

A Practical Guide

Embedding Public and Community Engagement in the Higher Education Curriculum



Preface

References to public and community engagement have become near ubiquitous in the higher education context. Applications for research funding demand stakeholder engagement, universities integrate public engagement into their strategies, and the UK's Research Excellence Framework 2029 includes "Engagement and Impact" as one of its three assessment elements. However, these activities often omit the integration of key actors in any university: taught students.

Indeed, practical guidance on the types of curricular and co-curricular activities through which students may interact with local communities and the broader public is still rather scarce (although some is referenced in this handbook). This is curious given unfavourable descriptions of universities as detached from their communities and calls for them to better prepare students for the 'real world'.

Therefore, this handbook is a starting point for higher education professionals who are interested in integrating public and/or community engagement into their teaching. The pages that follow offer concrete examples and step-by-step guidance on how to implement these activities.

The handbook is structured around 19 case studies developed by University of Warwick staff and students. It contains case studies from across and beyond all faculties at the University of Warwick on a wide range of activities from podcast assignments to student-run teddy bear hospitals. The handbook covers engagement both within modules and beyond the regular curriculum, for instance as part of the Warwick Institute of Engagement Resonate programme. It also includes general insights on public and community engagement pedagogies (including what we mean by these terms – p. 4).

The handbook was created by the Pedagogies of Public and Community Engagement Learning Circle, shared by the Warwick Institute of Engagement (WIE) and the Warwick International Higher Education Academy (WIHEA). The learning circle connects students and staff to consider the ways in which students can and should be involved in public and community engagement. Having been established in 2021, the learning circle has benefitted tremendously from several generations of leadership by Kevin Moffat, Mark Hinton, Gioia Panzarella, and Jonathan Hickman-Heron. We would like to thank them for their outstanding efforts in championing public and community engagement pedagogies. We would also like to thank the Warwick Institute of Engagement and the Warwick International Higher Education Academy for their commitment of funding and staffing resources which made this project possible, as well as Annabel Bagshaw for her editorial work. Finally, we would like to thank the contributors. They have volunteered their time to share their experiences and guide future engagement practices in higher education teaching.

Laura Gelhaus, Naomi Kay, Rachel Turner-King



Contents

- 05 What Do We Mean by Public and Community Engagement?**
Jenny Harlock
- 07 The Case for Embedding Public and Community Engagement in Teaching**
Laura Gelhaus & Jo Kukuczka
- 09 An Organising Committee to Advise on a Departmental Event**
Gioia Panzarella
- 12 Designing and Producing a Podcast as Assignment**
Duncan Lees & Stephanie Schnurr
- 15 Designing Hands-On Engagement Activities**
Naomi Kay
- 17 Hands-On Maths**
Helena Verrill
- 20 Student Research and Public Engagement**
Callum J. Hodge
- 21 A Psychology Placement Module**
Gitit Kadar-Satat
- 24 Collaborating with Community Arts and Third Sector Organisations
for an Applied Theatre Module**
Bobby Smith
- 27 Pop-Up Health Checks for Under-served Communities**
Kate Owen & Sean Barrett



- 29 Teddy Bear Hospital**
Alex Reeve & Lucy Phillips
- 32 Live Problem Solving with External Partners**
Inge Hill
- 35 Co-Production of Case-Based Learning Materials: Capturing the Lived Experience**
Dawn Collins & Hollie White
- 37 Social Design: Co-Creating with Local Communities**
Edward Loveman
- 39 Engaging with Museums: Maths and Coventry Transport Museum**
Helena Verrill
- 42 Student Pitching as an Engaged Pedagogy**
Naomi Kay, Sophie Martucci, Rachel Turner-King & Cheryl Cane
- 48 Genetics: Science and Society**
Corinna Clark & Felicity Boardman
- 51 Pop-Up Shop Owners for a Day**
Inge Hill
- 53 The Dissemination Component of an Undergraduate Final-Year Dissertation Module**
Gioia Panzarella
- 56 Community Engagement with Seldom-Heard Groups: Considering Students and External Partners**
Laura Gelhaus & Jenny Harlock
- 58 Community Engagement in Purposeful Curriculum Design**
Jo Kukuczka

What Do We Mean by Public and Community Engagement?

Jenny Harlock

One issue that educators and researchers alike face is the plethora of terms used to talk about public engagement. What we mean by public engagement has implications for thinking about who we include, exclude (and whether that is appropriate), and how we engage the public in our teaching.

There are many terms to describe processes of, and who is the focus in, engagement with audiences beyond the classroom, including but not limited to: community engagement, coproduction, collaboration, co-design, patient and public involvement, and user involvement. Different disciplines adopt different terminology. For example, in the health and medical sciences it is common to hear “patient and public involvement and engagement”. Other disciplines use alternative terms such as citizen or service user involvement, populations, or communities. The terminology will be influenced by the norms of the discipline, who we wish to engage with, and how. It can be appropriate to be quite specific for example if we wish to engage with particular types of organisations or individuals, such as children and schools.

In this handbook, we mainly use the terms public or community engagement to describe the broad range of activities in relation to education and teaching that engage people beyond the university.



Community Engagement

We understand community engagement as the active participation and involvement of individuals, groups and/or organisations, in the design and/or implementation of an activity. In the context of this handbook, this can include working with communities of individuals, who may share a connection such as living in the same place or share an identity or experience such as being a patient (Minkler et al. 2022). It can also include working with a diverse range of voluntary, non-profit, grass roots, social enterprise and faith organisations, as well as companies, and in some cases (often local) government organisations (Preece 2017). For our purposes, community engagement means activities in which students work with community actors for their learning, projects, assignments, or other activities. It is important to remember when undertaking community engagement activities that communities are not homogenous and community actors bring dynamic and multifaceted identities.



“Public engagement describes the myriad of ways in which the activity and benefits of higher education and research can be shared with the public. Engagement is by definition a two-way process, involving interaction and listening, with the goal of generating mutual benefit.”

National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement definition of public engagement

National Coordinating
Centre for Public
Engagement



Public Engagement

Meanwhile, we use public engagement to refer to wider engagement (e.g. at societal level) and/or with a broader range of people. While we understand community engagement as involving processes of co-creation with a community, public engagement can capture those activities that have elsewhere been described as outreach or dissemination. In the context of this handbook, public engagement therefore covers activities in which students communicate information, outputs, or perspectives to a broader audience, be it online or in-person, without necessarily designing the activity together with an audience.



As we have seen, in practice, there are many terms to describe public engagement, and they can sometimes be used interchangeably in the context of talking about public engagement in research and education. We have tried to draw out some of the nuances to help navigate educators and novices to the field.

Further reading

Minkler M., Wallerstein, N. and Hyde C. (2022). ‘Improving Health through Community Organizing and Community Building: Perspectives from Health Education and Social Work’ in M. Minkler and P. Wakimoto (Eds.) Community Organizing and Community Building for Health and Social Equity, 4th edition, Rutgers University Press: New Brunswick.

Preece, J. (2017). ‘Community Engagement and its evolving terminology’, in University Community Engagement and Lifelong Learning. Palgrave Macmillan: Cham.

The Case for Embedding Public and Community Engagement in Teaching

Laura Gelhaus & Jo Kukuczka

This chapter summarises the benefits identified by the literature on embedding public and community engagement in teaching (listed under “further reading”).

Benefits for students

Knowledge



- Strengthening subject knowledge: students know the subject well enough to communicate it and answer questions they would not have encountered in strictly academic contexts
- Challenging existing knowledge: engaging with communities can challenge students’ existing knowledge and assumptions, both about their subject and the world at large

University experience



- Motivation
- Feeling empowered
- Fun
- Belonging
- Appreciation: especially when receiving positive feedback from the public, students’ view of their discipline or programme can improve
- Reflection on own values, knowledge and skills developed at university

Personal Development



- Social learning through interacting with diverse communities
- Confidence
- Civic mindedness and responsibility
- Student agency: voice, ownership and agentic citizenship
- Expanding the comfort zone: activities are new to students, leading to initial discomfort that is overcome as they progress
- Building professional expertise and networks
- Recognition of value of working with communities
- New social encounters with communities, other students, university staff

Skills



- Communication to different audiences, adjusting flexibly
- Critical thinking
- Time management
- Teamwork with other students, communities, etc.
- Problem solving

Benefits for educators

- Motivated students in a different teaching and learning environment
- Building and sustaining networks with external partners
- Opportunity to implement institutional employability frameworks in an environment appropriate for a modules’ learning objectives

Benefits for communities

- Tangible contributions by students, including but not limited to: new perspectives, solutions to existing problems, time
- Increasing interest in and access to academic disciplines
- Concrete reporting and data e.g. from student research/projects
- Trust in science and research
- Encouragement for citizen science
- Access to research findings
- Engagement with a wider range of university actors than academic staff, likely more representative (Finn and Brown 2023)

Benefits for UK Higher Education: a caveat

Institutions may view teaching and learning activities that embed public and community engagement as a response to two criticisms which have been levelled against universities:

1. Universities have long been described as unable to meaningfully connect to communities beyond the academy. Therefore, public and community engagement has been encouraged or even prescribed for research activities. Such calls may expand to include teaching.
2. Universities are increasingly asked to defend the value they add to students' career prospects. However, some (e.g. Gabriel and Harding 2023) have argued that such a discourse unduly restricts the perception of the purpose and value of a university education.

