University of Glasgow

4th Annual University of Glasgow Learning and Teaching Conference:

Learning in a global research-intensive university: developing graduate attributes

21 April 2011

Welcome to the fourth annual University of Glasgow Learning and Teaching Conference

The theme for this year's conference: 'Learning in a global research-intensive university: developing graduate attributes' has been chosen to explore the way in which we are rising to the challenges of continuing to enhance the student experience as we seek to extend our global reach. In this respect, this year's conference lies at the intersection of our Learning and Teaching and Internationalisation strategies.

Our taught provision continues to develop and is now attracting students from more countries and cultures than ever before. At the same time, we are expanding the range of trans-national education activities that we are involved in and this is impacting on how we deliver our taught courses. If we are to maintain and enhance the student experience going forward, we must continue to build on the excellent practice and culture of innovation in pedagogy that we have established in this University.

This year, Senate approved a revision of our Learning and Teaching Strategy (available from: **www.glasgow.ac.uk/services/planning/staff/public/learningandteachingstrategy**) that identifies areas of priority and focus for the years ahead. It recognises that, as our portfolio diversifies, we must continue to support our student population in engaging and deriving maximum benefit from their educational and life experiences at the University. In the next few years, there will be an increased emphasis on graduate attributes and engaging students with their own personal development. The potential benefits of this to the student as an individual, to employers and our learning environment are significant and worth pursuing.

As in previous years, our 2011 conference is an opportunity to celebrate what we do well, and to challenge our thinking as we look to the needs of our current and future students. I hope that you will find it an opportunity to learn from colleagues, and that you will work with me to build on past successes to further enhance the learning environment which helps make our students successful.

Frank Coton
Vice Principal (Learning and Teaching)

Keynote Addresses

Graduate Attributes: Spin or Education?

Anna Jones

Glasgow Caledonian University

Graduate attributes are not a new phenomenon and it is arguable that universities have been teaching attributes for quite some time. What is new is the way in which graduate attributes have been appropriated, and the meanings now attached to them. This presentation argues that the term 'graduate attributes' has been used in an untheorised and rather loosely defined way. This paper, in response, explores the situated nature of graduate attributes and the implications this has for research, teaching and higher education policy. It argues that contextual and individual factors have a significant influence upon the ways in which graduate attributes are conceptualised and taught. Further, it suggests that a serious examination of graduate attributes requires a commensurate examination of the role of the university.

Biography

Anna is a Reader in Education at the Centre for Research in Lifelong Learning and the Caledonian Academy. Prior to this she was at King's College London and The University of Melbourne. Her research interests include institutional change, graduate attributes, disciplinary cultures and academic identity. In her previous roles she was responsible for the design, co-ordination and delivery of a range of transition, student learning and academic development programmes.

Refereed Articles

Jones, A. (2010) Not some shrink-wrapped beautiful package: Using poetry to explore academic life. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 15(5) 591-606

Jones, A. (2010) Generic attributes in accounting: the significance of the disciplinary context. *Accounting Education*, 19(1 & 2) 5 - 21

Jones, A. (2009) Re-disciplining generic attributes: the disciplinary context in focus. *Studies in Higher Education*, 34(1) 85-100

Jones, A. (2009) Generic attributes as espoused theory: the importance of context. *Higher Education*, 58(2) 175-191

Keynote Addresses

International students as a resource in the development of graduates' intercultural skills and attributes

Janette Ryan

Director, Teaching International Students Project, Higher Education Academy

The Teaching International Students Project (www.heacademy.ac.uk) hosted by the Higher Education Academy aims to promote effective teaching and learning practices for both international and home students. Its philosophical approach is that rather than viewing international students as a problem to be solved, international students can become a resource for the development of intercultural skills and attributes for both home and international students so that they can effectively live and work in a more interconnected world. Although many universities strive to develop these skills in their graduates, it can be hard for academics to operationalise these aims in their classroom. This short presentation will illustrate the TIS database of teaching and learning research and resources developed to support internationalised pedagogy and curriculum praxis.

Biography

Janette Ryan is Director of the Higher Education Academy's Teaching International Students Project. She is also a Visiting Professor at Leeds Metropolitan University and Visiting Fellow and Research Associate of the University of Oxford's China Centre. Her publications include:

Ryan, J. (2011) *Education reform in China: Changing concepts, contexts and practices*, London: Routledge (forthcoming).

