

## Student Paper

**Title:**                   **The spectrum of student engagement: Looking beyond metric measures**

**Presenter:**       **Madeleine Pownall**  
University of Lincoln

### Session Outline

Student engagement is a largely contested term within HE (Bryson, 2016), due the broad array of concepts and approaches that it encompasses. Student engagement has historically been discussed within academic literature and conversation as a term synonymous with student satisfaction and involvement in academic community.

Indeed, an emerging era of ‘student-as-consumer’ culture within universities has meant that it is now common practice for institutions to develop evidence-based initiatives to encourage and measure the engagement of their students. These initiatives designed by institutions are helpful in identifying the ‘Super Engaged’ (students who are regularly visible and vocal within the academic community) and offer a big-picture of engagement across the board at universities. However, the notion of metric-based measurement of student engagement implies that those who do not engage in university initiatives are, by default, ‘disengaged’. This paper identifies the need for institutions to carefully consider how engaged and ‘disengaged’ students are defined and will discuss the implications of these labels.

Offering a valuable student opinion, this paper looks beyond metric measures, and poses questions surrounding definitions of engagement, drawing upon relevant academic literature (Kahu, 2013). Specifically, approaches to the so-called ‘disengaged’ will be challenged. It is proposed that metric measures of student engagement, in the traditional sense, may be problematic due to their prescriptive and inflexible nature.

### References

Bryson, C., 2016. Engagement through partnership: Students as partners in learning and teaching in higher education. *International Journal for Academic Development*, 21(1), pp. 84-86.