What is key is that programme and module learning objectives are the core consideration when contemplating the introduction of public and community engagement. Otherwise, any strategy to embed public and community engagement – at university, faculty, department, or module level – risks shoe-horning such activities as box-ticking exercises. As explained in the chapter “Community Engagement with Seldom-Heard Groups”, such activities may even cause harm to the relevant communities.

Further reading

Finn, G. M., & Brown, M. E. L. (2023). The Hidden Curriculum of Public Engagement for Creative Methods of Instruction. In O. Varsou (Ed.), *Teaching, Research, Innovation and Public Engagement* (pp. 139–152). Springer International Publishing.

Gabriel, J., & Harding, J. (2023). Questioning ‘the public’: Exploring the meanings of public engagement in higher education. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 28(8), 2089–2103.

Limson, J. (2021). Putting responsible research and innovation into practice: A case study for biotechnology research, exploring impacts and RRI learning outcomes of public engagement for science students. *Synthese*, 198(S19), 4685–4710.

Patson, N. D., & Wagner, L. (2024). Building a more engaged scientist from the bottom up: The impact of public engagement training on undergraduate students. *PLOS ONE*, 19(4), e0302671.

Reeve, J., & Tseng, C.-M. (2011). Agency as a fourth aspect of students' engagement during learning activities. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 36(4), 257–267.

Shah, R., Preston, A., & Dimova, E. (2023). Making community-based learning and teaching happen: Findings from an institutional study. *London Review of Education*, 21(1).

Tijmsma, G., Hilverda, F., Scheffelaar, A., Alders, S., Schoonmade, L., Blignaut, N., & Zweekhorst, M. (2020). Becoming productive 21st century citizens: A systematic review uncovering design principles for integrating community service learning into higher education courses. *Educational Research*, 62(4), 390–413.

Zepke, N. (2015). Student engagement research in higher education: Questioning an academic orthodoxy. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 20(4), 697–708.

An Organising Committee to Advise on a Departmental Event

Gioia Panzarella

This co-curricular activity is one of the outputs of the 22/23-23/24 project 'Teaching public engagement in Global Sustainable Development (GSD)', funded by the WIE Public and Community Engagement Module Development Fund. In a nutshell, I worked with student co-creators from all year groups to develop new teaching and learning resources to strengthen students' understanding and practice of public engagement. We focused specifically on the dissemination component of the Dissertation/Independent Study module (GD307), which is core to all undergraduate students in GSD.

One of the recommendations of the initial co-creation phase was the establishment of an organising committee with input from current students. Our aim was to make the event a day for all students in Global Sustainable Development, designed by the students themselves, and open to the wider university community. In their discussions, members considered the value, currency, and relevance of global sustainable development undergraduate research and how to ensure that these were made visible and understood by wider audiences. They consulted the whole student body on which alumni to invite as guest speakers, having considered budget constraints and other limitations. Overall, the meetings proved useful for members to shape a departmental event and learn about how university structures function more broadly.

The committee meetings served as a space for important conversations linked to the experience, challenges, and opportunities offered by disseminating research. For example, we asked: "How does it feel to not receive any questions from the audience, and how could we facilitate discussion?" As a result, the committee members co-designed an etiquette document for attendees. From a community-engaged pedagogy perspective, this initiative proved to be a meaningful exercise, as we considered how to support each other in vulnerable moments, but also how to ensure that others thrive when presenting a year-long project that they should be proud of.

"I believe showcasing the impactful research within our department is extremely important, especially in reaching audiences outside of the department."
- Student

"I am eager to collaborate with fellow members of the committee to plan a memorable event that promotes GSD research and fosters conversation about global challenges."
- Student

"I'm eager to help organise an engaging, inclusive event which allows critical topics to gain more recognition across the university."
- Student

How to

- 1** Identify a departmental event or initiative that would benefit from a group of students advising on it and co-creating resources to enhance it.
- 2** Draft a call to recruit members of the organising committee. Specify the job descriptions (see sample below), especially in terms of expectations, selection process (if any), and time commitment (best if you can already set the dates and times of the meetings).
- 3** Present your draft to student representatives and at relevant departmental staff committees to get feedback.
- 4** Look for funding to pay your committee members. Include prep time in the pay, not only attendance at meetings. If funding is not available, make sure you provide recognition of their work, for example you can check whether the work can be recognised through Warwick Award points (or similar).
- 5** In preparation for the meetings, prepare a presentation for committee members to illustrate the event they will advise on. They will become informal spokespeople for the initiative, so they need to know how it works and ask questions that other students may ask them.
- 6** Identify some crucial points you need their help with. For example, if you are planning to invite a guest speaker, they can advise on the format of their participation (guest lecture, networking event, Q&A session, etc.).

A difference of one year can significantly change the composition and priorities of a cohort! For this reason, the establishment of an organising committee helps source information from current students rather than from the cohort who had just graduated.

Sample role description

Committee members will attend two meetings. In these sessions, you will co-design certain aspects of the [name of the event], including:

- working collaboratively with [dept.] staff and students to design an inclusive and successful event.
- promoting partnerships with student societies and student groups to give visibility to the event.
- agreeing on the schedule for the day, while keeping in mind the constraints linked to the logistics of a large-scale event (approx. 100 presenters).
- promoting the event beyond the department, including to relevant stakeholders and the wider public.
- reflecting on how to gather [dept.] students' preferences and input, for example through surveys.

**Learn more
about the
Warwick
Award**



- 7 Plan the committee meetings as co-creation workshops, to ensure that all members can contribute in an inclusive manner.
- 8 At the meetings, make the most of their experience as students. For example, co-write the communications linked to the event targeting other students with them.
- 9 If members come to the meeting with lots of ideas and time is limited (especially if budget is limited), agree on which tasks the committee can feasibly work on.
- 10 Agree on any follow-up from the committee meeting. For example, once the department sets the registration form live, committee members may help to circulate the form among their channels and contacts.
- 11 At the last committee meeting, present members with the results of what they have raised and the subsequent actions. Whether the department followed their advice or not, it is essential that they see what has been taken into consideration and that the department valued their input.

DO



- Ensure that students' recommendations get a response - if it is not possible to follow their requests, explain why.
- Give students as much time as possible to sign up to be part of the committee.
- Stress the community-building element of the initiative, for example make it visible to students that a certain event has been made possible by the work of their peers.

DO NOT



- Organise too many meetings. Even a couple of sessions can make all the difference.
- Confuse the work of the committee with that of existing structures for student voice (for example, student representatives) and ensure that students don't get the roles of each mixed up either.
- Forget to invite colleagues (both academics and professional services) to join the meetings. They may not attend, but it's important to get everyone involved.

Further reading

Lindley, M. (2024). 'Working on a Warwick Institute of Engagement-funded project'.



Designing and Producing a Podcast as Assignment

Duncan Lees & Stephanie Schnurr

We introduced podcasts as assignments on our MSc in Intercultural Communication for Business and the Professions module on “Globalisation and Diversity” to encourage students to apply their academic knowledge to real-world issues and engage with the people impacted by them. Students produce podcasts on topics of their choice such as inclusion/exclusion in sports, digital nomadism, and gender inequality and wellbeing in higher education. For their podcasts, they have engaged with many interviewees, from single parents and Deaf cricketers to professionals in distant locations.

“Instead of hearing about theories/writing them in essays we explored them in real life scenarios - deepening our understanding.” - Student.

Podcasting assignments allow students to identify and engage with topics that matter to them, while deepening their understanding of how academic research relates to the real world. Through the production process, students learn how to communicate academic knowledge to diverse audiences, develop creative and technical skills they can use in the future, and make something that can be shared publicly and have real-world impact.

Podcasts as assignments work well for undergraduate and taught postgraduate modules which require students to apply theory to real-world problems, especially those affecting people whose voices are not always heard. This type of assignment is ideally implemented in optional modules, as podcasting may not appeal to or be appropriate for every student.

DO



- Share examples of real podcasts (so students know what to produce) and training resources (so they know how).
- Balance individual group tasks, e.g. by requiring students to submit individual work-in-progress or reflective assignments, as well as their final group podcasts.
- Allow lots of time! Form groups early, push deadlines back (if possible), and arrange regular check-ins with each group.
- Adapt assessment briefs and criteria to specify academic, public engagement and podcasting requirements.
- Consider capping student numbers: podcasting assignments require a lot of ongoing support and mentoring from tutors.

