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Where place, lived experience and disciplinary knowledge converge: engaging students through knowledge exchange

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Abstract

Transforming and Activating Places (TAP) was a knowledge exchange (KE) programme at the University of Sheffield that was run exclusively for widening participation students in the fields of the arts and humanities and social sciences. Between 2020 and 2023, the programme facilitated 200 short-term paid internships in which students completed intensive preparatory activities and then partnered with nearly 80 external partners for projects and activities related to place and placemaking. After situating the research within the current literature on experiential learning, student KE and KE more broadly, we present and analyse in this article the data collected from a series of student surveys completed in the programme's first and second year. With a particular emphasis on the voices, experiences and reported benefits for TAP student participants, we identify three interconnected domains of student KE that have evolved through the project: 1) applying disciplinary knowledge, 2) identifying lived experience, 3) realising expertise. We conclude that, where all three domains are activated within student KE - that is, where it involves students' identification and application of disciplinary knowledge and lived experience, as well as a conscious synthesising and framing of that knowledge as valuable expertise - then it is at its most transformative and productive.

Keywords: student knowledge exchange, knowledge exchange, experiential learning, engaged learning, widening participation, place, placemaking, internships, SHAPE disciplines, employability, students as experts

Introduction

Transforming and Activating Places (TAP) was a knowledge exchange (KE) programme based at the University of Sheffield that ran between 2020 and 2023 and was exclusively for students from backgrounds underrepresented in UK Higher Education, - described in this article by the term 'widening participation students' (WP) - in the fields of the arts and humanities and social sciences, otherwise known as the SHAPE (Social Sciences Humanities & the Arts for People and the Economy) disciplines. TAP was designed to run alongside students' academic programmes and provided a diverse array of short-term paid internships. Over three years around 200 students – competitively recruited through their academic departments and faculties - worked with nearly 80 businesses, community, cultural and heritage organisations on co-designed projects within the Sheffield city region, and beyond.[1] These organisations were identified and engaged from an existing pool of established external partners in the university, and through local networks and contacts within the project team. The internships and the accompanying academic programme were united by a central focus on the topic of place and placemaking (Arefi, 2014). Placemaking is a malleable and multifaceted concept, but for the purposes of TAP (and this article) it is understood in line with Cara Courage's definition as an

> *approach and a set of tools that puts the community front and centre of deciding how their place looks and how it functions* (2020, p.2).

This multidimensional theme was positioned as the shared impulse for TAP's focus on KE. UK Research and Innovation describes KE as collaborations between higher education providers and external partners, which leads to a wider benefit to society (2023). TAP pursued this approach specifically through student KE, which again has various definitions but can be conceptualised as student engagement with activities that bring together

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[1] For details on the TAP partnerships, see: Anonymous (2023), 'Projects and Internships 2019-23', Transforming and Activating Places website archive, https://sites.google.com/sheffield.ac.uk/tap/about-tap?authuser=0

academic staff, users of research and wider groups and communities to exchange ideas, evidence and expertise (The Office for Students, 2020).[2]

This article begins with a literature review that provides the background for our exploration and articulation of student KE and locates the TAP programme within an emerging field of knowledge on the subject more broadly. The SHAPE acronym that is used throughout was developed by the British Academy (2020)[3] and was deployed in TAP to give a tangible focus to student KE , offering clear narratives around the social, cultural and economic value of the disciplines studied by students on TAP, fostering a shared sense of identity, community and purpose amongst the cohort, with students encouraged to see their subjects as meaningfully and positively connected. SHAPE gives important context and holistic framing for our main areas of concern: employability in arts and humanities and social sciences (particularly relating to WP students), experiential and embodied learning, and placemaking as a practice and method that brings a new perspective and currency to these areas. Our article makes connections between these concepts and considers them in relation to evaluation data from the first two years of TAP, and in the process sets out three interconnected domains of student KE that have emerged through the project.