Ryan, J. (2010) *China's higher education reform and internationalisation*, London: Routledge.

Ryan, J., Slethaug, G. (2009) *International education and the Chinese learner*, Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.

Carroll, J. and Ryan, J., (2005) *Teaching international students: Improving learning for all*, London: Routledge.

Ryan, J. (2000) *A guide to teaching international students*, Oxford: Oxford Centre for Staff and Learning Development.

Keynote Addresses

Graeme Waddell

This presentation will look at the attributes that industry values in graduates and how industry seeks to develop these attributes in the early stages of a graduate's career.

Biography:

Graeme Waddell is currently a Director of Energen Biogas (a renewable energy company) and former business director of Rolls Royce Aero Repair and Overhaul. He is also a member of the Board of Scottish Enterprise.

Learning & Teaching Conference 2011 - Abstracts

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W1 'It's a lifeline.' (Computing Science student). Is http://khios.dcs.gla.ac.uk/writing/ the way forward for writing skills? Come and see.

Presenter: Katie Grant, AAW Project Officer

Co-authors: Quintin Cutts and Steve Draper, Computing Science, Psychology

This workshop is aimed at those who, with academic excellence, graduate attributes and student retention in mind, are interested in materials that help students improve their writing skills without involving staff in hours of extra work. The workshop provides the chance to assess Advancing Academic Writing (AAW), which offers subject-specific information, examples and exercises, all generated by real student problems observed in this university. AAW has been successfully trialled, is linked to the Academic Writing Skills Programme and has been adopted by ten (at time of writing) subject areas.

At this workshop, interested academics will:

- experience what using AAW feels like for a tutor marking assignments
- see what using AAW feels like for a student actively following up the feedback
- understand how adopting AAW embeds writing into the learning process in line with new thinking about bridging the gap between Learning and Teaching (which includes writing skills) and academic study (Wingate, 2006)
- discuss the results of three trials, including focus group findings
- exchange views as to the financial viability and practical difficulties of subject-specific on-line writing skills resources, e.g. should writing skills practice be made compulsory for students?

It would be helpful if participants brought, on a piece of paper, a short paragraph of student writing displaying typical problems, both grammatical and structural, from their subject-area. It would also be helpful if participants brought a laptop with wireless internet access.

W2   Developing and Using Student Generated Content

Presenters: Paul Bishop, Lorna Morrow, David Simmons and Steve Draper, Psychology

Involving students in the generation of content for teaching and learning support (Student Generated Content, SGC) has become increasingly common over recent years. This is due to the emergence of facilitating web technology (Wheeler et al., 2008), and also an increased understanding of its role in enhancing student engagement (Pritchard et al., 2008). The students receiving SGC may benefit from having the content communicated to them by peers, who more sensitive to potential difficulties within the topic, and the level of background knowledge. The benefits to students producing such content include engaging in enquiry based learning as they investigate the topic, and enhanced communication abilities as they grapple with how to convey the content so as to best support their peers in their learning. Such skills (research, communication) and autonomy are important graduate attributes to be encouraged.

Recently, the School of Psychology has used a number of different methods of encouraging students to generate content. This has included students both generating content within-courses using EBL or as a follow-on to assessment (e.g. wikis, podcasts). Students have also contributed to the development of skills resources (e.g. presentation skills).

The workshop will focus on the principles and practicalities of developing SGC.

First, some of the thinking behind the use and development of SGC will be presented, alongside examples from current use in Psychology.

The second section will be small-group facilitated discussions of the use of SGC. Groups will be encouraged to develop a plan for using SGC in hypothetical case study scenarios. Further, participants will be asked to consider a problematic learning situation from their own experience which could perhaps be improved using SGC. The groups will be asked to think about how use of SGC can impact on student engagement both positively and negatively, and its general educational worth for each case. Also the practicalities of the use of SGC will be considered, including how students will generate and publish the content, and will engage with any technology used. Groups will be asked to consider how SGC can be monitored for

quality.   The group facilitators will be the named authors, all of whom have experience of using SGC within courses and/or projects, and some students who have been involved with SGC.

The session will end with a brief summary from each group and a Q&A session.

1A Improving support for Graduate Teaching Assistants, and encouraging engagement with Graduate Attributes: A mutually beneficial strategy?