DO NOT



- Assume you need expensive equipment and software, or existing podcasting skills. Novices can learn to do a great job using free and/or readily available resources!



Before term

Review module content and structure

- Identify opportunities for linking podcasting to existing topics.
- Build in time for regular check-ins and work-in-progress activities.

Prepare resources

- Locate suitable training resources that students and staff can refer to.
- If you don't have access to dedicated podcasting equipment, familiarise yourself with free and readily available alternatives. For example, students can record audio with mobile phones and edit with free software such as Audacity.
- If possible, invite guest speakers with podcasting and/or public engagement expertise.

Adapt assignment briefs and assessment criteria

- Be specific about how students should apply academic knowledge (such as requiring the use of particular concepts or approaches), and demonstrate public engagement. This could mean requiring a certain number and/or type of guests.
- Build elements of "professional" podcasting practice into assessment criteria, for example by requiring an engaging title, clear recording and editing, an appropriate podcast structure and style of presenting, background music, or accompanying art.
- Don't feel trapped by assessment conventions: a time limit of 20 minutes per podcast might be better than a word count.

Buzzsprout: How to
Start a Podcast



Check other requirements

- Liaise with relevant colleagues regarding any ethical, data protection and risk assessment requirements.
- Prepare template informed consent and release forms for students to use with interviewees.

First week

- Introduce podcasting as an integral part of the module.
- Ask students to form small groups (3 – 4 members), in which they will produce their podcasts.

First two-three weeks

- Ask students to informally present several ideas for potential podcasts, so they can receive feedback from peers and tutors.
- Consider dedicating one session to public engagement and discuss how podcasts can be an effective way of achieving this.

By mid-term

- Require each group to submit a proposal outlining one concrete idea for their podcast, including topic, target audience(s), and potential guests.
- Tutors should meet each group separately to provide detailed, targeted feedback.

Before the end of term

- Require students to submit a short (e.g. 1000-word) individual assignment, in which they share notes and reflect on their initial research. This can include a critical engagement with relevant literature, samples of proposed interview questions, initial podcast scripts, and notes on background research.
- Mark these quickly, so students can use the feedback to shape their podcasts.
- Give groups at least one more opportunity to discuss their final podcast plans with tutors before starting production.

Final assessment

- Students should ideally have at least four weeks after teaching ends to produce and submit their final podcasts.
- Once podcasts have been marked, tutors should meet the students to discuss their feedback and make concrete suggestions for next steps as further changes are often needed before podcasts can be published.
- Once ready, the podcasts can be shared free of charge on department or other websites or for a small fee via RSS providers, who will distribute them to well-known hosting and streaming services, increasing their reach.

Further reading

Lees, D., Schnurr, S., Turner, M., Agius, J., Wang, D., Zhang, VC, Patrick, M., Yitong Wang, Y. (2026). Public engagement through podcasting: putting theory into practice in a university module on globalisation and diversity. In: Salazar et al. (eds): *Podcasting Between Entertainment and Education. Balancing Media Industry Expectations within Educational Contexts*. Routledge: London.

Listen to the Globalisation, Diversity and Public Engagement podcasts



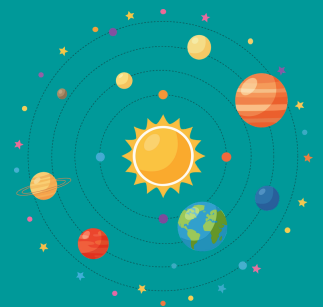
Designing Hands-On Engagement Activities

Naomi Kay

“Public Engagement” (IL217/317) is an interdisciplinary module based in the Institute for Advanced Teaching and Learning (IATL), led by colleagues from Warwick Institute of Engagement (WIE) and Professor Katherine Astbury in the School for Modern Languages and Cultures. The module teaches students about different types of public engagement and explores the skills they need to meaningfully engage with others. One way we encourage them to do this is through working in groups to design and deliver a hands-on public engagement activity to communicate a piece of research. The research themes are preselected, and groups can choose which they would like to respond to. They present the activities at a Student Showcase event that the WIE team organise at a pop-up shop in Leamington Spa. The audience is mostly families and students are asked to aim their activities at 12-year-olds.

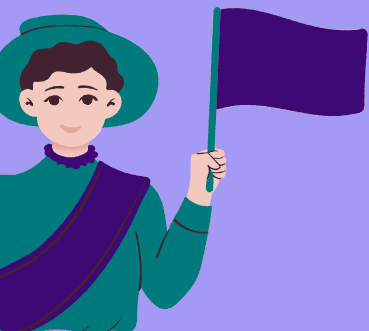
The Great Planet Race-Off

Students took Dr Farzana Meru’s (Dept of Physics) research into the idea that planets form from gas and dust swirling around stars in a finite amount of time. They used this idea to develop “The Great Planet Race-Off” where participants create a planet in just 120 seconds out of a polystyrene ball, craft materials and glitter. The stall was a hit with children of all ages who were excited to learn about how planets were formed.



Leamington’s Legacy: Women Fighting for the Vote

The students took work done by Dr Tara Morton (Dept of History) on the Mapping Women’s Suffrage project and created a stall that celebrates Leamington’s suffragettes. They researched and produced printed case studies of women based in the town who had been influential to the movement, provided a map of key local landmarks, and created a photo backdrop for people to take pictures with. Visitors to the stand would spin a wheel to pick a suffragette to learn more about through the materials on the table and discussion with the students.



Santa’s Workshop is Hiring!

Have you ever wondered if employers care about which university you went to? Students took research into the university prestige effect by Dr Georgiana Mihut (Dept for Education Studies) and created a family-friendly challenge for which visitors had to choose elves to hire for Santa’s workshop. Visitors considered elves’ CVs showing their skills (for example – able to gift wrap a bike in just 3 minutes!) and then decided if qualifications and the prestige of the awarding institution would change their mind about who to hire.

For example, does a 2:2 degree from a top-ranking university such as LSE (London School of Elves) make someone a better candidate than a first-class degree from a low-ranking university such as the University of Mislechester? The students used this game to start conversations about the prestige effect in a fun and accessible way that anyone could take part in, regardless of age or their own qualifications.



How to

- 1 Groups are assigned in week 2 of the module, making sure to mix up disciplines and levels of qualification if mixed. We aim for groups of 4 or 5 students.
- 2 The students' different disciplinary backgrounds make it difficult to ask them to communicate their own research via a group project. Instead, we provide them with examples of research to create projects around. The groups choose which project they want to work on in week 3.
- 3 The groups put together a pitch for the class in week 7, where they present what they're going to do and what costs they would like covered. They have a budget of £150 to cover consumable materials for their stand. This is paid for by the Warwick Institute of Engagement. WIE also have access to a wide range of resources such as craft materials/props they can borrow for free. Each group receives formative feedback during the lesson and then submits the final list of materials they need. We also ask them to present on risks to be added to an overarching risk assessment I produce as the module lead, and how they want their space laid out. This way, we, the organisers of the pop-up shop, can work this into the plan for the event.

The opportunity to present a live engagement activity helped me ground the skills that were taught over the 10 weeks in real-life application about a topic that resonated with the public due to its relevance." - Student

- 4 Students get class time to construct their activities (e.g. create props, laminate posters etc.). They can also meet outside of class. However as the module includes students from different departments, they often have clashing timetables. We've found it works best to give them dedicated class time together.
- 5 The morning of the event, we bring all their materials to the venue for the students. We set up the wider event, so they just need to build their stand. The event is 4 hours long. Some years we break up the day into a morning session and an afternoon session and have student groups swap half-way to allow us to accommodate more groups.
- 6 During the event, two markers walk around the stands to take pictures and mark students' work. Their grade is made up from a group mark for the planning and design of the activity, and an individual mark for their own communication during the event. There is also a 10% component for their contribution to the group work which is informed by a peer review the students submit.

Studying public engagement allowed me to express my creativity and test my understanding of the discipline in ways different from simply writing essays. I've been thinking of pursuing a career as a political risk analyst, and for that, it will be important that I am able to explain complex, discipline-specific issues to people with no prior knowledge of them. This is exactly what public engagement prepares you for." - Student



Top Tip: Look for existing events already happening which your students can slot into to reduce the time/costs. You could also ask students to hypothetically design the activity/pitch it in class, and then take one or two to a real life event.

**Public
Engagement:
Connecting
Communities to
Research**



Hands-On Maths

Helena Verrill

In the module “Communicating Mathematics”, students work in groups to devise an in-person mathematics activity. Students can choose to work on different activities, one being to design a hands-on activity from start to finish. Hands-on activities are typically drop-in table-top maths activities, including puzzles, games, and maths arts and crafts. These activities should be fun, engaging, and inspiring and encourage mathematical exploration by public audiences. Activities can be carried out independently or in small groups and should be both self-contained and open-ended.