The pedagogies of student KE

TAP provided the opportunity for widening participation (WP) students to take part in KE with external organisations, following extensive preparatory activities. The WP categorisation in this context refers to disabled students, mature students, Black, Asian and minority ethnic students, students in receipt of a university bursary, students who have been in care, students who are a carer for someone, students who are the first in their family to go to university, students whose parents/siblings went to university but not

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[2] The Office for Students is a non-departmental public body of the UK government's Department for Education, acting as the regulator and competition authority for the Higher Education sector in England.
[3] The British Academy is the UK's national academy for the humanities and social sciences. It has a fellowship of more than 1,000 leading scholars and is a funding body for research projects across the UK.

until they were twenty one and students whose home address is in a neighbourhood with low rates of participation in Higher Education. TAP pre-internship workshops were designed to prepare participants for their work with organisations through a series of practical insights (i.e. building preparedness for work) and more academic content (i.e. bridging subject knowledge and skills with workplace insights). For example, academic experts in placemaking led activities to encourage students to reflect on the ways in which their own disciplines connect to the themes of TAP, while invited speakers from host organisations also contributed by sharing the ways in which student KE partnerships benefit them, relating their experiences of working life and helping students to connect their academic knowledge to accounts of placemaking from their own practice and other 'real world' examples. Finally, students from previous TAP cohorts shared details of the projects they worked on, their understanding of placemaking and their strategies for a successful student KE partnership. These preparatory activities therefore worked to ensure that students felt comfortable with the practical and intellectual dimensions of their internships, and they also began to model knowledge exchange by explicitly signposting the differing and complementary sources of expertise that were informing the project. The design of the workshops was also grounded in methodologies developed in established student KE projects at the university, namely Storying Sheffield, where undergraduate students in English Literature worked with long term users of mental health services to co-produce narratives of everyday life in the city - this project adopted a similar pattern by combining theoretical and academic insights with the lived experience and expertise of external participants and project partners. (Stone, 2012).

The subsequent internships then consolidated and made tangible the KE as students were supported with practical ways of maximising the learning from their experiences and sharing their own knowledge with their partners. Students were also invited to navigate, reflect upon and document their experiences via a series of short modules within an 'intern support pack' co-produced by TAP staff, students and partners. In this formation, supported internships - incorporating preparatory activities grounded in academic and applied knowledge and insight, along with iterative reflective exercises - offer ways of generating and capitalising on experiential knowledge as they provide students with the

opportunity of learning through work and experience, within a generative, complementary dynamic incorporating their classroom-based academic studies.

This approach to Student KE builds on academic literature that has explored the pedagogical impacts of external engagement in teaching and learning, through the lens of experiential learning (Pugsley & Clayton, 2003), active learning (Yoder and Hochevar, 2005) and work-engaged/integrated learning (Brüssow & Wilkinson, 2011; Yorke, 2011; Jackson, 2013). These various pedagogies are united by a shared emphasis on learning through doing (Lester & Costley, 2010). While such approaches have been shown to improve students' academic performance (Yoder and Hochevar, 2005), their potential benefits have been shown to yield wider outcomes: as Breakey et al. (2009) emphasise, the "academic landscape" is changing, and so graduates must be better equipped for society's broader challenges (p.224). Internships can help to foster resilience in students, allowing them to gain experience and improve transferable skills such as communication and collaboration by surfacing them through work experiences (see Jackson, 2013 on employability skills, Breakey et al., 2019).

While work-based learning can benefit students, internships based on these approaches can also have positive outcomes for businesses and organisations. Basit et al. (2015) highlight the shared positive outcomes of work-based learning, with students using the workplace as a "learning resource" and employers also benefiting with assistance on "specific projects closely related to their business" (p.3). In this sense, work-based learning can be understood as itself a form of KE with the emphasis on mutual benefit supporting both parties to reflect on what they might contribute (exchange) to and within the partnership. Such arrangements, when implemented with due care and consideration, can facilitate long-term positive outcomes for students, organisations and higher education institutions (HEIs).

KE could offer a more holistic means of developing students' overall resilience and employability. While TAP placed heavy emphasis on employability skills, the programme emphasised a less instrumental notion of development - one which appealed to students'

sense of personal growth and future planning, and their relationship with their communities (i.e. placemaking) - with the students' WP identities at its heart. Through student KE - emphasising the multiple knowledges that students possess and can bring to relationships with external partners - the programme helped students in multiple ways, as this article will show.

Work-based learning (see Foster & Stephenson, 1998) modules have been meaningfully integrated in undergraduate curricula across a range of disciplines for several years, while subsequent literature (Udall et al., 2015) has explored the ways in which these models have been developed to support students and HEIs to engage with community partners as part of academic programmes. TAP builds on these types of experiences in various ways. Perhaps most obviously, the programme's co-curricular status more easily enabled the application of an interdisciplinary theme (placemaking) that complements but is also independent from students' programmes. This theme enabled a common reference point to unite the varying perspectives and knowledges of students, partners, and academics/HEIs, thus providing a collective foundation for KE. TAP's other key differentiating factor was that it exclusively engaged WP students, working on the basis that such students bring much needed insights and rich lived experiences - augmenting their disciplinary perspectives - to the many organisations with which the programme collaborates, and to the institution. The sense of students' WP identities as valid and meaningful, challenges deficit models by explicitly positioning such students as assets to HEIs and partners, in line with Quinn et al. (2005) who emphasise the need for HEIs to"draw on [their] strengths" (p. 39).

