team to engage in decolonisation work.

Shirley Yearwood-Jackman

Embedding sustainability into a final year module: the importance of empathy.

Laura Menzies

Building Community Through an Undergraduate Conference: Celebrating Success and Fostering Identity in LCF.

Rebecca Dixon

11:15 - 12:30 - LT Parallel 2

Learning in the Time of Covid: Student Engagement and the International Students Club on the Master of Public Health (MPH) programme

Jennie Day & Vickie Bates

Jumping on board the pandemic express: supporting nursing students working on the front line during severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2).

Vicky Thornton

Exploring Nursing Students Understanding and Experiences of Academic Resilience. A Qualitative Study.

Carolyn Lees

Formative Assessment & Assessment Support Strategy

Lorna Mitchell

Psychology new module PSYC398/397 Business and Enterprise in Psychology.

Giulia Rampone

11:15 - 12:30 - LT Parallel 3

Peer Networking Disguised as 'Fun'.

Helen Scott

Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) – A go to guide

Kate Murray

Enhancing the Online Learning Environment in Higher Education: Orthoptics BSc(Hons).

Ashli Milling

Achieving inclusivity through the re-desing of continuous assessment in Chemistry curriculum.

Konstantin Luzyanin

An Interdisciplinary Approach to Communication in Clinical Settings.

Sarah McKernon

12:30 - 13:30 - Lunch

13:30 - 14:30 - Workshop Parallel 1a

Schwartz Rounds

Helen Orton

13:30 - 14:30 - Workshop Parallel 2a

Enhancing the curriculum with Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)

Dr Matt Murphy & Nick Bunyan

14:30 - 14:45 - Break

14:45 - 15:45 - Workshop Parallel 1b

Supporting scholarship in the Faculty of Health and Life Sciences.

Luciane V Mello, Francine Watkins, Luke Dawson and Mark Jellicoe

14:45 - 15:45 - Workshop Parallel 2b

SHELTA: Supporting Mental Wellbeing on a VR Island

Dr Pete Bridge

02

Keynote Abstract

Dr Julie Hulme

Student belonging and inclusion: 'duck to water' or 'fish out of water'.

A sense of belonging at university predicts student retention and attainment, and is also central to student mental health. In this session, we will explore some of the ways in which diversity and belonging can interact, and the ways in which we can create an inclusive and supporting learning environment through our everyday teaching, to help more students to feel like 'ducks' than 'fish'.

We'll reflect on our own experiences of university, the factors that affect student transitions and engagement with higher education, and ways in which we can ensure that we can hear and learn from diverse student voices in our classrooms. Julie will lead us through some of her research on these topics, whilst also taking a pragmatic and interactive approach to positively addressing issues of diversity, inclusion, and belonging.

03

LT Parallel 1 Abstracts

Alison Poutney

Enterprise at the heart of the city region, a collaborative approach to creating an ecosystem that supports student start-ups by LCR Founders.

LCR Founders is a collaborative project between UoL and LJMU encouraging our students to work collaboratively in order to form co-founded start-ups in the Liverpool City Region.

The LCR Founders project sits within the Student Success Team, Careers and Employability who work together to improve a student's sense of wellbeing, belonging, social mobility, retention, and attainment.

As the project is mainly focused on creating a diverse and inclusive environment that supports the authentic development of collaborative work and co-founded start-ups, it is fundamental that we build a solid community of student entrepreneurs, encouraging a culture of risk-taking, confidence, and belief that starting a business is a viable career option.

The work completed on the project so far includes:
- Building an online community of enterprising and entrepreneurial students
- Making sessions accessible via the language we use
- Creating programme and workshops for students to naturally meet others and work collaboratively on authentic real-world challenges and projects
- Creating an eco-system for our students and grads throughout the Liverpool City Region
- Providing opportunities to network and meet Liverpool businesses and potential employers

We would love the opportunity to share our work at the conference.

Dr Nicola Baker

Supporting International Students in the School of Health and Life Sciences.

