

Title: **Placing Student Voices at the Heart of Institutional Dialogue**

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Abstract:

Session Learning Outcomes

By the end of this session, delegates will be able to:

- Consider the value of an evidence based approach to using the authentic student voice in influencing quality enhancement activities
- Reflect on an innovative approach to engaging staff in new conversations around student feedback to the institution
- Understand the value of dialogue sheets - an innovative tool to change institutional dialogue

Session Outline

This workshop focuses on placing student voices at the heart of institutional dialogue. The central activity is set in the context of an innovative and aspirational response to the National Student Survey (NSS) at a post-92 higher education institution. The session will introduce an innovative discussion tool called a dialogue sheet, a sophisticated development of the World Cafe technique (Holtham and Courtney, 2006), which was adapted to bring authentic student voices to the discussion table at an institutional level professional development event. The evidence to inform the content of the sheets came directly from research with current final year students, the NSS free text comments, and voices from the sector about the student experience.

Participants will have the opportunity to work through a dialogue sheet focusing on: how students feed back into the institution: how staff respond to and act on that feedback; and, finding ways to close the feedback loop by reflecting the institution's responses back to the students.

The facilitators will share their experiences and reflections of using the tool, and how this led to unique and tangible outcomes for the institution and students.

The following key issues will be addressed:

- How this approach, which combines collecting and responding to authentic student views with the opportunity for different staff groups to discuss the learning experience at their institution, can influence the way we work in the future
- Achieving a truly deeper understanding of the student experience at your institution by going beyond working only with existing student feedback
- The difference an institution can make to the student experience by taking an aspirational approach which is proactive rather than reactive
- What happens when academic developers adopt less traditional facilitation roles and use a specific tool which allows difficult and challenging conversations to take place?

Facilitation

The facilitation of the workshop will model the facilitative approach taken at the event being discussed. The emphasis will be on delegates experiencing dialogue sheets for themselves and engaging in active

dialogue with fellow participants based on authentic student voices. The sheets are pre-printed at A0 size and designed for participants to write their answers, feedback and ideas on.

Workshop structure (90 minutes)

Timing	Content	Delivery mode
20 minutes	Introduction and background to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the context of the work we carried out ▪ the use of dialogue sheets 	Informal presentation
45 minutes	An authentic dialogue sheet - student feedback to an institution	Facilitated group activity (tables of 6-8 people)
25 minutes	Feeding back and sharing our own reflections on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the process we used for collecting and responding to student views on the NSS ▪ the use of dialogue sheets as a staff development tool <p>Questions to workshop participants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How did it feel to use the dialogue sheet? ▪ What does it allow you to do that you could not do otherwise? <p>General comments from participants</p>	Conversational feedback by the presenters. Facilitated discussion. Open discussion.
HANDOUT A3 colour copy of a dialogue sheet illustrating how they are used and including our own reflections on how we have used them in preparation for the next National Student Survey		
EVALUATION The facilitators will take live feedback from participants during the actual workshop.		

References

Holtham, C. and Courtney, N. (2006) About Dialogue Sheets. Quality in Business Education: available from <http://www.qube.ac.uk/QuBE/toolbox/diags/dialogsheet/dialsht/> [last accessed 13/09/07]