TAP's championing of SHAPE is linked to this positive emphasis on WP students, in the hope that it can offer a sense of belonging and currency for those whose disciplinary identities have been contested through recurrent debates around the value of disciplines outside of STEM (Olmos-Peñuela et al., 2015). While TAP was careful to not perpetuate an artificial STEM-SHAPE binary, our evaluation data reflected a perception amongst students that their disciplinary status was somehow lesser than their STEM peers, and we therefore took opportunities to reinforce SHAPE as an inclusive and dynamic framing

for their academic identities and perspectives. These perceptions amongst SHAPE students reflect longer standing trends in the literature. According to Malone (2012), STEM disciplines have greater access to research funding, with the result highlighted by so-called "physics envy" (Malone, 2012, p. 246) prevalent amongst adjacent but unaffiliated disciplines. Benneworth and Jongbloed (2015) argue the value of SHAPE disciplines is not being realised and that "SHAPE stakeholders are not sufficiently salient as stakeholders to universities" (p. 567). Research shows students from SHAPE disciplines develop skills in

communication, collaboration, research and analysis, independence, creativity and adaptability" throughout their degrees (British Academy, 2020).

TAP emphasised such skills acquisition through the process of KE, and subsequently aimed to give students confidence in the "real world" value of their subjects, by surfacing these skills through the internships.

Defining effective student KE

Current literature discusses what makes effective KE, providing guidance for the TAP programme. In a systematic review by the National Centre for Academic and Cultural Exchange, Sarah Sigal (2021) states that successful KE requires frequent and clear communication, management of expectations from all participants and a deep awareness of the differences between the domains of participants. This is echoed by Dowling (2015), who emphasises a need for mutual understanding and trust. The importance of communication is also highlighted by King and Rivett (2015) and Abreu et al. (2008), who note how partnerships should be expected to evolve over time, with cross-domain collaboration encouraged (Salinas, 2019) through iterative partnership. Of specific relevance to TAP, Moreton (2015: 103) shows the unique character of KE in the arts and humanities disciplines, emphasising its 'collaborative' nature and a focus on value 'beyond only financial gain'. Overall, as Ulrichsen (2019) sets out specifically, the multi-directional and mutually negotiated flow of knowledge that defines KE, differentiates it

from knowledge transfer, which presupposes a more transactional or one-way dynamic. Although these articles and reports primarily focus on a process of KE between HEIs (professional researchers) and external partners that does not typically involve students, this distinction offers a helpful way of conceptualising student KE in contrast to more traditional models of work experience because it opens up the possibility for a two-way exchange.

In contrast to much of the current literature, Lowe and Dent (2021) pay specific attention to the role of students within KE, drawing on the knowledge exchange framework (KEF) developed by Research England. Lowe and Dent (2021) present four models of student engagement within KE: students as entrepreneurs, partners, producers and agents. The concept of students as KE partners builds on established literature which examines student engagement through partnership, with student involvement in curriculum planning and other learning and teaching activities (Flint, 2016) emphasised. However, within student KE the partner role has larger implications, offering the possibility that students might inform the generation of new knowledge outside of the HE ecosystem, actively participating in an evolving partnership and exchanging knowledge in a workplace environment. In the TAP programme, the personal experiential knowledge of WP students elevated their role as partners in KE. This dimension develops the work of Udall et al. (2015), who note how students participating in externally facing projects bring

> *forms of knowledge and expertise that might be located outside the academy and that can be enlivened through public engagement* (p.6).

Evaluating and defining student KE through TAP

Because student KE is a developing concept, TAP offers an opportunity to reflect on how the project's processes and emergent data offer some definitions of its distinctive dynamics. The programme used a mixed methods approach to evaluate its impact on participants. For students, this included extensive pre and post programme surveys, focus groups and optional creative reflection tasks for which participants could create poetry,

video, drawings or blog posts. For partners, this included pre and post programme surveys and informal interviews which evaluated TAP's impact upon their organisation as well as the communities and places with which they work. The programme used an action research strategy[4] given its experimental and iterative nature, and the evaluation methodology was itself continually improved in consultation with students and partners with the aim of making the process accessible and producing insights – for example around placemaking or KE - that could be used by current and future TAP participants. The TAP symposium held at the end of the second year of the project also provided the opportunity for partners and students alike to share their experiences and reflect on their projects.