Before designing their own activities, students receive relevant training on hands-on activities.

- Talk on outreach by Faculty Public Engagement Lead Phil Jemmet.
- Royal Institution Masterclasses in Mathematics training session. Although this is aimed at delivering classes to year 9 students (another option for the module’s in-person activity), many of the concepts are transferrable.
- Training session by the Coventry Museum education team about hands-on museum activities. They also offered a museum tour, including a demonstration of their hands-on museum activities.
- Safeguarding training.
- Class on how to collect feedback by Marie Diebolt (Warwick Manufacturing Group outreach team).

Engineering
Build Space



Resonate



In the module, students not only design the activity idea but physically create it. For this, we had access to the University of Warwick Engineering Build Space. For example, students used a laser cutter to create boards for use in mathematical string art activities, and to create a maze based on the edges of an icosahedron.

Hands-on maths activities created for the module have taken place at Resonate (the Warwick Institute of Engagement’s public event series and festival), Foleshill Creates community arts and crafts group, and the Coventry Transport Museum. Students also had the option to get involved in other outreach activities, such as through Resonate, to practice running hands-on activities.

Students running our one-off, hands-on maths activities did not require **DBS checks** because children were usually accompanied by a parent, and a supervisor for the event was expected to have a DBS check. Students should receive safeguarding training, which can be included as part of a module, or could be provided by the university’s public engagement team.

Usually, a staff member will determine the when and where of an event, though students can play a leading role in some cases. Take the example of an extracurricular activity, rather than a module: a student working on a summer outreach project could be given a list of local schools to contact and arrange a visit directly.

How to

Plan the module or extracurricular activity

- **Decide: module or extracurricular activity?**
 - Students are likely to take more initiative if they are given a creative leadership role, which means being involved before the event. Students may not have the time to engage as deeply with an extracurricular activity.
 - Students may have the opportunity to devise and run activities through undergraduate summer research programmes with outreach and public engagement components.
- **Consider student credit or payment.** Students should be given module credit for developing and running an activity or, in the case of extracurricular activities, be paid to help run activities. Administration to pay students may take some time, so make sure to allow for this.
- **Liaise** with administration on what documentation, such as risk assessments or insurance documentation, is required.
- **Consider expenses.** Collecting materials may be time-consuming and expensive. An initial investment in reusable materials, such as geometric construction shapes, may be useful. Ongoing expenses include purchase of paper, pens, string, foam, and photocopying. Usually these will be relatively cheap but sufficient quantities need to be obtained in a timely manner.
- **Consider where the hands-on activity will be created.** Some universities have facilities that allow students to use machines such as laser-cutters which help with the creation of jig-saw puzzles (and is much faster than cutting by hand!), or 3D printers. Consider when and how the space can be booked, and how students get access to it (first come first serve?).

Plan the engagement activity

- **Determine the location.** If this is for an off-campus event, contact and liaise with local museums, libraries, shopping centres, etc.
- **Determine the date.** Tying the activity to an existing local or national event will help with advertising and promoting the event. Examples: Heritage Open Days, British Science Week, or Maths Week England.
- **Consider synergies.** In some cases, you can add to existing activities, rather than designing an event from scratch. Examples are university open days, alumni events, or science festivals such as Resonate at the University of Warwick.

Support students

- **Offer training** on outreach, hands-on activities, safeguarding, and evaluation.
- **Communicate available resources** and materials to students and advise them on whether/how they can get additional materials if necessary.
- **To practice, encourage students to attend an outreach event** and run activities they have not devised before developing their own activity. Students should assist with some activities beforehand, or at least observe some hands-on maths activities taking place.

- **Students develop the activity.** You can guide students to resources available to draw on for ideas:

Liverpool Fun Maths Roadshow 	NRICH 	Bridges Math Art Organization 
Collection of puzzles to print on A3 card. Ages 4-Adult	Maths puzzles	Annual conference, archive with papers and examples on hands-on workshops

Looking for other activities? More examples in Kay: “Designing Hands-On Engagement Activities” in this handbook!

- **Encourage reflection on the audience:** Students devising an activity might not have enough experience to ascertain what their audience is capable of. An opportunity to practice with staff or friends recommended. Activities need to be tested for length of time, difficulty, and so on.
- **Run examples as part of the module.** After trying a typical hands-on activity in class, students will be asked to discuss the experience, e.g.,
 - how they solved a problem,
 - what the learning outcomes are,
 - how the activity could be adapted or extended for different audiences or formats.
- **Provide ongoing guidance.**

At the event

- Staff should always be present at the activity to oversee.

After the event

- Ask students to write a reflective report on their activity.
- Consider if activities successfully developed as part of the module can be reused. For example, could students who developed the activities run them in other contexts? This can reinforce the learning from the module.

Adapt and reuse!

Students may initially devise an activity for one type of audience which can be adapted for other audiences. As part of the “Maths Communication” module, a student group prepared a 2.5-hour Royal Institution Masterclass in Mathematics for year 9 students. Students then adapted it for a more hands-on year 7 day. A student who created a poster as part of a summer project adapted it into a hands-on activity as part of Maths Week England. Running an event a second time, for a different audience, extends the development of students’ teaching skills and adaptability.

Student research and public engagement

Callum J. Hodge

I am a second-year physics undergraduate student. I was fortunate enough to undertake multiple community engagement projects as part of my summer research project carried out via the University of Warwick Undergraduate Research Support Scheme (URSS) that allows students to become involved in academic research outside of their degree. This astrophysics research project studied brown dwarfs – an astronomical object of which very few have been discovered.

I communicated my work to expert and non-expert audiences. For the former, I published a research paper on the URSS Showcase website and, soon, in the Reinvention International Journal of Undergraduate Research. I also presented at multiple conferences including the British Conference of Undergraduate Research. This allowed me to communicate the motivation behind my research, how I went about conducting it, my findings and their significance for the future to academics and students across the country.

Meanwhile, for non-expert audiences, I ran a workshop at the University of Warwick Christmas Live Labs and Resonate Roadshow. These events were hosted in public venues to encourage people of all ages and backgrounds to become invested in science. I was able to source this opportunity through the Warwick Institute of Engagement, which offers many opportunities to become invested in the public communication of science. My workshops at both of these events involved a simple set up of lights and specially-designed glasses to demonstrate the transit method, a method that astrophysicists use to detect planets and brown dwarfs orbiting foreign stars in our galaxy.

Getting involved in public engagement is something that is explored in my degree. However, the range of formats is limited, especially when it comes to non-expert audiences. Public engagement has allowed me to improve my public speaking ability, especially when it comes to explaining complex scientific concepts and adapting my explanations to my audience's expertise. I cannot wait to explore more public engagement opportunities during my time at Warwick and beyond. Science will always be a significant part of my life. It is my passion and what I hope to be my career one day. Therefore, it will always greatly excite me to talk to others about my research, and it will always make me feel privileged to teach science for the benefit of others.

URSS
Undergraduate
Research
Support
Scheme



Read Callum's
paper



A Psychology Placement Module

Dr Gitit Kadar-Satat

‘Placement, Outreach and Engagement’ is a final year optional module for psychology students. This 10-week module provides undergraduate students with the opportunity to support and advance an organisation’s outreach and engagement portfolio in an area linked to psychology. Alongside their placement, students undertaking this module attend interactive seminars where they develop knowledge of public and community engagement theory and practice. By completing this module, students develop an understanding of and expertise in outreach and engagement processes and methodologies, refine their transferable skills and gain work experience that boosts their employability.

The placement

This module offers between 20 and 30 placements per academic year, all of which are organised by the department’s placement officer with support from a graduate teaching assistant and the office team. We work with a wide range of external partners such as charities or local authorities and university departments to co-create placement projects that align with the module’s learning objectives and deliver positive social impact from local to national levels. Each placement involves approximately 55 hours of engagement over 10 weeks (around 5–6 hours per week) and can be completed on-site, online or in a hybrid format. During their placement, students receive support from a line manager within the host organisation and through the academic seminars. Placement projects vary, but commonly involve students supporting, designing, developing and/or delivering activities such as:

- Teaching or training resources
- Community or corporate events
- Marketing materials or social media communications
- Presentations or workshops
- Research or impact reports



The seminars

Students undertaking this placement module participate in fortnightly seminars, with five two-hour seminars delivered across the term. The seminars cover theoretical knowledge, models and empirical research on themes such as community participation and co-creation, and research methods for evaluating such programmes. Students are encouraged to apply these theories and methods to the context of their placement. The seminar series also includes contributions from 2–3 guest speakers who discuss specific aspects of their outreach work, such as evaluation or creative approaches. The seminars also provide opportunities for students to reflect on their placement experience and the development of transferable skills, thereby supporting their employability.

