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Promoting a collective conscience: Designing a resilient staff-student partnership model for educational development

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Abstract

This paper discusses experiences of a student-ambassador network within one UK-based Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, problematising key issues in relation to transience in staff-student partnerships in HE, and highlighting the importance of the educational developer in facilitating institution-wide partnership models. Theoretical explorations are supported by data gathered throughout the Network's operation, including student evaluations following the first year of operation, and a final "impact study" conducted with staff and students. The article develops the notion of a "collective conscience"

model of student engagement, which supports all students via a variety of activities, incorporating short, mid-rage and long-term goals, and enabling a range of collaborative and individual opportunities for success.

Key words: staff-student partnerships, transience, collective conscience, resilience, educational development

Introduction and Background Literature

The CETL background

This article discusses the staff-student partnership model at a UK-based Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) between 2006 and 2010. The Centre for Inquiry-based Learning in the Arts and Social Sciences (CILASS) began its life as a CETL funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) in March 2005, having attracted £4.5m in funding to recognise, fund and promote excellence in the area of Inquiry-based Learning (IBL) at the University of Sheffield. A total of 74 such CETLs, each based on existing excellence in varying areas and institutions, received similar funding across England and Northern Ireland, with each centre encouraged by HEFCE (2004) to consider student engagement at the proposal stage.

The staff-student partnership model described here adopts a participatory approach (Fiennes and Little, 2007; Levy, Little and Whelan, 2011), and provides the input and feedback at student level that allows for the CETL's 'mission' to be moved forward with all stakeholders in mind and fully represented. The CETL's 'Student Ambassador Network' (SAN) brought together students from each of the 26 departments the CETL worked with and student ambassadors operated at three distinct levels: as a cohesive overall unit, in five special interest working groups, and individually at departmental level.

This article will explore this “three-tier system” of involvement, which resulted in students having several anchor points to which to tie their work: as a network, student ambassadors organised an annual staff-student conference, met regularly to discuss their work, and took part in the CETL’s wider activities. In working groups, they had different foci, including the creation of student-friendly videos, editing a research journal to which the wider student body submitted articles, writing CETL communications for students, running evaluation activities in departments, and to assist with the development of technology-related resources. Individually at departmental level, student ambassadors worked with staff to feed into the development of new modules, and created a bridge between staff and students around the context of IBL. Their work was co-facilitated by a student and an educational developer, with the latter providing the continuous narrative and the main ‘anchor point’ for the network, helping it to grow year on year, and working to mitigate against issues related to student transience.

Partnerships in HE educational development

Healy, Flint and Harrington (2014) identify four areas of within which staff-student partnerships may develop, namely ‘*learning, teaching and assessment; subject-based research and inquiry; scholarship of teaching and learning; [and] curriculum design and pedagogic consultancy (p. 36).* All four areas were involved in the partnership model described here, and will be referred to below. In the UK, the CETL movement resulted in the creation of a variety of staff-student partnership models (see e.g. CEEBL, 2007; C4C, 2007). This coincided with a global interest in involving students as partners in educational development, and an increased awareness of the advantages such partnership models can offer. Cook-Sather, Bovill and Felten (2014) have identified a number of positive outcomes, ranging from ‘enhanced engagement’ (p. 101) to a ‘higher-developed metacognitive awareness’ (p. 111), a ‘stronger sense of identity’ (p. 111), and an ‘enhanced teaching and learning experience’ (p. 119). All of these were expressed by the students involved in the model outlined in this paper.

Working with students to examine teaching and learning in HE is of benefit both to the students and to the teaching environment (Zepke, Leach and Prebble, 2006; Carless, 2006), although – or maybe because - student engagement can be both 'unpredictable' and 'thought-provoking' for students and staff alike (Bergmark and Westman, 2016, p. 33). Carless (2006) judges evaluation data gathered by students to be more reliable and honest than the information gathered from focus groups run by academic members of staff in his department. Levy, Little and Whelan (2011) point out that 'when students are involved and enthused by educational enhancement, they can move the institutional agenda forward with energy and in creative ways' (p. 10). The emphasis is on making sure that both staff and students feel represented in the 'institutional agenda', and both are prepared to engage as full stakeholders. The pathways such relationships can take are described in Werder and Otis (2010) and Little (2011), with staff and students co-authoring many of the chapters. Delpish (2010) describes how collaborating with students around module design of a current module resulted in enhanced engagement, with students taking control over their own learning and developing at a metacognitive as well as a subject-knowledge level.