What follows is an analysis primarily of data collected from the student surveys in the first two years (tracking the experiences of cohorts 1 and 2), with a particular emphasis on the voices, experiences and reported benefits of student KE for TAP student participants. Surveys were circulated after the pre-internship phase of the programme, and then again following the completion of students' placements, with students offered vouchers (£10 for the first survey, £15 for the second) to incentivise participation. The initial survey focused on students' expectations of the programme, invited reflection on the pre-placement activities, and on students' perceptions of the project's key terms and concepts, namely: placemaking, knowledge exchange, and widening participation. The second survey explored any changes over the programme as the internship phase was initiated. Areas of focus included the internship itself, students' future plans, and the relationship between their programme of study and the internship. The surveys were conducted by the

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[4] Action research, first developed in 1944 by researcher Kurt Lewin, refers to research that seeks simultaneously to investigate and solve an issue. For a brief introduction to action research see, for example, Susman and Evered (1978) and for a more in-depth study see, for example, Kemmis, S. and McTaggert, R. (1988).

university's Impact and Evaluation team, and student email addresses and identifying data were removed before the survey results were presented to the TAP team, while students' widening participation status was self-disclosed and recorded at the project recruitment stage. The survey was composed of multiple-choice questions, and wider qualitative questions, inviting deeper reflection. In presenting and analysing these data, we identify three interconnected domains of student KE that evolved through the project: 1) applying disciplinary knowledge, where students bring and develop insights and skills acquired through their degree programmes to their partnerships; 2) identifying lived experience, whereby students are supported to deploy knowledge drawn primarily from outside of their studies as part of their knowledge exchange partnership; 3) realising expertise, as students recognise that they can call upon this unique convergence of identities, knowledges and experiences in a way that adds value to their university and their partner organisation, establishing new conditions of knowledge development that bring benefit to the student.

Three domains of student KE

Applying Disciplinary Knowledge

TAP students came from a diverse range of disciplines across the Faculty of Arts and Humanities, and the Faculty of Social Sciences, namely The School of English, The Department of History, The School of East Asian Studies, The School of Languages and Cultures, Department of Sociological Studies, The Department of Music, Department of Archaeology, The Department of Economics, The Department of Geography, The Department of Urban Studies and Planning, The Department of Politics and International Relations, The Department of Journalism Studies, The School of Architecture, and The School of Law. Apart from the last three disciplinary areas, these students' degree programmes are not necessarily connected to specific career pathways. As such, the project aimed to support students to realise - through the process of KE - the skills and perspectives developed through their programmes of study (both discipline specific and generic) and to apply and reflect on these through the course of the internship. Again, the

thematic emphasis on place and placemaking provided a framework to channel these processes, both in the pre-internship activities and in the internships themselves.

While students from the place-related disciplines (e.g. Architecture, Geography) had more immediately identifiable resources and frames of reference to reflect on their degree programmes, place provided a focal point to enable the other students to begin to locate their disciplinary identities within applied contexts. For example, a Politics student reflected that "[P]olitics often decides who gets money to place make, and...what voices are not heard", a Sociology student stated that their subject could "easily be applied to facilitate safe spaces for complex intersections of communities", while an English student described "[L]iterature as a very powerful way of helping to establish place...it is an accessible format for most people" (University of Sheffield Impact and Evaluation Team (TUoS IET), 2023). These kinds of responses were partly enabled by the intensive internship support workshops and materials in which cross-disciplinary, academic and 'real-world' approaches to placemaking combined to create a co-curricular space (learning in addition to but complementary of the programme) with a practical endpoint (the internship) that enabled participants to consider and reconsider their disciplinary knowledges. By the end of the year 2 cohort, our survey found that 79% of the participants felt very able or able to bring subject-specific knowledge to their internships, and would suggest that, in order to bring this knowledge, students first had to be given the space – through preparatory activities - to reflect on their disciplinary identities (a reflection on what knowledges they had to exchange).

For many students, the application of knowledge gained through their degree programme was obvious, with clear connections drawn between academic work and placement activities. For example, an English student working with a cinema charity talked about how they "had the opportunity to write articles for the news page wherein I could bring my own film knowledge from my course" (TUoS IET, 2023). Similarly, a History student noted how

[w]orking as a curator, my knowledge of history was essential not just for the project I was a part of, but for establishing personal relationships with other curators (TUoS IET, 2023).