The assessment

The module is assessed through two components designed to capture students' placement experience and their ability to integrate theory, practice, and employability outcomes.

- **Presentation (10%):** In the final week of term, students present a poster outlining their placement project and reflecting on the development of transferable skills. Students also engage in discussions of their peers' work and respond to questions posed by fellow students.
- **Placement report (90%):** Following completion of the placement, students submit a 2,500-word report drawing on module resources and self-identified literature to situate their placement project within a relevant theoretical, empirical, or policy context. The report also requires students to design a new outreach activity that complements the host organisation's portfolio and to propose an evaluation plan for this activity. Finally, students reflect on how the development of transferable skills through the placement informs their future career plans.



During my placement with the Widening Participation and Social Mobility team, I worked on building and implementing an Academic Support Mentoring programme for local schools...at the beginning of my placement, I was not the most confident student or individual. Within those ten weeks, I presented to a large audience, met with stakeholders, led a launch event and experienced working within a team." - Olivia, BSc in Psychology with an Intercalated year

Other considerations

Time Management

Running a placement module requires significant planning and coordination. Allowing sufficient time to foster mutually beneficial relationships with host organisations is key to delivering positive experiences and outcomes for students, host organisations, and the communities involved.

Teamwork

Where appropriate, we encourage partner organisations to host more than one student per placement project. This has two benefits: first, student feedback consistently shows that working with a peer or small group enhances the placement experience through collaboration and peer learning, and second, it helps reduce the administrative workload, as shared placements typically involve less procedural variation.



Evie has been an exemplary telephone befriender, providing consistent support to clients, while also taking on the responsibility of conducting Omega's annual befriender feedback survey...Evie has been an invaluable part of our team, and we are deeply grateful for her contributions to our clients and our feedback processes." - Omega, Winter Newsletter 2025

How to

“Placement, Outreach and Engagement” is a Term 1 module, so placement preparation begins in February–March for delivery from early October.

Partner engagement (February–March)

Begin liaising with potential host organisations for the following academic year. For new partners, this involves an initial discussion about the module and examples of previous placements. Returning organisations are asked to submit a detailed project description.

Placement advertisement and applications (May)

Placement projects are advertised internally to eligible students during term three. As this is a final-year module, applications are invited from second-year students and those on an intercalated year for enrolment in the following academic year.

Formalisation and onboarding (summer period)

Following successful interviews, the department’s administrative office coordinates any required paperwork (e.g., Internship Agreements, DBS checks) in preparation for the placement, liaising with both students and host organisations.

Pre-start communication (late September, early October)

A couple of weeks before the start of Term 1, reminders are sent to both host organisations and students confirming placement start dates. Hosts are also reminded that students may not be able to confirm their full availability until academic timetables are finalised, and that some flexibility at the start of the placement is therefore required.

Project description examples

Mental Health Champions in Schools



Mindsum Content Creation and Outreach



“...This innovative module opened my eyes to areas of research and potential career opportunities I did not previously know were an option for me. I am now a Warwick Graduate Management Trainee who, since the module, has led on numerous projects within and beyond Warwick...” - Inca, BSc in Psychology, MAsc in Community, Engagement and Belonging

Collaborating with Community Arts and Third Sector Organisations for an Applied Theatre Module

Bobby Smith

Theatre and Performance Studies' MA Applied Theatre: Arts, Action, Change, delivered 2021-2026, sought to support and build students' skills to design, create and deliver innovative arts and performance-based research and projects to tackle pressing social issues. One module in particular, "Theorising and Facilitating Applied Theatre: Ethics and Reflective Practice", established ongoing and mutually beneficial collaborations with community arts and third sector organisations. These partnerships were leveraged to develop the students' expertise in creative facilitation. Projects and partnerships included:

For which contexts is this activity particularly appropriate?

The activities in this case-study are applicable to those working with at risk or vulnerable groups, particularly in creative and artistic modes.



- Physical and non-verbal performance workshops in Special Educational Needs schools with Open Theatre.
- Drama-based English language workshops for refugees and asylum seekers, held online during the COVID-19 pandemic, with Migrant Voice.
- Arts-based sessions to explore anti-racism with young people, in partnership with Maokwo Arts.

The module was taught across 10-weeks. At the start of the module, students participated in a range of academic readings, seminar discussions and creative activities which prompted them to respond to a series of questions, including:

- What aims do I have for my own socially engaged artistic practice?
- What ethics and values inform the work that I do?
- How does my own positionality shape my practice?

A weekend intensive then offered a range of workshops, led by invited expert artists and practitioners, which catered to the specific interests of the student cohort. These workshops focussed on arts and theatre-based facilitation skills and allowed students to encounter a range of different approaches to applied theatre and community arts.

Further reading

Turner-King, R. & Smith, B. (2024). Confronting the messy complexities of the climate crisis through drama education and applied theatre. *Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance* 29(2): 238-258.

Following this weekend intensive, students embarked on placements with different community organisations which were assigned to them by the module convenor, based on their interests and level of experience. Over several weeks, they observed and participated in workshops in their placements and activities with a selected group of participants, including for example children, refugees, and people experiencing homelessness. To support students in these settings, they received mentorship from their host organisation, an artist who works with community groups to explore issues and support them to co-create art, and the module convenor.

Assessment

The module culminated in an assessed workshop designed by the students for the community setting they were working in. A 20-page reflective practitioner portfolio, which captured their learning and assessed their workshops, formed the basis of assessment for the module.

How to

- 1** Approach potential project partners: request a meeting and be as clear as possible about the boundaries, expectations and key dates of the project.
- 2** Discuss the mentorship aspect of the projects:
 - Who at the organisation will be able to provide mentorship? Ensure that adequate time will be provided and discuss what kinds of funding might be necessary.
 - Is funding going to be possible, and where is it going to come from? This work was funded through the course budget and built into the design of the degree, but you may need to find alternative opportunities.
- 3** If possible, also invite organisations to contribute to the module in some way: this allows them to share their knowledge with other students and ensures they meet students early in the term.
- 4** Set up a dedicated meeting between the organisation and the student (you may need to be present – agree with the organisation) in which they can introduce the student to the organisation and to information such as safeguarding measures and expectations. They can also discuss any concerns, worries, hopes and strengths the student might have.
- 5** Once the project has started, find time to meet with the student once a week and at least once with the host.

Students are supported through teaching, on-the-ground experience with communities and mentorship by expert artists and facilitators.

Through engagement with community groups, in which their involvement builds towards leading their own workshop, students reflect on their practices, positionalities and the possibilities and limitations of arts-based community work.

- 6 Find a way to incorporate feedback from the host for the student.
- 7 Provide the opportunity for students to reflect on their performance and consider their key learnings. This should be part of the assessment for example through a portfolio or a presentation.
- 8 At the end of each project, meet with organisations to discuss any key learnings and (if appropriate) to plan ahead to the next year. How can this work be sustained?



DO



- Discuss expectations and safeguarding with students: ensure boundaries are in place regarding appropriate relationships with organisations and participants.
- Provide space in the module for students to reflect on their learning, successes and failures with each other, and to test out or 'trouble-shoot' ideas together.
- Start planning early: the lead-in time for organisations to buy-into collaborating in this way is at least 6 months.
- Have a back-up plan: what happens if no participants turn up, or if things change for a community organisation?

DO NOT



- Expect artists or organisations to give their time for free: how can they be remunerated for their time mentoring students?
- Rush! Discuss and plan carefully with each organisation and with students.
- Take on opportunities or possible community projects that you are not confident working with yourself: you will need to be able to support and advise students, so make sure you feel comfortable doing this for each context.



Supporting and assessing work of this nature is demanding. It requires the teacher to engage with a range of different community contexts, issues and needs. Assessing workshops is time consuming. Be aware of needing to travel to different group settings, engage meaningfully in the work, and try to find ways to incorporate host organisations' perspectives into feedback.

Pop-Up Health Checks for Under-served Communities

Kate Owen & Sean Barrett

Service learning is an educational strategy that integrates meaningful community service with academic instruction and critical reflection. It provides active, experiential, and authentic learning opportunities, enabling students to develop skills that cannot be gained in the classroom alone. Service learning requires structured, guided reflection. Crucially, the local community must benefit from the collaboration.

Following the pandemic, University of Warwick medical students reported that opportunities to contribute meaningfully to patient care were invaluable. These experiences offered learning far beyond traditional placements. Inspired by a Newcastle University initiative where pharmacy students delivered supervised health checks to under-served communities, we visited the programme before developing our own pop-up health checks.

With dedicated project management support from the medical school, we progressed from concept to community delivery in under a year. Logistical considerations included insurance, risk assessments, and the development of appropriate protocols. We trained supervisors with a bespoke session including psychological safety and structured debriefing. Working with local public health teams, we visited potential partner sites including the Irish Centre, refugee hotels, community centres and drug and alcohol services. Community enthusiasm exceeded capacity, and we could not collaborate with every interested group. We started with groups local to Coventry.