Menon (2005) problematises staff and student collaboration in her work on distributed leadership in HE. Her argument is that the model only works if all stakeholders involved 'are willing to abandon traditional leadership models and subscribe to more participative approaches to management' (Menon, ibid., p. 168). Any partnership model therefore requires all participants to continually question their own perceptions, to engage in communication with the 'other', and to mutually share perceptions and experiences of the partnership itself. This, in turn, necessitates a certain level of confidence on behalf of the staff and students involved (Marchbank and Letherby, with Lander, Walker and Wild, 2003). Jensen and Bennett (2016) found that student partners can successfully occupy a space

that is different from traditional student representatives, a relationship that can operate on a complaints model, rather than a truly collaborative one.

Notions of self-belief, belonging, and transience

Bandura (2012) points out that "self-efficacy beliefs affect the quality of human functioning through cognitive, motivational, affective, and decisional processes" (p. 13). Research on self-efficacy has been linked to areas such as student transition and settling in at university (see e.g. Morton, Mergler and Boman, 2014), and academic achievement (see e.g. Caskie, Sutton, and Eckhardt, 2014), but self-efficacy is also an important element in student engagement for the purposes of educational development. The success of involving students in partnership models for educational development, research and evaluation will depend at least in part on the students' belief that not only do they belong in this context, but that they are also well-suited and capable in their roles as change agents. Whether or not students feel ready to engage with staff as partners in learning and teaching development will to a certain extent depend on their prior experiences, and their resulting social, cultural and academic capital (Bourdieu, 1988). This cautions against the homogenisation of the student body - it is not enough to involve students as partners, but also necessary to create an equitable environment where students from all backgrounds feel comfortable to engage. Cook-Sather, Bovill and Felten (2014) suggest taking small steps in engaging students, beginning by inviting feedback and opinions, and helping students 'trust the changes' (p. 18) by acting on feedback, thus facilitating a shift in thinking. The educational developer, who is often outside the traditional staff-student relationship, is in a unique position to help create such an 'equitable environment', as this paper will go on to explain.

Staff-student partnerships can arguably be linked to the literature surrounding Communities of Practice (CoP) (Wenger, 1998). Staff and students form part of a wider learning and teaching community in HE, which further includes support and administrative staff. In reality, however, each side of the partnership often only marginally participate in the other's community. Aspects traditionally linked to the concept of CoP, such as shared language, mutual engagement and joint enterprise (*ibid.*) may differ widely, especially taking into account external pressures influencing staff and students respectively, e.g. research agendas, institutional policy, and concern regarding employment opportunities. Batchelor (2007) points out that evaluation activities often obscure 'student voice', capturing student opinion, only to summarise and paraphrase it in an 'academic Esperanto' (p. 43). Northedge (2003) similarly argues that student participation in academic discourse requires a knowledge of processes, procedures, and the language to discuss them. Staff acquire such 'academic capital' (Bourdieu, 1988) through prolonged engagement within the academic community – which students, due to their transient nature, may feel is neither achievable nor necessary. A partnership model which includes students in research, evaluation and educational development therefore raises the question whether academia should adopt, include and welcome students in their midst under the students' own terms, or whether students should be expected to undergo a certain 'apprenticeship' (Wenger, 1998) into an academic community of practice.

Either solution, however, takes time, and Cook-Sather, Bovill, and Felten (2014) iterate that higher education timelines and processes are not conducive to the development of grounded partnerships. Many of the issues related to the development of successful partnerships are therefore linked to the issue of transience – whether it takes time for students to build up the confidence to engage in educational development activities, for staff and students to build relationships, or to identify a shared language which can be used to drive a joint institutional agenda forward. In Little's (2011) book, which gave examples of 14 staff-student partnership models within higher education, nearly all of them listed transience as a barrier to continuous engagement (p. 219).

