

Title: Learning to learn for work in practice. Illustrating the role of reviews and assessment in the development of professional skills.

Presenter: Laurence Pattacini, Hannah Beard
University of Sheffield

Session Learning Outcomes

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

- Understand the student staff collaborative research project aims, objectives and outcomes. This will include:
 - The role of alternative assessment to deliver employability skills;
 - The use and pertinence of skills acquired during the studies in practice, drawing from the testimony of alumni working in professional practices; and
 - Practical illustration of the importance of effectively communicating the role of assessment for the development of transferable, professional skills.

During the discussion facilitated by the collaborative research team the delegates will be able to:

- Share their own experience and provide feedback on the research outcome including the web-based learning resource to be produced as part of the research to inform students.
- Explore and discuss how assessment and feedback strategies and module programmes can be modified to provide a greater emphasis on transferable and professional / employability skills.

Session Outline

In response to students' feedback and growing concerns about employability, the aim of the collaborative project is to improve students learning experience by understanding, maximising and communicating the role of the assessment processes in developing employability skills, which is a key objective of the Programme Level Approach adopted in Higher Education (Boud and Flachikov, 2006). This is particularly relevant in the current labour market where it is essential to demonstrate flexibility and resilience to adapt to changes in professional practices (Davidson, 2017).

The session will present the outcome of the research project funded by the Faculty of Social Science Student Staff Project in Learning and Teaching at the University of Sheffield (SSPILT). It will discuss the collaboration between staff, students and alumni and emphasise the importance of meaningful student engagement to collect and provide data to inform learning and teaching (Fletcher, 2017). It will introduce the alternative assessment methods used in our professionally accredited course aiming to maximise learning benefits (Biggs, 2011) and highlight the outcome of the strategic consultations led by students through focus groups and on-line fora. It will then introduce the web-based learning resource, which will use practical illustrations to explain the unique skill set and experience acquired through the assessment process in the department of Landscape Architecture and how it can improve the chance of employability. The resource will be developed by students and alumni for existing and future students and to inform those involved in developing curriculum and teaching. As the resource is to be created between November and March 2018, this conference provides the perfect opportunity for us to trial and discuss the resource prototype with participants from a variety of academic backgrounds. It can then be modified accordingly before it is made available to students at the beginning of the next academic year.

Session Activities and Approximate Timings

- **20 minute** presentation of the research project, led by Laurence Pattacini and Hannah Beard. This will involve information about the data collection and data analysis, including our thoughts on the staff, student collaborative research approach. We will then discuss our findings and present the web-based learning/informative resource.
- **10 minutes** for the audience to explore and familiarise themselves with the web-based learning resource. Printed copies and interactive digital versions will be made available for the participants to use. During this time the project team will walk around the room to help and discuss the users experience with individuals or groups.
- **10 minute** discussion of the research project outcome for participants to feedback and share their thoughts about the web-based learning resource. The project team will lead and participate in the discussion.
The discussion will be facilitated by questions such as:
 - How well-used and effective do you think the resource will be for students in creating an understanding of the connections between skills learnt at university and work in practice?
 - In what way do you imagine this resource will help teaching staff modify assessment processes and module programmes for lifelong learning?
 - How transferable is the research outcome and informative resource?
- **5 minute** summary from Laurence Pattacini and Hannah Beard. Opportunity for participants to ask any additional questions, e.g. questions regarding the collaborative research process, availability of the online resource etc.

References

- Biggs, J.B. (2011). *Teaching for quality learning at university*. Buckingham: Open University Press/Society for Research into Higher Education. (Fourth edition)
- Boud D.& Falchikov N. (2006) Aligning assessment with long-term learning, *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 31:4, 399-413: Routledge
- Davidson, C. N. (2017). Commentary: A newer education for our era. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, Retrieved from <https://search.proquest.com/docview/1968452568?accountid=13828> [accessed 12.06.18]
- Fletcher, A. (2017) *Student Voice Revolution: The Meaningful Student Involvement Handbook*. Olympia, WA: Common Action Publishing.