Supporting International Students is a vital part of Student Inclusion and Belonging. In 2020/21 the UK hosted 605,130 international students this is an 8.7% rise from 2019/20. The University of Liverpool has more than 8,000 international students which represents almost 30% of the student population. In the School of Health and Life Sciences the international students originate mainly from China, Hong Kong, Oman, India, The Philippines and Nigeria and there have been increasing difficulties with teaching and supporting these students in the university setting and on clinical placement. The research that has been completed by the school is building an evidence base to develop a comprehensive plan to improve the international students' sense of inclusion and belonging and therefore fits well into this conference theme.

Shirley Yearwood-Jackman

Decolonising the curriculum: Lessons learned about supporting a team to engage in decolonisation work.

This presentation discusses how a team of librarians who teach on various modules have been prepared to support academics to decolonise their curriculum. Decolonisation of the curriculum seeks to enable academics to help students to recognise, discuss and address how privilege manifests within different disciplines whilst also ensuring that students are able to understand and be exposed to knowledge from multiple perspectives. By decolonising the curriculum all students are prepared for global citizenship and to feel that they can see themselves reflected in the curriculum. This results in a feeling of student inclusion and belonging for all students. By showcasing how a workshop series has been used to develop a team of librarians who teach, the session will enable all attendees to consider how they could implement a similar programme to support colleagues to engage in decolonisation work.

Laura Menzies

Embedding sustainability into a final year module: the importance of empathy.

This session focuses on my experience of amending my module in supply chain management to add a focus on sustainability throughout. I will discuss my motivations for the change, including discussion about our role as educators in dealing with the climate crisis. We adopted a dialogical teaching structure for all face-to face sessions on this module to create a safe space for students to discuss their ideas. We used a flipped classroom approach to ensure that students had the opportunity to prepare for discussions which helped them feel willing and able to take part. Carbon literacy was introduced to provide students with a clear understanding of why sustainability is a key theme in modern day supply chain management.

Empathy was at the heart of our approach. Climate change can be an emotive topic for some, especially those focused on changing their own consumption habits. For other students, this is a topic that they have not grappled with yet, so it is important as a facilitator to strike a balance so as not to make these students feel bad. Sustainability issues are often referred to as 'wicked problems' due to the complex nature of our environment. Feelings of hopelessness are not uncommon. We introduced information about the practical ways we could make a difference as individuals and delivered this carefully to our students.

The high level of interaction on the module helped foster a sense of belonging. Intersectionality created wonderful opportunities for discussion about the wicked problem of climate change.

Rebecca Dixon

Building Community Through an Undergraduate Conference: Celebrating Success and Fostering Identity in LCF

This session will offer a brief overview of the lead-up to and rolling out of the LCF Celebrating Student Success event to be held in early May 2022. Originally envisaged, pre-pandemic, as a means of fostering UG research culture and achievement in our department, the event has developed as a means by which a sense of belonging and inclusion can be nurtured through highlighting the successes -- academic and other -- of our students as they reach the end of another challenging academic year. The session will discuss the initial rationale behind the event, and the means by which this was modified and developed to respond to the needs of students to feel included and part of a community as they navigate their identities as learners, and in some cases as graduates, in a fragmented and repairing post-pandemic world.

04

LT Parallel 2 Abstracts

Jennie Day & Vicki Bates

Learning in the Time of Covid: Student Engagement and the International Students Club on the Master of Public Health (MPH) programme.

This session will provide a critical reflection of changes made to the MPH programme following the move to online delivery during the pandemic. Changes facilitated included the use of digital collaborative and engagement technologies. Breakout rooms on Zoom were also utilised to stimulate discussions and increase engagement. Regular breaks were incorporated into online sessions to reduce fatigue with a maximum session length of 40 minutes with a 20-minute break and this worked well. Student support was a priority and academic advisors held regular Zoom meetings with advisees.

In addition to these changes, we simulated some of the supportive and social interactions experienced on campus. For example, facilitated breakout rooms for coffee breaks allowing students to socialise with other students during the breaks. Social events and inclusive quizzes to facilitate social interaction were also made available.

We were very conscious of international students, who were unable to travel home and were very isolated. Cognisant of this JD set up an international students' club. Regular meetings were held throughout the year to provide additional support and advice, signpost students to resources and services within the University and to increase confidence and encourage engagement in class discussions. The international students set up their own WhatsApp group and met together which led to international students developing friendships and giving each other advice and support. This resulted in increased class contributions from international students with last year's graduates reporting how useful and empowering they found the initiative.