In the following, the structure of one staff-student partnership model is described in detail, before the evaluation methodology and the findings are outlined. Suggestions will be made with regard to how this model may help institutions to build a resilient staff-student partnership model which can help guard against issues of transience, and the importance of the educational developer as a "constant" within this transience.

Student Ambassador Network Structure

From the network's inception in March 2006, the student ambassadors were encouraged to determine their own role within the context of CILASS and the institution. Bovill (2014) points out that even if faculty are looking to develop a participatory approach when it comes to engaging students in a partnership, such a model will usually be guided – at least initially – by faculty decisions. Student ambassadors were initially recruited by individual departments, via procedures which ranged from "first-come-first-served" to full application processes.

Facilitated by an educational developer, the student ambassadors worked to establish their own remit during the first three months of the Network's existence. This procedure followed Hart's (1992) "ladder of participation", where the highest "rung" is dedicated learner-led decision making supported and facilitated by staff, ahead of learner-led, completely autonomous developments. Between March and June 2006, students decided that they wanted to be more than 'representatives', instead asking for a decision-making role within the CETL. They requested tasks that would allow them to share their individual knowledge and strengths with the institution, and they wanted support to engage at departmental level, while also using the network as a whole to create high-impact work. When asked for specifics, students wanted to assist with the creation of student-facing materials about IBL, organise relevant events and competitions,

create opportunities for students to share their experiences of IBL, and have input into new technologies and spaces provided by the CETL. Staff, in turn, were keen for students to have an input into the evaluation of projects and assist with module development by providing a student perspective.

Based on these recommendations, the educational developer at the CETL drew up a staff-student partnership strategy, which outlined the roles of the student ambassadors at departmental and whole-network level. In addition to these, five working groups were established to correspond to the needs expressed by students and staff. These five groups included a ***film group***, an ***evaluation group***, a ***journal group***, a ***technology group***, and a ***dissemination group***.

The individual remits of the working groups are less important for this paper than the fact that each group could draw on support from the educational developer at the CETL, but also from a number of "critical friends" among staff members, including other academic and departmental teaching staff. All groups had control over a small budget, and were required to keep and submit meeting minutes, and to report back to network meetings. An undergraduate student was recruited following the initial 3-month consultation period, to co-facilitate the network with the educational developer. All student ambassadors were paid for their time, with working hours agreed per annum (60 per ambassador, 105 for the student facilitator).

At departmental level, students were encouraged to work with a dedicated staff member to feed into IBL activities by mutual negotiation. Finally, as a whole Network, student ambassadors organised and participated in events, such as an annual Staff-Student Conference, which is further outlined below. Each student ambassador was therefore involved in a three-tier model of engagement – at departmental level, working group level, and network/institutional level. These three tiers served as support pillars of the network as a whole, sustaining engagement and motivation in cases where one particular area was

unsuccessful, with the educational developer providing continuous support and a 'narrative thread' that held the whole network together, helping the network to develop collectively and holistically.

Methodology

As it was part of the overall CETL, the evaluation of the Network was carried out within the broader framework provided by the CETL's evaluation model, following a multi-method approach.

Data were provided as part of project evaluations, and via informal discussions. Additional documentary evidence is available to establish a timeline, e.g. when student ambassadors began to become involved in curriculum design, research, evaluation, conference presentations, and research publications. There were three specific evaluations dedicated to the student ambassador network: one following the first year of the network's iteration, in 2007, via three focus groups conducted among the student ambassadors, and one towards the end of the CETL programme, in 2010, where members of the evaluation group facilitated and conducted 19 focus groups with staff and students, gathering data from 17 of the 26 departments that had student ambassador representation. The third evaluation took place in form of a questionnaire given to student ambassadors in 2009, and focused specifically on their perceived skills development. All focus groups were audio recorded and subsequently transcribed – the first evaluation by the student co-ordinator, the final impact evaluation by members of the evaluation group. Focus groups are traditionally accepted as a valuable method to explore the beliefs, experiences, attitudes and feelings of participants through interaction (Gibbs, 1997), and were in line with the collaborative and communicative ethos of the CETL.