Presenter: Maureen Farrell, Education

Co-authors: Eric Yao, Dorothy Aidulis and AKM Adam, Physics and Astronomy, Life Sciences, Critical Studies

In the last 18 months the University of Glasgow has undertaken a project to explore perceptions of Graduate Attributes amongst its staff and students. Alongside this QAA Scotland established its 2008-10 enhancement theme as 'Graduates for the 21st Century'. One outcome of both the project and the University's engagement with the enhancement theme has been the development of a Graduate Attributes matrix which re-defines those attributes students should be looking to cultivate whilst studying at the University.

Four Academic Development Fellows (ADFs), one from each college, are now working jointly with the LTC and their respective colleges to identify ways in which these Graduate Attributes can be implemented into the colleges' course and programme provision. This is one of the main aims for the project: "Academic Development Fellowships: identifying and supporting colleges' priorities". A further aim is to improve college-level support and development for Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs). This included firstly identifying the different groups of GTAs, and the teaching activities they are involved in, which can vary greatly within and between institutions. Potential gaps in support for GTAs were then ascertained, and we now propose some ways of bridging these gaps at college level, to improve opportunities for GTA development, and enhance the learning environment of both themselves, and the students they teach. Further, GTAs represent a potentially powerful way of engaging students, by making the Graduate Attributes "real" for both themselves and the students they teach, and transforming the Graduate Attributes from abstract rhetoric to achievable goals.

This presentation will outline the findings of our project in relation to both implementation of the new Graduate Attributes and support for GTAs. It aims to highlight good practice, identify some of the obstacles to enhancing Graduate Attributes through GTAs, and consider the implications for learning in a global research-intensive university.

1B The Graduate Skills Programme (GSP): Supporting transferable skills development and reflection amongst undergraduate and postgraduate students

Presenter: Dickon Copsey, College of Social Sciences Employability Officer and GSP Coordinator.

Co-Authors: Karen Sawyer, Final year Politics undergraduate and GSP Tutor and Katharina Koenig, Final year Economics with Business Economics undergraduate and GSP Tutor

Launched in October 2010 the Graduate Skills Programme (GSP) supports students from across the College of Social Sciences to reflect on and enhance the transferable skills they are developing through their academic studies and their participation in extra-curricular and work-related activities. Interest in this voluntary skills programme has been significant with approximately 400 undergraduate and postgraduate taught students registering within the first two months of the Programme's launch.

The Programme is structured around the four key elements of academic skills, extra-curricular activities, work-related learning and jobs and careers. GSP 'sessions', 'self-directed activities' and 'workshops' are delivered by GSP staff, the Careers Service, the Student Learning Service, the SRC, the Student Volunteer Service, Student Enterprise and graduate employers.

GSP participants are supported through workshops, the GSP skills handbook, a dedicated Moodle site and annotated reflection tables to compile online 'Professional Development Portfolios'. These Mahara ePortfolios include personalised competency frameworks, critical incidents reflecting on specific examples of skills development, reflection on the impact of skills development on academic studies and future employability and detailed professional development plans.

The Programme was developed to address a range of college-specific and institution-wide student development issues, including:

- a need to provide a strategic impetus for student enaggement with PDP
- a professed student interest in a more structured approach to employability development (Cashman, 2007)

- an emerging interest in mapping and enhancing students' 'graduate attributes' and their ability to identify, reflect on and take ownership of their development of key attributes and skills

This presentation will provide an overview of the development, operation and impact of this new College-level skills programme and discuss its potential to provide a 'linked model' (Atlay, 2009) of student engagement where students are explicitly encouraged to reflect on the generic competencies they are developing both through their academic studies and their extra-curricular activities.

1C   A Postgraduate-led Teaching Initiative: Undergraduate Creative Writing Workshops at the University of Glasgow

Presenters: Micaela Maftei and Elizabeth Reeder, Critical Studies

This paper describes the development of a series of creative writing workshops organised and implemented by postgraduate members of Glasgow University's Creative Writing Programme. In the past, the University has offered such workshops to undergraduates in all departments and colleges, but funding sources have vanished in recent years, and so did the workshops. Inspired by high student demand, successful efforts were made to reinstate them.

Despite two years 'off', demand had only strengthened. An advertisement was sent to all undergraduates in the University; applicants were asked to submit a writing sample and a short explanation of why they were interested in taking this non-credit, entirely extra-curricular course. Within 24 hours, 50 responses were received; within two weeks, we were able to schedule seven weekly classes, four run by Creative Writing MFA students and three run by Creative Writing PhD students.