Vicky Thornton

Jumping on board the pandemic express: supporting nursing students working on the front line during severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2).

We will share ways in which the Nursing team encouraged student inclusion and belonging during the COVID19 pandemic – focussing on how we have continued to develop the strategies introduced during this time.

A nationwide, strategic decision for healthcare students to have the opportunity to be 'NHS workers' rather than 'University learners' required rapid action and agile problem solving. Staff were required to make quick pragmatic decisions in a rapidly evolving situation.

To facilitate student inclusion, the Programme Lead created information recordings and offered frequent opportunities for question and answer sessions. Working with UoL clinical psychologists, podcasts focussing on particular aspects of coping and developing resilience were developed. Many of our nursing students opting in to support the NHS workforce returned to their hometown: staff were required to provide extensive support to students across the country. Academic Advisors kept in touch weekly with their advisees, either via email or WhatsApp group and the Year Tutors also provided bi-weekly updates. The staff team met weekly for peer support

The Director of Studies role became one of being 'present', frequently needing to make quick decisions and, or signpost students to appropriate health and financial advice. Having oversight of the well-being of all students, the DoS was able to target support as necessary.

Peer support was key amongst students, with the Nursing Society taking a lead in providing both informal peer support and also organised appropriate social activities to promote inclusion.

Focus now is on building upon this inclusion in a sustainable manner.

Carolyn Lees

Exploring Nursing Students Understanding and Experiences of Academic Resilience. A Qualitative Study.

Findings from previous research have indicated the importance of developing a sense of belonging and connectiveness to order to encourage university student engagement and well being. The importance of maintaining a sense of belonging in this study was evident in relation to positive academic outcomes and students being able to manage the stress and anxiety associated with the academic requirements of their course. The study suggests there is a need for the university to acknowledge the importance of facilitating academic resilience amongst the student body with opportunities for promoting a sense of connectiveness and belonging linked strongly to student well being and positive academic achievement.

Lorna Mitchell

Enhancing student success through the introduction of an innovative Assessment Support Strategy

This presentation will discuss a pilot educational innovation project for first year law students that takes a programmatic, horizontal approach to assessment support and formative assessment. So, instead of concentrating on what each individual module can offer in terms of assessment support, we focus upon what our students are being offered in terms of assessment support across the entire year.

This presentation aims to share good practice and ideas around the provision of a varied package of assessment support activities and the importance of emphasising the transferability of skills learned to other modules. It will focus upon a planned lecture that (1) incorporates rapid feedback, peer evaluation and self-reflection (2) aims to boost student engagement with feedback and (3) promotes students' sense of belonging.

Giulia Rampone

Psychology new module PSYC398/397 Business and Enterprise in Psychology

This module is highly multidisciplinary, including external (Young Enterprise) and internal (C&E, ULMS, Brett Center) collaborations, and it is heavily based on experiential learning and teamwork. We developed effective methods to monitor and assess groupwork assessments (with the use of Buddy Check). We believe the module is a great example of effectively introducing entrepreneurship in non-business related disciplines and this is demonstrated by a fair number of successful outcomes from our students (two award-winning teams in external competitions against other Universities, this year).

More importantly we believe that overall this module has significantly contributed to increase inclusivity and sense of belonging. It allows work and interaction with diverse and unknown individuals (these being either other fellow students or mentors) and the opportunity to proudly represent UoL at external events. We have evidence that our group-allocation and ice-breaking methods were positively evaluated by the students, who embraced the challenge of working with unknown classmates.

05

LT Parallel 3 Abstracts

Helen Scott

Peer Networking Disguised as 'Fun'

On a programme with over 600 students studying on it, it can be difficult to meet people and feel like you belong. From day one, we incorporate peer networking opportunities throughout the programme to enable students to meet other students in both formal and informal settings. This helps to foster a sense of community amongst both staff and students as well as allowing opportunities for staff to gain deeper insights into students' experiences. We can then respond to students' feedback and look for opportunities to improve their experience. Being part of a vibrant peer network helps students to feel a sense of belonging and knowing someone else on the programme encourages them to get involved in more things as they have a friend to go with. Our students give us really good feedback on their experiences and this has been seen in our NSS scores where we are top of the Russell Group for student satisfaction. In this session, we will:

- Explain our main event which we do on day one to help our students settle in and make friends
- Show you our positive student feedback from students about to graduate that references their day one experience and how it helped them with a sense of belonging
- Outline some of the follow up events and activities we do which enable students to strengthen existing relationships and make new ones.