Overall, the evaluation of the student ambassador network sought to engage staff and students in reflective practice (Schön, 1987), helping students to adopt

their role as change agents. The terminology and principles surrounding reflective practice were shared with student ambassadors in order to provide them with a theoretic understanding of the principles underlying the evaluation.

In the following, the main findings are presented, returning to the literature where appropriate to facilitate reflection.

The upward spiral – tracking confidence and self-efficacy beliefs in student engagement

For the purpose of data presentation, the sections below summarise student ambassador involvement in two linked, yet separate areas. The first of these, educational development, comments on the students' work at departmental level and working group level, focussing on their work linked to learning, teaching and evaluation. The second area is more related to over-arching CETL outputs, including participation in research activity, writing for academic publications, and presenting at conferences. Throughout, reference will be made to all three tiers of involvement – at departmental, working group, and network level.

Student ambassador involvement in educational development

During the first evaluation in 2007, ambassadors reflected back to their early days and remembered their lack of confidence in approaching staff. Many students were unsure about engaging with a figure of authority at partnership level, reminiscent of Bourdieu's notion of social capital (1988). Atweh and Burton (1995) agree that this is a common problem throughout HE – students tend to feel as though they are not worthy of taking up staff time. One student commented

'I think I found my champion quite intimidating at first – approaching her was difficult because she is so high up in the department.' (End of Year 1 Discussion)

However, it was also obvious students felt a genuine pride in their work, and thought their jobs to be important within the institution, which, in turn, was important to them. This dovetails with Lave and Wenger's (1991) concept of situated learning – if learners are to feel that their experience is worthwhile, they need to be exposed to an empowering philosophy, and encouraged that their experiences are not only worthwhile in and of themselves, but that they form a vital contribution to a learning community or society. This, however, raised issues in relation of transience, and students initially expressed frustration about their involvement in projects they would not be able to see through to the end. Similarly, it meant students became frustrated if their departmental role was not as successful or well-defined as they would have liked it to be.

For the students who were frustrated at departmental level, working groups and the network provided additional anchoring points for their engagement, and became the main outlet for their activities while departmental relationships were built.

I just spoke to staff and went to a few meetings, but I think that the person that takes over from me will have more to do as [the relationship is] growing.

Student ambassador

Students anticipated that building a strong staff-student partnership model would take time, even beyond their own involvement, and were beginning to see their personal involvement as part of a collective conscience.

Student involvement in evaluation was one aspect staff had been particularly keen to develop, while students were initially uncertain whether they would be able to fulfil this role. In order to ensure students were confident, training sessions were set up where students developed interview questions and conducted an interview with a member of staff who was an expert on interviews and focus groups. Operating as a mentorship scheme, the students would develop the questions, conduct the interview, then receive immediate feedback on the types of questions asked and the overall conduct. This feedback process continued after the student wrote up a summary of the interview and sent it to the interviewee. This method provided a positive partnership experience, which both staff and students could take to their own departments to try and emulate, and gave the students confidence in their role.

A project leader commented:

> *'I've been really impressed by [the student ambassadors]. They've evaluated our project. Two student ambassadors came from CILASS and held some focus groups for about an hour and a half. And the data they produced […] is very good.'*

Out of the seventeen departments who contributed to the evaluation, eight were highly positive about the impact the student ambassador had had within the department, three were positive, and six stated that the student ambassadors had had little impact on learning and teaching at departmental level. In successful departments, staff and students had negotiated roles that revolved around input into introduction week for new students, where student ambassadors would give introductory talks; evaluation activities towards the end of modules, and "sounding boards" for the development of new modules. One member of staff commented:

'Departments often focus more on teaching procedures than on teaching methods and the presence of a teaching ambassador reminds staff that reflection on delivery is crucial too.'

The difference between the student ambassadors and other student representatives was also picked up by another department, where a member of staff commented that the student ambassadors were 'ideas driven', rather than 'complaint driven'.