A dual honours student studying Geography and Urban Studies and Planning noted how they "interned in the policy department at a national authority" and found themselves "surrounded by people who were interested in and work in urban planning", while another reflected that they had

covered a lot of placemaking concepts in my degree already so I felt confident using the language and participating in discussions (TUoS IET, 2023).

In these examples the students' disciplinary knowledge is identified both as directly relevant to their internship, and as enabling credibility and authenticity in the workplace.

We also found that students consistently identified the application and transfer of more generic skills associated with their degree programmes. Research skills featured frequently, with one student describing how they

made transport surveys and collated results which were made much easier by my experience of writing a dissertation. (TUoS IET, 2023)

Another noted how their

project used our skills such as research and planning that come from our degrees, but we were able to explore topics that were our interests rather than our degree titles and use our academic skills to get the best results from this. (TUoS IET, 2023)

In this case the student suggests an enhancement of their prior (in degree) skills training through application in the internship, a sentiment echoed by another student who describes being:

aware how my research training allowed me to conduct and analyse the research. I was prepared for the opportunity to make a presentation, and to disseminate the findings. I also had the chance to go beyond the kind of research I was allowed to do during my undergrad. (TUoS IET, 2023)

This sense of enacting and then going beyond transferable skills again suggests that the active process of applying and exchanging knowledge enabled constructive reflection on students' academic skills, imbuing them with new currency.

To explore this further, our post internship survey also sought to understand students' awareness of KE. Again, the concept had been central to our pre-internship activity, foregrounding students' knowledge assets (e.g. lived experience, subject specific, and transferable skills) and supporting them to feel able to contribute to and benefit from KE. We noted a high degree of awareness, with students anchoring their rich definitions to specific experiences from their internship. For example:

At one point, my host and I were discussing about our organisation's equality and diversity strategy, and I made the point that according to the Royal Autistic Society, only 22% of Autistic adults in the UK are currently in paid employment (compared to the employment rate of around 80% for non-disabled people). As I was working with the human resources division of the organisation, I was able to bring this statistic to members of senior staff, who were in charge of the organisation's diversity and inclusion policies. These staff members told me they would consider our exchange of ideas even after I had finished my internship, meaning that my work will continue to impact the organisation and the local community that the organisation works for in the future, and to me that is the value and meaning of knowledge exchange between humanities students and the professional world. (TUoS IET, 2023)

This powerful narrative is reflective of a recurring sentiment amongst the participants that KE is enabled through "any source - education, lived experience, or somewhere in between" (TUoS IET, 2023). Similarly, one student noted that their internship

> *involved knowledge exchange relating to personal lived experiences as well as how different personalities perceive and go about certain tasks. The knowledge exchange I experienced also involved more "hard" skills and how people from different backgrounds, both personal and professional, apply and value these.* (TUoS IET, 2023)

Here, the KE is presented as an active, collaborative process rather than a transactional consumption of skills and experiences. This implies that the project-led nature of the work (the production of collaboratively defined and produced outputs) was an important element in enabling a framework where the student is an active agent in the process - as another student suggested

> *knowledge exchange means not only sharing one's experience but also creating something by sharing one's knowledge* (TUoS IET, 2023).

Identifying Lived Experience

Given that the TAP programme only recruited students from WP backgrounds, it made explicit in dialogue with students and partners that students' identities and backgrounds formed an active part of the KE dynamic that underpinned the project's ethos. Put simply, lived experience was actively positioned as one of the knowledges that might be exchanged through the collaboration, alongside more obvious forms of subject specific and transferable skills that are developed within students' degree programmes. In practical terms, this involved framing the diversity of experiences and perspectives that our students would contribute as a distinctive component of our offer to external partners, and making clear the project's aims around widening access to opportunities, to ensure

an alignment of purpose. For students, this involved specific activities focused on lived experience (class identity, experience of disability, ethnicity, gender identity, hobbies and interests) as a form of knowledge, and, in the pre-internship workshops, inviting reflection on the extent to which these kinds of resources had shaped academic and/or professional aspirations and experiences. In these dialogues with students, place and placemaking provided a conjoining frame through which experiences as knowledge could be surfaced and contextualised - with students drawing on their own local geographies (either in Sheffield, or for many, beyond) as a reference point in articulating where their personal knowledge might emerge from.