Each community clinic begins with a supervisor briefing covering expectations, scenarios on challenges students may encounter, and an introduction to the population. Students set up their clinic station equipment in pairs. At the welcome desk, students check in visitors, confirm they are over 18 and ask them to sign a disclaimer agreeing to contact their GP regarding abnormal results. A raffle-ticket system manages queues.

After piloting at the university's sports centre and later in low-risk community settings, the programme was embedded into the Year 2 MBChB curriculum less than a year after the initial pilot. Over 1,000 health checks have now been completed. The programme has identified undiagnosed chronic health conditions and referred individuals to local services. Student learning has been transformative, with many describing the experience as “eye-opening.” Students strengthened their clinical and communication skills, gained practical insight into health inequalities and developed unexpected competencies such as managing queues, organising clinics and navigating uncertainty.



“To dive deeper into the life of a person... I’m trying to help them holistically, considering physical health, mental health and the social challenges they may be facing.” - Student



“Some students were extremely shy, and this really built their confidence. They were challenged to have conversations they normally wouldn’t, and discussing observations between clients enhanced their skills.” - Supervisor

How to

1. Review existing evidence.
2. Seek proof of concept; Newcastle University provided inspiration.
3. Create a project plan, timeline and team of academics, professional services, students and community partners to develop, run and evaluate.
4. Develop risk assessments, confirm your activity is covered by university insurance and create protocols for students and supervisors.
5. Build structured briefings, debriefs and reflection into the design.
6. Address practicalities such as travel for students and room availability at community locations.
7. Train supervisors thoroughly to ensure students are well supported and learning is maximised.
8. Pilot to resolve operational issues.
9. Launch.
10. Gather stakeholder feedback and refine.

DO



- Plan in reflection from the start- consider creative ways of promoting genuine reflection.
- Work hard on developing good relationships with community partners before the start of any project, finding out what the community needs. Go out and visit, be curious, talk to their clients.
- Ensure safeguards are in place for both students and community members.

DO NOT



- Get discouraged if things don't always go to plan.

"People using our service only engage if they want to. Those who worked with the students genuinely chose to, and they appreciated it." - Community partner



"I'm not very good at talking, but the volunteers really helped me feel at ease. I found it very motivating." - Participant

Further reading

Tijmsma, G., Urias, E., & Zweekhorst, M. (2023). Embedding engaged education through community service learning in HEI: a review. *Educational Research*, 65(2), 143–169.

Teddy Bear Hospital

Alex Reeve & Lucy Phillips

Teddy Bear Hospital is a voluntary scheme led by medical students at the University of Warwick, aimed at teaching children aged between 5-11 about first aid and tips for a healthy lifestyle. The goal is to improve relationships between children and healthcare professionals. It provides a great opportunity for medical students to engage with children in a non-clinical setting and helps children to understand first aid basics in a safe and friendly environment. Sessions include several interactive stations that are delivered in the community, including:

- **Pawscriptions:** a child friendly take on prescriptions to help children understand simple measures to get better, such as: rest, pain relief, hydration and asking an appropriate adult for help.
- **Healthy eating:** use of toy food to explain the different food groups and components of a healthy balanced diet.
- **Exercise:** creating a simple assault course to encourage the children to increase their heart and breathing rates, then supporting them to listen through a stethoscope at the differences in heart rate after exercise.
- **First aid:** use of toy first aid kits and bandages to teach children simple first aid skills on their teddy bears.
- **Plastering:** plaster casting of teddy bear limbs to demonstrate treatment for broken bones which can commonly occur in children. Aims to reduce fear that may be experienced in hospital if a child should ever need a cast.
- **Mental health and sleep:** discussion and colouring station on teddy bear feelings and a game of sleeping lions to demonstrate the importance of sleep and rest as part of a healthy lifestyle.



How to

The Teddy Bear Hospital Society committee are responsible for the organisation and running of events, including liaison with school groups and logistics of encouraging volunteer sign-up. All volunteers as medical students own full DBS checks.

The committee leads on:

- Seeking out contacts by reaching out to local schools and children's activity groups such as brownie/scout group leaders (cold email, leaflets, community social media groups).
- Liaising with each group on risk assessments and safety regulations.
- Offering training sessions to help teach new volunteers each year, otherwise new volunteers are paired with experienced students in order to learn on the job by example.

Each session relies on volunteers giving their time who can sign up via Google Forms sent out via social media. Once names and contact information are obtained, group chats are set up to finalise information, transport and timings.



For which contexts is this activity particularly appropriate?

Children's community groups including brownies, rainbows, beavers, scouts and school groups but content can be adapted to suit varying age groups.

We have also adapted our sessions to better suit children with learning difficulties.



Initially, sessions involved basic first aid and used donated teddies and toys. We then obtained funding to improve stations and gather more toys and equipment relevant to each station.

We always try to welcome ideas on new stations and adapt each session to the age range of the children attending. We have also implemented annual events such as the teddy bear picnic day during the school summer holidays, which welcomes children from across different communities onto campus to attend a day of activities relating to a fit and healthy lifestyle.

Now, many groups reach out to us for involvement due to word of mouth or after seeing posts on social media. Many groups also ask us to return in subsequent years due to the success of previous sessions.

How does this activity support student learning?

Teddy Bear Hospital provides great opportunities for medical students to engage with students in a non-clinical setting and to practice communication skills. It also enables a safe environment to practice teaching basic concepts and to adapt teaching styles to suit the audience.

DO



- Adapt to the age range.
- Prioritise safety for everyone taking part and leading the session.
- Be mindful of availability of volunteers before agreeing to sessions - never have students working alone, and have enough to keep the content engaging!
- Let the children lead (within reason).
- Have fun!

"I love volunteering with teddy hospital, it always puts a smile on my face after a long day of placement and is a great opportunity to engage with children."

"The brownies really enjoyed all of the stations but were especially enthusiastic about bandaging and trying out the blood pressure cuffs on their toys."

Live Problem Solving with External Partners

Inge Hill

In live case studies, business or charity owners, or public servants, present an organisational challenge to students. These case studies provide an optimal environment for authentic learning, in which learning for employability and public engagement are intertwined to offer benefits to learners and external partners alike (Ajjawi et al., 2024; Healy, 2023). When engaging with live case studies, educators temporarily shift into the role of facilitators who link classroom learning with societal reality (Hill and Bass, 2019), and act as mentors for students and practitioners. Ideally, live case studies form part of the summative assessment (Connolly et al., 2023), motivating students with busy lives to invest in the assessment while simultaneously creating helpful consultancy advice.

DO



- Create a back-up plan in case of cancellation: engage the practitioner to present to you and record the presentation, put this back-up date into each other's diaries.
- Consider a class which discusses using the case study work in students' CV/applications.
- Consider meaningful tokens of appreciation to encourage the practitioner's attendance and avoid cancellation.
- If possible, offer a competition with a prize (e.g. university memorabilia or company items) for the best student group presentation. A prize with certificate is an important reward for students' CVs. The prize can be self-created to avoid additional expenses.

DO NOT



- Forget to regularly remind students of attendance and professional behaviours during the client's challenge presentation and when they present to the client.
- Make any promises regarding possible outcomes to the partner practice organisation, as results are difficult to predict.

Further reading

Ajjawi, R., Tai, J., Dollinger, M., Dawson, P., Boud, D., and Bearman, M. (2024). From authentic assessment to authenticity in assessment: broadening perspectives. *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*, 49(4), 499-510.

Connolly, D., Dickinson, L., and Hellewell, L. (2023). The development of undergraduate employability skills through authentic assessment in college-based higher education. *Journal of Learning and Development in Higher Education*, 2023 (27).

Healy, M. (2023). Careers and employability learning: pedagogical principles for higher education. *Studies in Higher Education*, 48(8), 1303-1314.

Hill, I. and Bass, T. (2019). Embedding emotional resilience and reflection in the curriculum – pop-up shops for comprehensive learning in times of austerity. In: Diver, A. (ed) *Employable scholars in Higher Education: Challenges and choices in times of austerity*. 415-428. Springer: Berlin, New York.

The Nasio Trust Live Case Study

In a postgraduate sustainable business strategy module I designed and led at the Royal Agricultural University, I partnered with The Nasio Trust.

During a pre-meeting, I established the module's background for the charity's CEO, Nancy Hunt, and invited her to outline some possible challenges her organisation faced at the time. We agreed the challenge would focus on developing the production of the Spirulina dietary supplement and markets outside of Kenya, in line with the charity's aims.

This challenge provided rich scope for establishing market and strategic positioning, conducting industry and market research, and applying strategic models and concepts relevant for international business development that are core to our business strategy module.