Kate Murray

Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) – A go to guide

The Peer Assisted Learning pilot was implemented in the 2021/22 academic year, this is overseen by Kate Murray (PAL lead in Careers & Employability) and is supported by the European Centre for SI-PASS. Peer assisted learning has been shown to have a range of social and academic benefits for students (both participants and peer 'leaders') (Keenan, 2014), it provides a learning and teaching approach that can build student inclusion and belonging into the curriculum. Most importantly we have identified that PAL Has enabled students to feel empowered and supported with their learning.

In this lightening talk Kate will outline how you could embed PAL within your modules for a future academic year.

Ashli Milling

Enhancing the Online Learning Environment in Higher Education: Orthoptics BSc(Hons)

The aim of the project was to evaluate student attitudes and expectations towards online learning on the Orthoptic BSc (Hons) during the pandemic. Students' attitudes to online learning, views and opinions of learning in a pandemic, and their overall expectations of the online environment was carefully considered. The rationale of this study was to broaden our understanding of the online learning environment and obtain valuable information that may be able to enhance online learning, specifically for Orthoptic students, in the future. Throughout the project the social learning theory was explored in relation to engagement and the online environment. During the surveys and focus groups 3 common themes arisen: Communication and organisation, engagement and support. However, through each of the themes there was a common topic which kept surfacing which was a need for social interaction and connectivity amongst students, peers and staff. It became clear that social interaction requires social presence which relies on effective communication. From this study there were a number of barriers to each aspect which contributed to social learning. The key areas for improvement were identified as communication to students, including delivery of clear expectations to improve student motivation; encouragement of student interaction and presence to enhance the learning environment, and the implementation of additional support to enable the students to feel more connected. Ultimately, ensuring social presence and interaction is considered in the online environment will improve student engagement and experience and may improve the students sense of belonging.

Konstantin Luzyanin

Achieving inclusivity through the re-desing of continuous assessment in Chemistry curriculum

Many traditional forms of continuous assessment in STEM education, and in particular in Chemistry, can hardly respect principles of socio-cultural and linguistic diversity, limit the development of general chemistry cognitive skills that require reflection and logic construction, and diversity of special educational needs resulting in students' isolation and elusive underperformance.

In this report, we introduce and discuss alternative approaches to continuous assessment used in the large-scale core- and several smaller-scale Chemistry modules, that are based on self-evaluation of own findings and critical reflection upon them as well as on the outcomes of teamwork rather than on numerical analysis of outputs. Approaches designed and introduced so far are (i) more inclusive and broadly applicable towards other different modules in Chemistry education, (ii) varied and allowing to overcome limitations described above, and (iii) at the same time respect integrity of the teaching and learning process.

Sarah McKernon

An Interdisciplinary Approach to Communication in Clinical Settings

Within the School of Dentistry, international students have struggled with patient communication in clinical settings due to cultural and communication barriers. This can lead to them feeling challenged or uncomfortable.

In addition to reported culture shock experienced by many international students, the dentistry cohort must contend with the challenges of NHS healthcare governance structures and requirements. They may also experience a transition from expert practitioner in their own cultural setting to that of relative novice in the UK's healthcare setting. This has the potential to result in students having less confidence in their programme, and may impact upon student experience. In order to address this and develop learning needs, we designed an innovative session involving professional actors, the School of Dentistry, and the English Language Centre (ELC). Scenarios were designed to enable students to explore their personal beliefs, discuss new cultural experiences with their peers, and receive constructive feedback in a supportive environment. Student evaluation confirmed 100% of students believed the session to be beneficial to their learning and the novel session was an effective teaching modality. However, it is only through supervisor observation, that true effectiveness will be measurable.

06

Workshop Parallel 1a

Helen Orton

Schwarts Rounds

The FHLS' interprofessional, cross-departmental Schwartz Round team has been running Schwartz Rounds (SR) for healthcare students since February 2016, providing a structured and reflective space to discuss the emotional aspects of their work and support their capacity to deliver compassionate care. They help normalize strong emotions arising from clinical work during training, as well as enabling students to have greater insight, compassion for and appreciation of the roles and work of other healthcare professionals.