All planning, organisation, teaching time and assessment is unpaid and led by postgraduate students. In addition to weekly two-hour teaching sessions, the instructors will perform various self-assessment exercises: each will observe a peer's class, and be observed in turn; Dr Reeder will observe all sections once. Weekly verbal student feedback will be complemented by more extensive written feedback gathered in the final class.

Instructors will gain useful, transferable skills: in addition to sharpening teaching skills, planning for the 8-week course is largely up to them, with feedback regarding their choices to be discussed in post-teaching meetings. Class preparation, gathering student feedback and scheduling is therefore their responsibility, preparing them for career demands. The work students do in these workshops brings benefits that can be carried over into their own, varied disciplines – students will be committing to extra-curricular activities, balancing workshop demands with other university work, finding ways to take their creative growth into their other (academic) writing, and stretching their understanding of what 'creative' writing means. They will also benefit from being part of a writing/student community that brings them into contact with individuals and writing practice they

might not otherwise encounter in their university career, thus widening the breadth of their undergraduate learning experience.

This presentation will illustrate the overall development of the endeavour, the response it was met with, evidence of success and reasoned plans for future workshops. Drawing on recorded feedback from students and teachers, the presentation aims to sketch the reason for the popularity of these workshops across campus, the method of planning the workshops and implementing teaching, and the benefits of providing such a high-demand learning setting.

2A International student-led research: lessons from a collaboration between the University of Glasgow and the University of Dar es Salaam

Presenters: Jo Sharp and John Briggs, Geographical and Earth Sciences

Co-author: Opportuna Kweka, University of Dar es Salaam

This presentation will examine the benefits of internationalisation by discussing the example of a series of collaborative undergraduate research visits between the University of Glasgow and the University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM), Tanzania. In an attempt to support internationalisation as a two-way process, the research visits have been designed around the concept of collaboration. The Glasgow students have been paired with students from UDSM and each of the pairs undertakes a research project they have designed together. Although it is the Glasgow students who have the most obvious international experience, as it is they who have travelled to Africa, questionnaire and focus group data has been examined in an attempt to evaluate the impact on both the UK and Tanzanian student groups involved in the 2010 visit. This presentation will present some of the outcomes as they relate to student-centred and research-led learning, confidence building and intercultural experience.

2B Pre-entry Widening Participation programmes at the University of Glasgow: a study of success and impact on progression and retention.

Presenters: Neil Croll, Alison Browitt and Kelly Hedge-Holmes, Recruitment and International Office

Co-authors: Scott Iguchi-Sherry and David Hamilton, Recruitment and International Office

The University of Glasgow has well-established and well-respected widening participation programmes including the Top-Up Programme, Summer School and Access courses. This presentation will focus on pre-entry Summer School, the Top-Up Programme for school pupils and the new Reach programme, based on Top-Up, promoting access to the high demand professions. These aim to attract and prepare able students from non-traditional backgrounds who may not consider or aspire to progressing to higher education, or who may need advice and assistance with access and preparation for successful study.

School/ campus sessions expand on study skills from school to prepare prospective students for the transition to the new learning environments and methods they will encounter in higher education, by academically rigorous study in specific subject areas. The Top-Up and Reach programmes work with pupils in low participation schools, raising aspirations for progression to higher education, contributing to attainment of entry qualifications at school, and the programme assessment profiles are used by University Admissions Officers across Scotland to aid access. Summer School is targeted at prospective students who have applied to the University of Glasgow who, due to their non-traditional backgrounds, may require more preparation and orientation, or a Summer School profile to assist with admissions.

These programmes are delivered and facilitated by academic staff/ postgraduate tutors and undergraduate students. By introducing prospective students from widening participation backgrounds to an authentic experience of higher education the programmes act as an early induction to University to aid transition, integration and retention. The skills gained form the basis of the attributes necessary to become successful students and, over time, will be developed into higher level graduate attributes. Additionally, involvement of current undergraduate and

postgraduate students in development and delivery of activities contributes to development of their own graduate attributes. In this presentation we will describe the underpinning theories behind the activities, and demonstrate impact on access to the University of Glasgow, and student retention and success.