This preparatory work with students was important in offering practical ways of understanding and deploying elements of their lived experience in their placements, and modelling some of the ways in which such insights could be harnessed alongside academic knowledge and skills through the process of the internships, and more broadly in students' academic work. Our survey showed that 71% of our students felt able or very able to bring their lived experiences to their internships, which partly underlines the success of these preparatory activities and of our work with partners. Analysis of our open text responses reveals further complexity, however.

Given the nature of the internships, students were frequently exposed to direct communication with stakeholders (clients, users, customers, audiences, participants etc.) or were asked to keep stakeholders' concerns and needs at the centre of their projects. As such, lived experience was frequently positioned as the basis for empathic and considerate engagement with these groups and individuals. A student working with a local housing association described how they were able to "use my lived experience to empathize and connect with" their clients, and another, working with a theatre on an outreach and engagement project, was more explicit in disclosing that they themselves came from "a lower economical background so I was able to somewhat relate to the families and children I met" (TUoS IET, 2023). In these examples, students' professional behaviours and activities in the service of their internship are enriched by class backgrounds, which provide them with a shared and authentic point of reference.

The sense of one's class background being intrinsically connected to what we might call lived place knowledge was found with a student working on a heritage project in a specific area of Sheffield. They defined their contribution of their lived experience to the internship in terms of secondary local understanding, noting that they were "from a similar place" to that which they were working in, and how they felt "the same need to protect its history" (TUoS IET, 2023). Here the empathic framework is more explicitly located in a shared understanding of class and geography.

Class and place and knowledge are therefore particularly fertile components of easily mobilised lived experience and these were felt uniquely in the case of an overseas student on the programme. They were working on a migration festival and their internship involved, amongst other activities, developing and delivering workshop activities around participants' experiences of migration. They note how as a student "visiting" Sheffield they are neither "local" nor "immigrant", but then they explain how they reflected on the complexity of their own community and place within their "hometown", as they describe growing "up in the middle of (or mix of) many cultures", which provided an authentic basis for their own dialogue with the stakeholders with whom they worked (TUoS IET, 2023).

These student narratives indicate a growing confidence amongst the participants that one's background and experience of life might constitute expertise. One student described how:

> *as a mature, first-generation student, the placement helped me understand how my previous life experience fits into the world of graduate employment. In many ways I was able to reconcile my pre-university self with my post-university self.* (TUoS IET, 2023)

Here the notion of KE has provided a bridge to connect hitherto disparate experiences and identities, legitimising the richness of the student's background as an asset rather than a hindrance.

Clearly in these cases the partner organisation reinforces the messages around legitimising and encouraging this KE domain that had been explored within the pre-internship support workshops, and one of our participants summarises this powerfully when they note that

> *my internship hosts were so keen to learn more about my lived experience and this made feel very welcome and valued.* (TUoS IET, 2023)

The notion of placing value on experience is critical here, and it was mobilised by partner organisations in tangible ways. For example, a student working with a local museum describes how:

> *[h]aving ADHD I was able to design an exhibition that I believe will excite children and engage those with even the shortest attention span.* (TUoS IET, 2023)

The student's reflection suggests that their learning difference was an enabling factor in the success of their work, rather than a barrier, and speaks in terms of creativity and agency: "I was given the freedom to design the exhibition exactly as I wished without traditional constraints". There is a sense here, too, that experience in this context is a richly empathic resource, a sentiment felt by another student;

> *[a]rts and culture are integral parts of my everyday life but my lived experience has taught me that when it comes to race, I am always at the margins,*

a sense of knowledge which made them determined to approach their

> *internship with the awareness and intentionality of doing work that did not marginalise, but instead built on inclusion and recognition of the humanity of the people we were reaching out to in our comms.* (TUoS IET, 2023)

Here the lived experience of racialised exclusion is directed towards a sense of purpose and energy in the internship, and again the student is clearly given space to nurture this sense of agency.