COVID-19 heightened the emotional precariousness and stress of clinical work. The team rapidly pivoted to providing Schwartz Rounds online. They became part of the crucial emotional and psychological support needed for healthcare students in the pandemic and formed part of the University's "Project Ayres" offer. Having run 24 Rounds face to face over four years, the Schwartz Rounds team ensured continued delivery of the Rounds to students remotely, the model being adapted for delivery via Zoom: over 18-months, we ran 12 online Rounds. Student feedback showed how much the connectivity of Rounds was valued during the pandemic lockdowns. Since that switch, 430 students have attended twelve Rounds. Student feedback shows that 86% of attendees completely agreed that they took solace from hearing others talking openly about the emotional impact of clinical work in the context of the pandemic. In particular; "Emotional but very insightful. The doctor's account of anxieties and fears of COVID and the COVID patient was particularly poignant at the time. I think it would benefit a lot of people to hear it".

07

Workshop Parallel 2a

Dr Matt Murphy & Nick Bunyan

Enhancing the curriculum with Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)

This workshop is open to any academic, professional services staff, and students interested in enhancing Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in their learning and teaching. NUS research indicates many students feel it is important to leave their time in formal education with the knowledge and skills required to address sustainability challenges. ESD typically engages students in transformative and active forms of learning and teaching (including learning through extra-curriculum opportunities) that build students abilities to work in teams (often interdisciplinary), develop confidence through participation with real-world problem-solving, valuing diverse perspectives from peers & other stakeholders, reflect on their own values and behaviours, making new friends and connections.

08

Workshop Parallel 1b

Luciane V Mello, Francine Watkins, Luke Dawson & Mark Jellicoe

Supporting scholarship in the Faculty of Health and Life Sciences

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The Faculty of Health and Life Sciences Teaching & Scholarship group has embarked on a proactive strategy to develop guidance and interventions to define, support, recognise and promote scholarship for staff providing education in the Faculty. This interactive workshop will start with by presenting an overview of newly developed guidance and resources designed to facilitate professional development and career progression within Teaching and Scholarship. Delegates will then be encouraged to input into this resource development, share their experiences and discuss some of the challenges and opportunities relating to Scholarship.

Scholarship is the continuum of activity that advances educator practice and knowledge for the benefit of all stakeholders. Students are key stakeholders in their own education, no matter what their background, and it is important that they recognise how their University not only provides their education but also provides leadership in teaching through scholarly work.

The appropriate incorporation of scholarship in education therefore aligns strongly to the conference theme, 'Student Inclusion and Belonging' because available data highlight the importance of supporting and encouraging student agency in successful educational outcomes. Supporting, recognising and rewarding the scholarship of staff ultimately leads to an improved student experience through encouraging evidence based practice and innovation.

09

Workshop Parallel 2b

Dr Pete Bridge

SHELTA: Supporting Mental Wellbeing on a VR Island

Students in the School of Health Sciences attend clinical placements around the country as part of their pre-registration training. Previous research has identified how UK health students can experience feelings of anxiety and isolation while on placement. This Office for Students funded project responds to a call for innovative digital solutions for mental wellbeing. IN partnership with a local software development company, we have developed the "Support & Help Environment for Learners To Access" (SHELTA) which transports students away from their potentially isolated environment and their laptops to a 3D VR tropical island. The initiative is based on existing evidence highlighting potential reduction in anxiety arising from use of VR environments.

The island enables students to don one of our Quest 2 VR headsets and meet with support tutors, engage in peer reflection and also undertake mindfulness sessions; alternatively they can sit by the sea watching the butterflies. It features a secluded cave area for confidential appointments with a tutor, a fire pit down by the waves for group reflection and a sheltered Zen Garden area with mindfulness resources and bespoke audio tracks to facilitate mediation, mindfulness and relaxation. We are currently evaluating the impact of SHELTA on our students' mental wellbeing and mindfulness via a randomised controlled trial and validated questionnaires.

This demonstration will take you on a guided tour of the island to show you the support features and let you experience a calming break from everyday life. Come and seek some SHELTA with us.