The confidence to attend teaching sessions and comment on delivery, teaching style, and content was not inherently present among the ambassadors, and only developed towards the end of the second year of the network's iteration. One Student Ambassador shared their experience of conducting an evaluation and subsequent module redesign working in collaboration with staff in their department:

'I really enjoyed working so closely with the department because I was given the opportunity to help implement important changes to the teaching curriculum. […] I was able to help make a big difference to the […] learning experience of many students.'

Success stories such as this allowed ambassadors to learn from each other – experience gathered by individuals was fed into the network as a whole, leading to a skills and knowledge transfer which other students could pick up and develop further within their own contexts. This meant that students did not necessarily have to follow all steps of the developmental journey themselves – an important protection against student transience, which will be further discussed below.

Worthy of mention are the six departments where student ambassadors were felt to have had little to no impact on learning and teaching development. In these departments, one member of staff was outspoken about their unease in involving students in the development of learning and teaching, and in four others, time was cited as the main issue related to developing a partnership model. One member of staff commented 'it's becoming a culture of not having enough time to get involved. There is just not enough time to build relationships.' Where students faced issues with their own departments, they usually focused more of their time on their working groups or the work of the network as a whole, connecting to different anchoring points, and protecting engagement.

Student ambassador involvement in research and presentations

In the early days of the network, students had commented informally that they did not feel confident to become involved in research, or public speaking opportunities, such as conferences. Overall, their experiences were very much tied directly to their respective programmes of study, and they had had little involvement with the over-arching institution. After the first year of the network's existence, one student commented

> *'It was really interesting meeting people from places like [Learning and Teaching Services], which firstly we never knew existed and secondly would have never have met had it not been for CILASS.'*

Although students were quickly becoming recognised as valuable members of the learning and teaching community, the CETL's longer-term goals – involving the group in research writing and publications – proved more difficult to achieve, for a number of reasons. The involvement of 'Students as Researchers' (Fielding, 2006) was initially hampered by the students' lack of confidence in their

ability to write academically. In the first evaluation, students expressed their frustration with encountering academic “jargon” whenever they engaged in discussions around learning and teaching with staff, and this frustration further influenced their engagement in publications.

Despite good intentions, Wenger’s (1998) notion of a shared language is difficult to maintain if either side of the partnership is expected to simply ‘adopt’ the other’s language, with all the resultant consequences for the concept of ‘voice’ this entails. Facilitated by the educational developer, the concepts of ‘audience’ and ‘voice’ became issues of equal consideration to the partnership, as staff were grasping the students’ perspectives and viewpoints. Academic writing is also, by its nature, a drawn-out process, and usually necessitated – more than engagement in educational development – the involvement of the same student ambassador throughout, which once more raised the issue of transience.

Within the student ambassador network model, the biggest change agent was the staff-student conference, which took place annually from 2007. The conference was organised by the student ambassador network with support from CETL staff, and proposals were only accepted from staff and students who intended to present together. These presentations opened additional communication channels, where staff and students were asked to discuss how they were going to present their experiences. Organising the conference, reviewing the proposals and working with presenters gave student ambassadors the confidence to become more involved in outputs that required more “academic capital” (Bourdieu, 1988). In the 2009 skills audit, virtually all student ambassadors (25 out of 26) commented that their academic skills and confidence had improved due to their work within the CETL. Alongside other developments, the educational developer served as a conduit, explaining academic jargon where it was encountered, and facilitating collaborative efforts between staff and students.

By 2009, the majority of student ambassadors had spoken at institutional events, and twelve students had spoken at national events. Four students were actively engaged in writing for publication, rising to seven by the time the CETL funding ceased in 2010.

Discussion – exploring self-efficacy and voice within the concept of student transience

Throughout the lifecycle of the CETL, student transience was "the elephant in the room" – while student ambassadors were invited to stay on for the duration of their degree, there were a large number of variables that dictated the composition of the network: students might join in their third year and almost immediately begin focusing on final examinations; students of languages might join in their second year, then go abroad in year 3, and return for year 4 after a year's absence; or students might join in their first year and stay for the duration of their degree. While the emphasis for involvement was on undergraduates, if departments suggested postgraduate students as ambassadors, these were not turned away. Throughout the life cycle of the CETL, only one student ambassador remained constant throughout. Such transience, as Batchelor (2007) points out, results in a constant 'recovery' of the student voice, where the same or similar questions and issues are re-discovered by students year after year, and staff are seeking to build on prior discoveries.