2C   Challenging right-answer syndrome in a taught postgraduate programme in accounting and finance

Presenter: Christopher Coles, Business

A great deal has been written about the trials and tribulations experienced by overseas students in adapting to UK higher education at postgraduate level. As universities increasingly vie with each other to increase their enrolment of such students, it becomes more and more important to offer as attractive an experience as possible to such students. A vast amount of effort has been expended in the form of support services and adaptations to make these students welcome, but some problems still persist. In particular, some overseas students still report surprise at their relatively low attainment in the UK compared to their home nation. We do not know the full range of reasons for this performance gap, but it is possible that "Right Answer Syndrome" (RAS) is responsible for some element of this. RAS is manifested in many ways, for example, a student may be reluctant to answer an examination question, even where s/he might be able to make a creditable attempt. Accordingly, the RAS student may submit incomplete or even blank assignments rather than take a more strategic or pragmatic approach which would obviously achieve better results. The literature reveals that RAS is ethnicity and gender neutral, but is more common in disciplines where answers are more commonly "right" or "wrong". This report gives an account of the writer's attempt to challenge RAS in a large group of taught postgraduate students studying international accounting. It concludes that although isolated success was achieved, it would be better to attack RAS as part of a suite of measures designed to improve attainment. Whilst this study concentrates entirely on taught postgraduate students, there may be lessons which could be applied to undergraduates as well. In addition, awareness of RAS might be of assistance in courses where assignments are of a less clear-cut nature.

3A   Peer Assessment: A Conduit for Developing Graduate Attributes?

Presenters: Judy Pate and Sheena Bell, Business

Co-authors: Helen Purchase and John Hamer, Computing Science

The research question that shapes this study is to what extent does peer assessment facilitate the development of graduate attributes? The literature advises that peer assessment develops transferable skills e.g. critical thinking, self evaluation and reflective practice (Thuy and Dall'Allb, 2007; Thompson et al, 2005; Langan and Wheater, 2003; Stanier, 1997, Brown et al, 1994). Moreover it offers the potential for increased self confidence (Brew et al, 2009, Prins et al, 2005) and enhances students' sense of responsibility as autonomous learners (Brown et al, 1994): issues that lie at the heart of the graduate attribute agenda.

This study draws on this literature in analysing the experiences of engineering students' undertaking an entrepreneurship course. The quantitative phase involved a two stage questionnaire that was issued before and after peer assessment. The qualitative phase consisted of three focus groups with these students, following completion of peer assessment activities.

Initial findings revealed that students welcomed peer assessment and that, subsequently, it had positively impacted upon some key skills. Additionally, significant themes emerged that informs implementation. To begin with, assessing the relationship among peers was underlined: firstly, confidence in their peers' abilities to review was vital and underpins the legitimacy of the exercise. Secondly, there was fear of a one way flow of knowledge between peers and concern that others could appropriate their work. Thirdly, building this in as a compulsory assessment component may be required to ensure that all students to take the exercise seriously. Finally, it was evident that students viewed their peers' opinions as second rate to those of the lecturer when receiving feedback. This issue perhaps relates to the more traditional expectations regarding the roles of staff and students as well as the balance of power between lecturer and student.

3B   The Development and Implementation of a Method of Collaborative Learning for First Year Philosophy Tutorials

Presenter: Sarah Honeychurch, Humanities

The traditional tutorial takes the form of a dialogue between the tutor and tutees, where the tutor is the subject expert and the tutees are the learners. However, there is evidence to suggest that better learning occurs when students are encouraged to discover and construct knowledge for themselves. In addition, the literature suggests that learning is reinforced when students work together in small groups in order to teach and learn from each other.

During the first semester of the academic year 2010-2011 a project was funded by a grant from the Higher Education Academy to develop and implement a method of collaborative learning for first year philosophy tutorials. This project was inspired by Aronson's "jigsaw classroom" technique, which is a method for small group work which allows all students to become subject experts and to teach and be taught by their peers. Students were split into three sub-groups, with each sub-group being given a particular question about the tutorial topic to focus on each week.

Tutorial materials were delivered via a Moodle Forum and a Moodle Wiki prior to the tutorial and students were encouraged to post answers to the tutorial questions before attending a tutorial. During the tutorial, each sup-group had a few minutes to discuss their answers and nominate a spokesperson. Each group then presented to the rest of the class and taught them what they had learned. By the end of each tutorial, the group as a whole had built a model answer to the tutorial topic, covering more ground than would have otherwise been possible.