Subsequently, student groups were formed prior to an online client challenge presentation. In the following seminar, I engaged students in a structured debrief to ascertain their understanding, and mentored groups in the application of theory to the live challenge weekly at the end of each seminar until the assessed presentation date five weeks later. After the assessed presentation, two groups took up the opportunity to also present their findings to the client. Because of students' varying motivations, combining formal assessment and client-facing presentations is ideal if possible.

The CEO was impressed with the student solution to turn surplus Spirulina into animal feed, a new pathway and product the charity had not previously considered. Regional farmers were identified as target customers, investigated and developed as a result. Subsequently, the students' market and industry research on exporting food to the EU revealed the challenges of meeting EU food safety standards, and thus the export considerations were stopped.

The Nasio Trust



The Nasio Trust is a registered charity based in the UK and Kenya, which works with and supports orphaned and vulnerable children in Kakamega County, Kenya. As a grassroots charity, it empowers communities with three core activities: education, healthcare, and creating sustainable livelihoods.

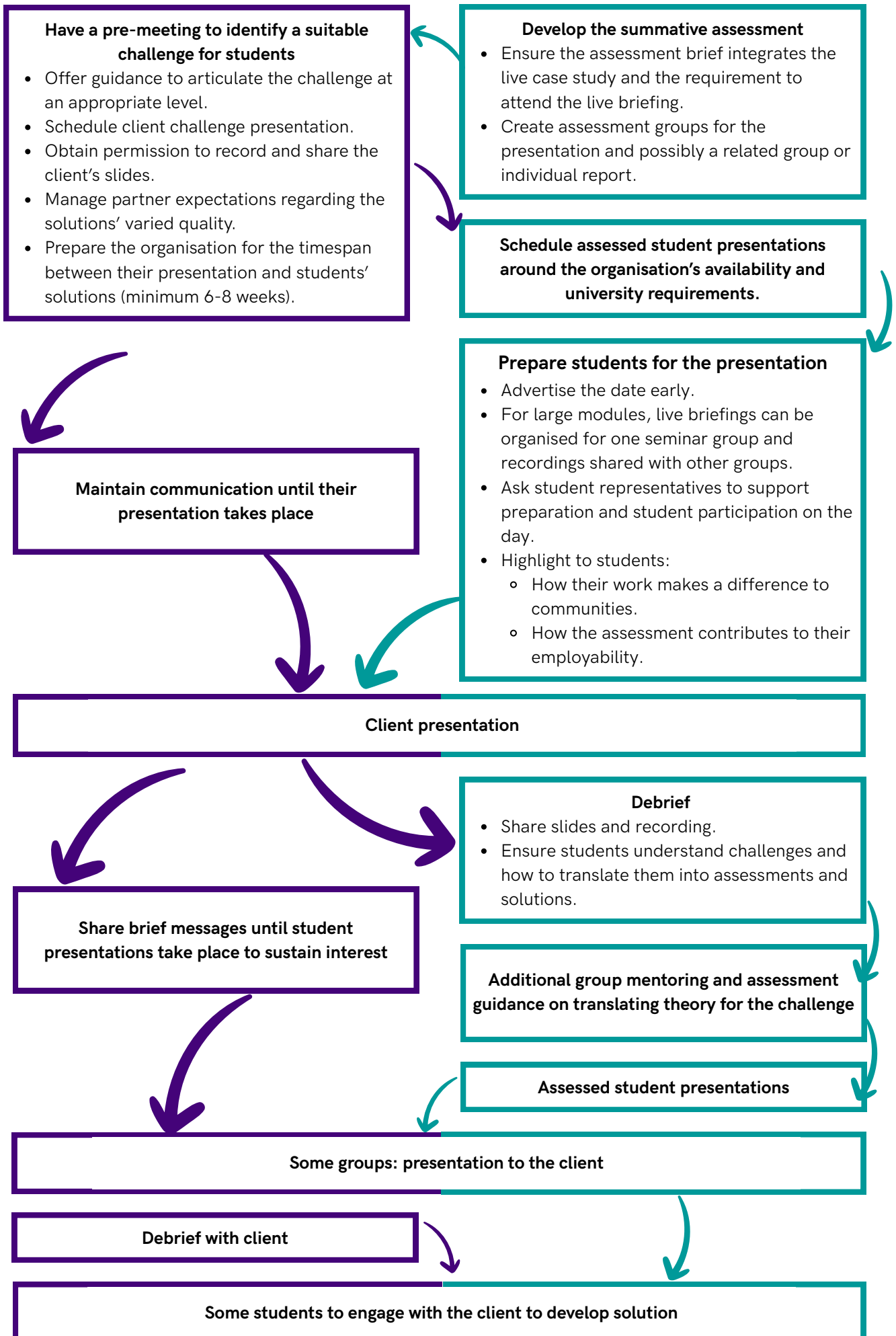


Working with students through this live case study brought fresh thinking, practical insight, and genuine value to The Nasio Trust. Their research and innovative ideas challenged our assumptions and opened new opportunities to strengthen our impact. Partnerships like these demonstrate how education and charitable organisations can work together to create meaningful and sustainable change for communities. I would also like to extend sincere thanks to Dr Inge Hill for creating such a valuable learning opportunity. Her leadership and commitment to authentic learning created benefits for both students and The Nasio Trust, demonstrating how meaningful partnership working between academia and practice can deliver lasting social impact."

Nancy Mudenyio Hunt, CEO, The Nasio Trust

Client-facing

Student-facing



Co-Production of Case-Based Learning Materials: Capturing the Lived Experience

Dawn Collins & Hollie White

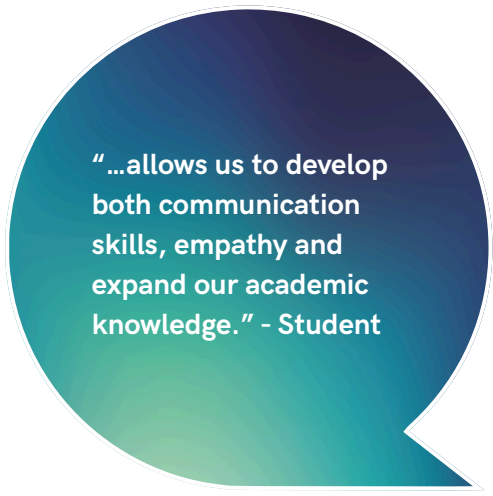
Case-Based Learning (CBL) is a small-group, student-led learning approach, where students explore case scenarios based on health conditions. This fosters critical thinking and holistic, interdisciplinary problem-solving, and maintains the patient and/or population experiencing the health problem as the focal point of learning. In Warwick Medical School's final year capstone module, Advanced Cases, we elevate this approach for the summative assessment, where students transition from CBL participants to creators. Students develop their own CBL cases for the summative assessment, and create a guide for facilitators. This guide contains the case and academic resources used to support student learning (equivalent to 3000 words) as well as an online, student-facing case presentation, which portrays the patient/volunteer journey in an interactive and engaging manner.

Direct engagement with volunteers and real patients, who are willing to share their healthcare experiences (their lived experience), allows students to create highly authentic case materials while developing advanced transferable skills, including communication and interviewing skills, alongside competencies in design and aesthetics. These elements act as key drivers for student engagement. Volunteers are recruited from across the local community through word of mouth and advertising. Each student is required to create an individual case and is given the opportunity to work with a volunteer to capture their experience.

Within CBL, students must seek to understand the lived experience holistically across all domains, from biomedical to systemic impacts, and ethical, local and global viewpoints. Students gain this knowledge through interviewing and discussing the situation with the volunteer, wherever possible capturing the volunteer's authentic voice of their lived experience using video and/or audio. Students must convey their knowledge through the co-created case scenario.



"From the point of view of the patient...I love having that purpose, developing something that's going to be useful for students - having something that you can give to other people...something positive to come out of these things." - Volunteer

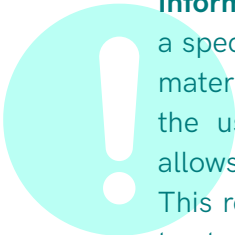


"...allows us to develop both communication skills, empathy and expand our academic knowledge." - Student

To co-create, the student works closely with the volunteer on the written and recorded elements to ensure their experience is accurately and authentically captured. The number and duration of contact sessions are determined by the student and volunteer and can be supported by the module leads where needed. During the module, students received supporting sessions on communication/questionnaire skills and AV/digital tech training to support case development.