Despite this transience, however, the confidence among student ambassadors increased year on year. This implies that it may be possible to establish a partnership model with a collective conscience, rather than simply a group of individuals. Within the design of the student ambassador network, a number of inherent features were included to guard against transience issues. Each year, new student ambassadors were recruited from March onwards, resulting in a substantial handover period, and ensuring that incoming student ambassadors

witnessed and became involved in the annual staff-student conference. In many departments, student ambassadors were actively involved in recruiting their successor, which helped overcome some of the barriers linked to students engaging in educational development. Each year, incoming students came into a certain “status quo” and were introduced to a certain level of engagement. From an organisational perspective, it was ensured that no working group ever lost its entire membership. The summer months presented an intensive handover opportunity between the incoming and the outgoing student facilitator. These activities, in combination with the facilitation of the network by a dedicated, permanent member of staff, acted as safeguards to ensure the network could continue to build on past successes.

The three tiers of engagement – at departmental, working group and network/institutional level – meant that students had opportunities to touch base with their departments, at small group level, and as a network, enabling a number of communication channels. This model, above all, presented students with options, and direction for their agency, should one particular conduit be blocked due to circumstances out of their immediate control. Through these channels, students could also exchange ideas and receive input from the permanent CETL educational developer, who on occasion would work with departmental members of staff to facilitate the partnership. In principle, the three tiers meant that each ambassador always had a specific job or role to focus on, guarding against periods of disengagement. The educational developer served as the narrative thread and additional anchor point, a person who knew the history of the network as a whole, and who could facilitate partnerships at whatever level was needed.

Since each academic year had some cyclical properties, incorporating periods of curriculum planning, teaching, and evaluation, as well as annually recurring activities such as conferences, student ambassadors essentially entered the network on an upward spiral, and throughout their membership of the network,

drove the scope and level of network activity further than before. Since there was never an absolute changeover of all students involved, the upward spiral remained undisturbed, and largely independent of individuals. Students began to see the network as a collective conscience, enabling them to see their role as part of a greater educational development drive which was not necessarily to be completed during their time within the network.