This presentation will discuss the development of the teaching materials, the technologies used, and the tutorials themselves. The jigsaw classroom will be contrasted with other methods of enabling peer assessment and formative feedback, and there will be a comparison of the jigsaw classroom with enquiry based learning. In particular, the literature shows that, when considering induction and the first year experience, the first class taken by a student plays a vital role. Students who are happy and intellectually challenged in their first class are more likely to adjust to the environment of higher education. This is an important factor to consider in terms of

student retention within a subject and within the University as a whole. The jigsaw classroom, with its emphasis on collaborative learning and social interaction, helps students to make the transition into their new learning community.

Detailed feedback from the GTA and from the students will be presented (six students have indicated that they would be interested in talking about their perceptions of these tutorials as part of this talk). At the time of writing this project is just entering its assessment stage, but the preliminary finding is that students have benefited from this model of tutorials, and the reasons for this will be discussed.

3C   Developing Graduate Attributes through Online Student-Led Magazines

Presenters: Catherine Steel, Stella Bolaki and Martin Dixon, Humanities, Critical Studies, Culture and Creative Arts

This submission presents the findings of the LTDF-funded project, 'Developing Graduate Attributes through online student-led magazines', which is running this session in the College of Arts. The project's aim is to produce two editions of a student-led online magazine in each of three disciplines: Classics, English Literature and Music. Content and production are in the hands of three student editors in each discipline, with the assistance of an academic member of staff. The project contributes to the development of graduate attributes by helping students to articulate and explore the attributes they identify as pertaining to their particular discipline. The selection and preparation of appropriate content for the magazine will give students in the Editorial Team an opportunity to reflect on the academic, cultural and social life pertaining to their discipline, while readers will be actively encouraged to participate in the debate via comments sections and by submitting material for inclusion. The audience for each magazine is the entire undergraduate body in that discipline: these magazines will therefore contribute to induction and the first-year experience by giving first-year students a means to explore their evolving disciplinary identities.

The presentation will explain the organization of the magazines and discuss any difficulties that have emerged during the project, show what the project has achieved so far, including snapshots of the magazines, reflect on the contribution that the magazines have made to the development of graduate attributes. We envisage that the three academic members of staff listed above will make the presentation in collaboration with the student editors.

4A   Taking it personally: Feedback and the development of Graduate Attributes

Presenter: Stuart Hanscomb, Interdisciplinary Studies

This presentation adds to a growing body of higher education research promoting the importance of a more holistic understanding of students, including their emotional responses to learning situations (e.g. Barnett 1997, 2007, Brockbank and McGill 1998, Mann 2001, Ashworth 2004, Beard et al 2005, Jarvis 2005, 2006, Carless 2006, Hanscomb 2007, Värlander 2008, Christie et al 2008, Ashworth and Greasley 2009). Taken to task is the view that tutors should be careful to separate the 'product and the person' when giving feedback on assignments. It is argued instead that in several important respects a student's work and a more holistic understanding of them as person are closely and relevantly related. More precisely, a student's strengths, weaknesses and idiosyncrasies as a personality can be detected in their work; examples most of us will be familiar with are over or under-confidence in the assertion of arguments; wilful (and potentially creative) nonconformity to standards and norms of essay writing; overly rigid adherence to perceived norms; unwillingness to consider opposing views; willingness to take responsibility for positions taken (vs. abstraction, or fence-sitting), and excessive defensiveness in the face of criticism. It is not being suggested that we psychoanalyze our students, but that attention to these patterns could play a significant part in the development of graduate attributes. Arenas for raising discussion of such qualities might include subject-based 'feedback vivas', and meetings with advisers of study. Advantages of this approach include congruence with the primary purpose of being at university, and the personal and immediate relevance of the process leading to increased motivation to engage with developing attributes. Also, assuming feedback matters, such an approach ought to improve academic performance, itself a potential motivator for engaging with personal development at university. Despite these advantages, the talk/discussion must also address the significant ethical issues associated with such an approach.

4B Expanding the role of Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) within Level 1 Biology.

Presenters: Mary McVey and Anne M Tierney, Life Sciences

Level One Biology is the largest undergraduate course in the university with ~700 students. With 14 repeat labs each week, the course also requires 42 Graduate Teaching Assistants. According to the Boyer Commission Report Reinventing Undergraduate Education (1998), developing the abilities of GTAs teaching first year students is of utmost importance. Traditionally, in Level 1 Biology, GTAs have been used in practical classes to assist the Lab Leader (usually a University Teacher).