That students have the confidence and willingness to deploy lived experience as knowledge is determined by a number of factors, but evidence from the survey suggests that establishing notions of empowerment and belonging are critical in giving them the permission to draw on their backgrounds in the context of KE. Our survey explored, amongst other things, participants' feelings about being classified as 'widening participation' students and, while some noted the limits of the term

> *it would be great if one day, there wasn't a widening participation category. To be classified as such is an indication that something is wrong, something has gone wrong and needs rectifying,*

There was also a consistent and wide-ranging sense of pride that emerged from the responses. One respondent noted that the term made them feel that they

> *have a lot to offer from my own lived experience that I wouldn't necessarily have considered valuable.* (TUoS IET, 2023)

Here, the WP category is specifically linked to the notion of lived experience as an asset and the response suggests that the experience of student KE in TAP (a project specifically and explicitly designed for WP students) has supported the development of a more positive, shared identity. One response explicitly states for example that the

> *phrase gives me a sense of community, understanding that voices from all groups should be represented.* (TUoS IET, 2023)

The student's reference to "voices" and representation offers further evidence that putting lived experience to practise in the internships creates a powerful, reinforcing

impact on students' feelings of confidence and belonging. Similarly, where another respondent notes that they are

> proud of my place as a widening participation student as my experiences are valuable to a range of people and places,

the sense of value to people and place again refers back to the KE internship, just as it did for the student who describes their "honour" at being associated with the categorisation and its usefulness in terms of a "skill moving forward into work" (TUoS IET, 2023).

Realising expertise

As the data presented so far has shown, TAP students were positioned within the workplace not just as learners but as active contributors who are able to draw on disciplinary knowledge and lived experience that is valued by their partner organisations. This framing offered students the possibility of looking forward to their internship with the sense that, although they have much to learn from their experience, they also already possess highly valuable knowledge, skills and perspectives. This expanded, critical and contextual view of expertise - the idea that there are different ways to be an expert - was presented to students during the pre-internship workshops, and this means, as one survey respondent outlined, engaging in KE is about "taking on the role of expert" (TUoS IET, 2023).

To be positioned as an expert can be daunting for some, and this may be particularly acutely felt by students with a WP status. Many TAP participants shared at the beginning of the programme an anxiety that they did not possess valuable skills, knowledge or experience. "I don't feel I have anything to offer my host organisation" was a concern that repeatedly surfaced when students were invited to share their thoughts on their forthcoming internship (TUoS, IET, 2023). Therefore, an integral strand to the pre-

internship activity was to support students in the process of locating and articulating their own expertise, and in interrogating and reflecting upon what 'being an expert' might mean. Invited speakers - including academics, colleagues from host organisations and previous TAP students - shared their personal stories and experiences, related the ways they deal with personal and structural setbacks and challenges, offered practical advice for strengthening self-belief and explained their own embodiments of the role of expert. This modelling of a multi-layered and personal view of expertise, as well as an offer of practical tools and techniques for communicating with partners, building confidence and dealing with imposter feelings, acted as an invitation to TAP students to develop and share their own formulations of expert knowledge and to apply that to their work with their host. As one student recalled in his post for the programme blog:

> *Initially, arriving at [my host organisation] and touring its vast and grand exhibits, research facilities, libraries and archives, I felt completely out of my depth. What could I possibly offer such a prestigious institution and its expert staff as a second year history student? That's when I reflected on my TAP sessions and remembered being told that my experience, knowledge and interests were entirely unique, and that I will always have something to bring to the table. As I interacted with welcoming staff from various departments, I began to realise that this applied to everyone. No two people I met had the same career path, or field of work, or background knowledge - but they all displayed inspiring passion for their respective subjects.* (Pointon, 2023)

Other survey respondents, in looking back at their TAP experience, similarly offered nuanced insights into the ways in which diverse expertise interacts in the workplace and how expertise can be applied for a beneficial outcome. Many describe a balance between locating and sharing one's own knowledge and being open to new knowledge, for example, as this student explained:

> *the term knowledge exchange to me is like a puzzle and each person involved is a different puzzle piece [...] and we work together by figuring out where each piece fits*

and the best way that they would fit together. In other words, we work together by sharing what we know and how it can help solve any particular problem. (TUoS IET, 2023)

In this conceptualisation of KE, multiple forms of knowledge coalesce, but the process through which they can most effectively be combined is understood as an important and explicit consideration. This conscious and critical relationship with knowledge sharing is reflected elsewhere, with one student remarking that "[t]o me [KE is] firstly something you have to be open to!" and another succinctly pointing to the potentially transformational effects of embracing a multi-directional flow of knowledge when they reflect that

TAP afforded me with the skills and toolset to be a changemaker- it benefits people greatly who seek to learn and to pass on knowledge to others. (TUoS IET, 2023)

Participants' responses here suggest that, not only has the presence of varied and individualised forms of knowledge been identified in practical contexts, but that the shifting dynamics and contexts of knowledge realisation - a process in which the student has shared agency - has been identified.