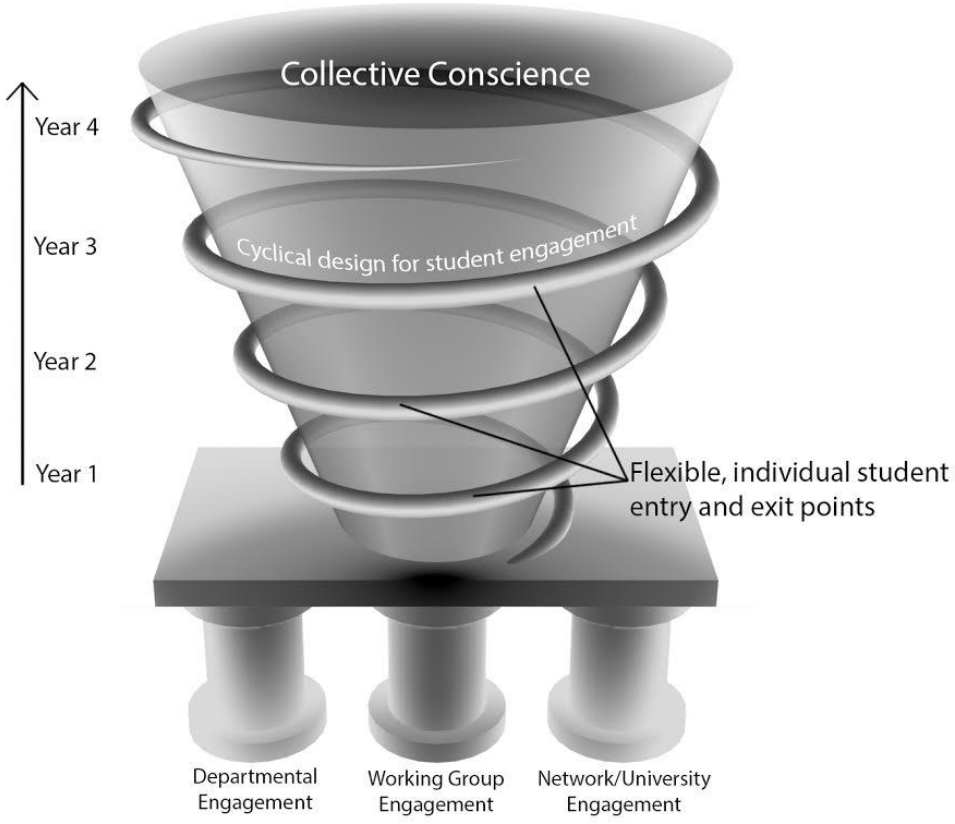

Figure 1: Collective conscience development through cyclical design and multiple support points.

One exception to this was the involvement in research publications, which could not as easily be handed over, and sometimes necessitated the involvement of a student beyond their degree. Since involvement in the activities was voluntary, this was not usually an issue. Student ambassadors who expressed interest in

writing for publication were often those who were further interested in an academic career, and saw their involvement as skills development for the future.

Concluding thoughts on student engagement models

The facilitation of such a continuous, developmental spiral of student engagement is dependent on the set-up of a student engagement model that has a number of safeguards in place to incorporate resilience and protect it from transitory influences, and the role of the educational developer as a constant anchor point is vital to the success of the partnership model.

Planning the size and composition of a network can have immediate effect on the type of educational development students can become engaged in. A larger network with departmental representation is wider spread, and thus able to engage at a broader level than other types of student representation, e.g. a sabbatical officer. A larger network also allows for communicative exchange and collaborative growth. The establishment of working groups allows students to pursue areas of interest, while at the same time presenting an 'alternative outlet' for those students who struggle to engage in their department. Furthermore, students had the opportunity to directly influence their own remit, where the departmental role was often more defined by staff needs than student input. These two tiers thus incorporated both a responsive and a proactive role. Students felt proud of their achievements, and working groups also allowed those students whose department was less engaged to build up confidence via their peers (Bennett and Dunne, 1992). Additionally, working at full network level further guarded against insular developments, facilitated communicative exchanges, and provided the sheer number of individuals necessary to drive big projects (such as organising a conference) forward. These large projects made the network visible to the whole institution, facilitating further recruitment, and providing opportunities for staff to witness students engaging in successful educational development, which in turn enabled departmental interaction. This

enabled the model to gain momentum and increase its remit and reach year on year, building on the notion of a collective conscience.

In the first year of the collaboration, both staff and students were exploring their roles and slowly gaining confidence. Facilitated by the educational developer, the willingness of all involved to see traditional boundaries as fluid and permeable was no doubt one of the vital factors that allowed for innovative staff-student partnerships to take place. Wenger (1998) explores the notion of boundary trajectories, where individuals sustain an identity which spans several communities. The student ambassadors and educational developer arguably had such identities, functioning as brokers and experts to the wider student body and academic staff. Through the cyclical model of engagement and the creation of opportunities to engage at three different levels, students learnt to plan for and manage a variety of goals – some identified by them, some by staff, and some by the CETL. These same goals incorporated different timelines, some achievable within the current academic year, others going beyond the current ambassador's time within the network. Facilitation from the educational developer was needed to manage expectations, and this became easier once students witnessed successes of projects that had been instigated before their time. The dedicated support from an educational developer provided not only a consistent point of contact, but helped protect the network against transitory issues, and facilitated a collective conscience of staff-student partnerships for educational development. Such a model may be difficult to maintain at a time when many developments at higher education institutions are grant-driven, and in themselves transient, dependent on funding and time dedicated to the facilitation by dedicated staff. As Jarnecki and McVitty (2013) point out, however, it should not be beyond institutions to identify a solution which 'achieves an appropriate balance between pragmatism and authenticity' (p. 4). Creating a resilient partnership model with a collective conscience will hopefully allow institutions to bridge times of uncertainty, build on successes, and communicate a commitment to staff-student

partnerships in educational development to staff, students, and the wider community.

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