The GTAs can enhance the taught lab experience and the motivation of the undergraduates as they inform the students of the current developments in their subject. This develops the graduate attributes of the students who become subject specialists and develop their critical thinking skills. By providing the GTAs with the resources available to the students they can encourage the reflective learning of the undergraduates by helping them to see the links between the taught materials.

We have recently developed the role of GTAs in the course. These developments include; provision of GTA teaching development (Coffee and Cake) sessions for GTAs to discuss teaching and learning issues, leading tutorials, marking assignments, lab leading, and the development of lab material. We have also asked students for feedback on their GTAs which is used to improve GTA teaching. Using Moodle, GTAs are given information on each lab session and further background information and can feedback to staff on their perception of each lab. GTAs also contribute by adding further resources that they have identified in order to help their colleagues. Student feedback following these changes suggests an improvement in GTA performance. GTAs express satisfaction in being able to make a wider contribution to the course, interaction with the literature has allowed them to value their teaching contribution which is reflected in their perception of their academic identity.

4C   Identifying and Assessing Employability Skills within Service-Learning

Presenter: Susan J. Deeley, Social and Political Sciences

In the undergraduate Public Policy honours curriculum, two distinct modules entitled 'Education for Citizenship' and 'Active Citizenship' together form a service-learning course. Service-learning is a type of experiential and enquiry-based learning in which academic theory is combined with civic engagement. In the course, students participate in voluntary work in a welfare agency while also attending classes. Students relate the practical experience of their service to the community with the academic coursework. This is achieved through structured and supported critical reflection in small group tutorials, and by writing a reflective journal.

Outcomes of intellectual and personal growth through service-learning are well documented in the literature (Deeley, 2010; Kearney, 2004; Eyler, 2000). There is a dearth of investigative studies, however, into the nature of employability skills that students may acquire or develop through service-learning. This study attempts to redress this. A small scale qualitative research study was conducted using semi-structured individual interviews and focus group methods. The overall aims of the study were to investigate: the nature of employability skills identified by staff in welfare agencies; the effects of service-learning on students' development of employability skills; and an appropriate method of assessing students' reflections on their development of these skills.

5A Marking Level 1 and Level 2 Essays via Turnitin on an Industrial Scale.

Presenters: Kevin O'Dell, Joe Gray and Chris Finlay, Life Sciences

A major challenge in Level One and Level Two teaching is giving educationally meaningful assignments to hundreds of students, whilst enabling staff to manage the marking in a robust and efficient manner. Within the Level One Biology (620 students) and Level 2 Essential Genetics (400 students) we are keen for students to have the experience of writing essays in a scientific fashion, yet at the same time we have to appreciate that staff time is a precious commodity. Therefore we used Turnitin via Moodle to collect, grade and provide feedback on short essays, for classes with hundreds of students. Our experience has generally been positive.

Timely, instructive and developmental feedback on student work is arguably the most powerful single influence on a student's ability to learn, and for their future prospects (Hattie & Timperly 2007; Black & Wiliam 1998; Gibbs & Simpson 2004). The four main principles for effective feedback are that it should:

- Be frequent, timely, sufficient and detailed
- Be linked to the purpose of assessment task and criteria
- Be understandable and account for the student's level of sophistication
- Focus on learning rather than marking

By making use of technologies there is the hope that marker time can be better directed to encourage a more focused level of feedback to ensure that student's gain appropriate and clear direction on their submitted work.

In the L2 Essential Genetics Class 400 students submitted 500-word essays on a Turnitin link on our class Moodle site. Apart from some accessibility problems around the single closing time (the site was 'down' for around 90 minutes) we encountered few difficulties. The two staff involved in the course used the Turnitin tools to grade each essay and make comments, then return the essays to the students within 14 days. Ad hoc feedback from students suggest that within 4 days of the staff completing this task about 90% of the students has read our comments, compared to around 30% who used to collect their paper copies from us in

previous years. This was also an entirely paper-free exercise, which clearly limits our contribution to deforestation.