For the groups of students who returned the following year to the project as mentors, ambassadors and consultants, their personal understandings of the nature, role and practical application of expertise informed the way in which they supported and inspired new students and communicated the project to a wider audience. By giving presentations and Q&As at the pre-internship sessions, conferences and dissemination events, and by supporting students one-to-one, their role as experts, this time in the TAP experience, was strengthened further. In sharing their knowledge, the ethos of the programme was communicated authentically and effectively and the focus on collaborative knowledge production was modelled. One student, for example, engaged an audience of academics and professionals from across the sector with a presentation at a national employability conference, explaining in their post on the programme blog that "I always thought that

being employable was learning how to be an inauthentic version of myself" but had ultimately learned that

my contexts and disabilities have value and TAP empowered me to understand that my needs are not unreasonable and will not make me unemployable. (Bark, 2023)

Another presented on her internship with a local migration festival on the themes of belonging with which she had worked, to a cross-institutional academic audience at a British Academy organised event on the role of the SHAPE disciplines, and the university's annual education conference. In both cases, the student expertly drew from a combination of their lived experience - both from the TAP programme and more generally - and academic knowledge to communicate compellingly with their audience.

In the pre-internship activity, TAP students learned about the relationship to the wider context of KE activity within the university, including that its current primary manifestation is as partnership work between academic staff and external businesses, organisations and communities. All participants undertook anti-racism training and were encouraged to consider how the questions of justice and equity raised in that work relate to KE practice. In using the frame of institutional KE for TAP, as an expansion of the more traditional employability frame, students were thus invited to reflect critically on their roles as representatives of the university and to understand themselves as potential influencers or drivers of its relationship with the outside world. As one student said, "this program helped me a lot to think about the relationship between the university and the city", while another commented that:

Knowledge flows in two directions, including in situations where it might be taken for granted that one party is the subject plied with knowledge. Recognising this is an important step in redressing imbalances of power, especially within academia. Constructing our research design involved a flow of knowledge [between] both host and students. (TUoS IET, 2023)

In this way, TAP participants' formulations of expertise account for the role of power in broader KE contexts and acknowledge the ethical and practical dimensions of the university's relationship with external partners. The student, as expert in student KE, 'looks in two directions': to the institution, in terms of critically addressing the value foundations of expertise within the university and acknowledging their own active role in that context; to the external partner and the 'real world', in terms of understanding a two-way flow of knowledge and its potential benefit to culture, community and economy as well as to themselves.

Conclusion

Through an analysis of data gathered from the TAP student surveys, and with a particular focus on the way in which students reflected upon and conceptualised their experience, we have mapped three interconnected domains of student KE. Based on the collected data and our own observations of students' work, however, we have noted that not all TAP internship experiences appeared to involve a movement through all three domains: a minority of survey respondents said they had felt unable to bring disciplinary knowledge and/or lived experience to their work, for example. This is partly accounted for, we suggest, by the nature of student KE as a necessarily live and therefore 'messy' process that centres student agency and self-discovery, especially in relation to the mobilisation of WP identities. At no point was the sharing of lived experiences with a host organisation or peers a requirement of the programme, for example. Nevertheless, we propose that, where student KE involves students' identification and application of disciplinary knowledge and lived experience, followed by a conscious synthesising and framing of that knowledge as valuable expertise within a given collaborative context - that is, where all three domains are activated - then it is at its most transformative and productive. Although the WP categorisation has played a key role in the development of this conception of student KE, with a particularly rich and diverse set of data as well as a methodology for engagement having emerged from TAP, we understand it to be potentially applicable to students from all backgrounds.

As we have outlined, the concept, practice and method of placemaking is integral to TAP in terms of its role as a thematic catalyst for students' movement through the three domains, especially for those whose subjects align with it less overtly. It also mobilises participants to critically consider questions of collaboration and power within the broader context of the institution's relationship with external organisations, businesses, communities and places. Students' formulation of novel conceptualisations and applications of 'knowledge exchange' of the kind shared in this article have the potential to disrupt and unsettle KE paradigms and interrogate the ways in which the university relates to and seeks to benefit the outside world. Therefore, we argue that a central focus on a diverse, topical and 'real world' theme such as placemaking brings intellectual robustness and practical coherence to the multiple, interconnected strands - disciplinary approaches from the SHAPE disciplines, embodied and experiential learning, employability, widening participation, students as experts, the broader KE context - that comprise the model of student KE that we set out here.

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