Level One Biology has trialed electronic submission of student work over the past two academic sessions. This process has been managed through Moodle, following the same structure as used by the Turnitin Moodle add on. Student work is then provided to markers on memory pens for grading. This session, a random selection of the Level 1 Biology students submitted their assessed lab reports in the normal way as well as doubly submitting through Turnitin. This has allowed us to gain detailed information on both systems and test Turnitin with a wide variety of file types and formats. Some small issues have been identified with questions being posted back to TurnitinUK for consideration. Feedback has been generally positive with some marked improvements introduced in the newer versions of Turnitin.

Student, Staff and Assessment coordinator comments and perceptions will be presented at this meeting along with suggestions for future developments.

5B Improving the quality of the student learning experience in the Level 1 Psychology teaching laboratory

Presenters: Maxine Swingler and Judith Stevenson, Psychology

Co-author: Mabel Nakubulwa, Psychology

For first year psychology students, the support provided by GTAs in the student computer lab environment plays a vital part of the first year experience and in development of graduate attributes such as presentation skills and data analysis.   For GTAs, teaching experience is key in development of post graduate attributes and transferable skills. While the benefits of formal training for GTAs have been well documented (Prieto & Meyers, 2000), recent research has highlighted the importance of students being involved in the process of teaching and learning (Bovill et al., 2008). We aimed to address these issues by investigating how feedback from first year student's experience of the laboratory course could be used to improve current GTA training.   This FELT funded study aimed to 1) evaluate students' experience of their level one psychology laboratory and 2) use this evaluation to direct training and support for GTAs.   A short questionnaire was completed by approximately 250 first year psychology students. The questionnaire focused on two main areas of the student experience. Firstly, we intended to assess the students' evaluations of various responsibilities held by GTAs. More specifically, we wanted to discover the methods of GTA assistance that were most favoured by the students, so that these methods could be developed in future GTA training. Secondly, the evaluation examined the student experience of learning in the practical laboratory.

Student attitudes to both taught labs and student-led labs were assessed in terms of student motivation and attendance patterns at these labs. Overall students were satisfied with the support provided by GTAs, but reported that their experience would have been improved by having more GTAs, and GTAs being more approachable. Students reported that GTAs were most helpful in taught lab sessions, and that they learned more effectively in this way, but preferred the flexibility of student-led labs. Consequently, GTA training now emphasises the importance of being a friendly and approachable point of contact for first year students, and the structure of the laboratory course is being updated to take into account student feedback. The implications of these findings will be discussed in relation

to the conference themes of developing graduate attributes in first year students and support for early career researchers in gaining transferable skills through teaching.

5C   Contrasting employability interventions

Presenter: Steve Draper, Psychology

This talk will compare and contrast some current employability related interventions at GU with a view to bringing out the virtues of each and identifying the underlying dimensions by which we might evaluate them. The aim is to stimulate discussion of the issues, and someone associated with each intervention has indicated that they will attend to further support this.

The longest running is Professional Skills in psychology; This is a fully embedded 10 credit compulsory module delivered in the third year that covers the theory and simulated practice of job interviews, personnel selection, and the production of a large portfolio. It is taught in a large lecture class, highly valued by students by the time they apply for jobs, and is clearly scalable; but it is not clear how it could be transferred to other disciplines. The Graduate Skills Programme is a college wide scheme focussing on generic skills, and despite being optional has already drawn in nearly 400 students in its first months. Employing Arts and Humanities took 15 students in its first year of being taught as a for-credit honours option. It approaches employability as in part an intellectual issue of understanding one's discipline critically and in relation to a wider context.

The dimensions for comparison to be used here are

a) Scalability;
b) Low level vs. high (graduate) level skills;
c) Whether the content is discipline specific;
d) Whether the scheme is delivered as part of the degree programme or as a "bolt-on".

In addition, a key concept is that HEIs need to support not one but two transitions: specialising from school to a single discipline, and then generalising from single-discipline to general skills. Lumping "study skills" and "employability skills" together may obscure the fact that these two are in important ways exactly opposite processes.

This talk explores different interpretations of graduate attributes (the conference's theme). In two of the three schemes discussed, students develop highly personalised responses which on one view is the essence

of theme 4: Enquiry Based Learning (taking the same general aim as other students, but working out one's own route to it). Particularly in large enrolment schemes, there are technologies to support this (theme 5) e.g. Mahara for recording student reflection; besides the appropriateness of using Moodle to manage self-paced learning for non-embedded approaches to employability.

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