How to

- 1 Develop a network of collaborative volunteers – this need not be patients, everyone has some experience of healthcare and healthcare systems (e.g. attending a GP appointment) or knows of others who do. Seeing experiences from different angles can create relatable, engaging cases that challenge student to investigate more deeply.
- 2 Create templates and guidelines for the creation of the cases, e.g. videos/audio, recordings should be no more than 1-2 mins to ensure engagement and questionnaires should incorporate all elements of the socioecological model of health.
- 3 Enable students to select cases of interest as early as possible to allow first contacts to be made and meetings organised early in the module. Consider safeguarding issues and needs for chaperones (usually the module leads, who have basic safeguarding training) on a case-by-case basis.
- 4 Support student development by including relevant training in communication skills, use of questionnaires, safeguarding, audio-visual techniques and editing etc..
- 5 Encourage students to engage fully with volunteers making the process collaborative and creative, and ensuring the volunteers have final approval of the case prior to submission for assessment.



Informed consent for volunteers is vital. Creating a specific consent form encompassing the use of material for educational purposes and stipulating the use of video/audio/photographic recording allows the volunteers to control the narrative. This requirement must be clearly communicated to students prior to them starting to work on the cases.

DO 	• Expect the unexpected: allow the volunteer's narrative to unfold naturally.
DO NOT 	• Overproduce (e.g. overediting videos to highlight specific points as this reduces authenticity).

Further reading

Thistlethwaite, J. E., Davies, D., Ekeocha, S., Kidd, J. M., MacDougall, C., Matthews, P., Purkis, J., & Clay, D. (2012). The effectiveness of case-based learning in health professional education. A BEME systematic review: BEME Guide No. 23. *Medical Teacher*, 34(6), 421–444.

Hewitt, D. & Wright, B. (2018). *Engaging, Motivating and Empowering Learners in Schools*. Sage: London.

For which contexts is this activity particularly appropriate?

This approach can be adapted and integrated easily into many courses wishing to increase their interdisciplinarity and engagement with more holistic approaches to problems, for both PG and UG students. Our assessment was considered more inclusive than traditional approaches, with students from diverse backgrounds and with varied academic achievements producing excellent authentic, aesthetically considered material for the assessment.

Social Design: Co-Creating with Local Communities

Edward Loveman

The Design Studies department at the University of Warwick have embedded community engagement within a module called “Social Design”. With support from the Warwick Institute of Engagement and Coventry City Council, students on the module co-designed (designing with people, rather than for people) solutions to address digital exclusion in at risk communities and created tools that enhanced their digital literacy and wellbeing. Running since October 2024, the ongoing collaboration between Design Studies and #COVCONNECTS (a council initiative which supports residents on their digital journeys) has demonstrated the power of co-design by building meaningful community engagement.

The module is taught over a 10-week period (5 x 2hr Seminars, 3 x community visits), during which students build a relationship within a specific community, dependent on the assignment brief that has been set that term and the availability of community groups. Over time, they will undertake collaborative research – such as spending time in other people’s spaces to understand their world – to examine the environmental, social, cultural, and economic factors shaping that community.

Drawing on this research, students design and prototype co-design approaches that respond to needs and opportunities. During the first few weeks, students are introduced to the concepts of social design and design activism and are trained in key aspects of public and community engagement by Warwick Institute of Engagement. Following this training, students work with the community to propose potential designs to reduce digital exclusion before finalising these in order to ‘pitch’ their ideas back to the council and key stakeholders.

 DO	• Give students freedom to make mistakes. • Have a back-up plan. • Accept that plans get cancelled.
 DO NOT	• Overlook ethics.

This module supports student learning by developing their capacity to operate as ethical, interdisciplinary, and socially engaged designers through live, community-based projects.

Warwick Design Studies



The administrative and logistical elements of carrying out projects like this are something that needs consideration – **co-production takes time!** However, one piece of advice is to make sure that there is a back-up. If the community group drops out, how would you ensure students are ‘co-designing’? Make sure that this is clearly set out and communicated to students prior to the module commencing.

How to

- 1** Seek out project partners. We have found local authorities, which for us was Coventry City Council, to be a brilliant place to start. Not only do they have a wealth of connections, but most importantly, often have projects in place which benefit from your involvement. Don't start from scratch!
- 2** Formalise the partnership. It works better when everyone is serious about their involvement. Contracts between all stakeholders have worked well for us.
- 3** Get ethical approval for the activity and make sure that students understand what role ethics plays.
- 4** Ensure that the communities you are working with fully understand the project and the university's involvement.
- 5** If any transportation is required, either for students to communities or for communities to students, this needs to be arranged. If funding is available, this is an excellent place to use it.
- 6** Teach students how to engage with the public, and then specifically the communities which you will be co-producing with.
- 7** Give the students and the communities involved as much time and space as possible to work through their thoughts.
- 8** The last step is one of the most important. Make sure that at the end of the project (in our case the module), all stakeholders have the work presented back to them in the format that has been collaboratively arrived at.

For which contexts is this activity particularly appropriate?

The activities in this case study are applicable to any co-created projects, but are especially appropriate for initiatives that involve working with local authorities and at risk/vulnerable groups.

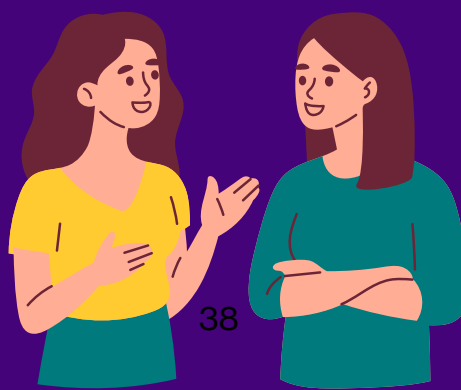
Further reading

Manzini, E. (2015). Design, when everybody designs: an introduction to design for social innovation. The MIT Press: London.

Sachs, A. ed. (2018). Social design: participation and empowerment. Lars Müller Publishers: Zurich.

Powazek, D. (2001). Design for Community. Pearson Education: London.

"I really enjoyed talking to the young people, if you are doing it again, please come back and I'd love to be involved!" - Midland Heart Community



"From our point of view it went brilliantly, the Residents really enjoyed it." - Midland Heart community

Engaging with Museums: Maths and Coventry Transport Museum

Helena Verrill

The mathematics module “Communicating Mathematics” (MA3L3) was developed with support from the Warwick Institute of Engagement (WIE) and students. The Warwick Institute of Engagement provided funding that allowed nine students to be paid co-creators. Students played a major role in deciding content and public engagement options.

The module spans terms 1 and 2:

- Term 1: Workshops, guest talks and assessed written and video work take place.
- Term 2: Focuses on an in-person group project and drop-in planning sessions.

The module has four graded components: a written piece, a video, an in-person activity, and a reflective piece. Students can create the written piece and video on the same topic. The in-person activities were delivered in groups of 4-6 students.

The options were

1. Giving a Royal Institution Masterclass in Mathematics to year 9 students,
2. Delivering a creative mathematics session at Foleshill creates,
3. Running an activity at Coventry Transport Museum.

This case study focuses on the third of these options. For more examples, see the case study on “Hands-On Maths” in this handbook.

How does this activity support student learning?

The in-person activity is a group project requiring coordination with an external partner, so students develop organisation, planning and communication skills. They learn how events are run, how to engage non-academic audiences, and how to adapt activities for children and families.

Teamworking is extensive; students reported making close friends and valued the opportunity to develop skills not covered elsewhere in the curriculum.

Development and partnerships

In term 1, we arranged speakers from across the university and two external speakers. Advice and examples were drawn from existing public engagement modules (notably Bath University’s offering discussed at the British Mathematical Colloquium outreach session in 2023). At a WIE partnerships event, I met representatives from Coventry Transport Museum and the Foleshill Creates community group who agreed students would have the option to deliver activities at the museum’s Home Education Day during British Science Week.



This is my favourite module I’ve taken at uni — I cannot be positive enough about it. It teaches valuable life skills such as public speaking.” - Student

Museum activity and delivery

The museum option included:

- a group tour of Coventry Transport Museum,
- a training workshop by museum staff,
- supervised drop-in planning sessions (two drop-ins per week in term 2),
- an officially arranged student visits so participants did not pay entry.

Students prepared laminated posters, small hands-on resources, and organised how materials would be set up in the museum. In the second year, the student group independently arranged additional planning visits and created a museum trail that the museum expressed interest in reusing.

For which contexts is this activity particularly appropriate?

This activity suits students interested in teaching, outreach or public engagement.

The museum activity was designed for primary children.

Practical constraints and reflections

Class sizes

A small class size has pros and cons: students have the freedom to create site-specific activities, but the module cannot staff a large single event.

Number of partners

Working with several partners increases workload. For larger cohorts, a single partner or standardised activities may be necessary to scale.

DO



- Build on established events (e.g., Home Education Day during British Science Week) to reach larger audiences with less logistical overhead.
- Arrange official museum visits so students are not charged entry.
- Use institutional engagement teams for funding, contacts and training.
- Allow plenty of lead time for paid arrangements: completing forms to pay external speakers increases ownership and quality.

DO NOT



- Underestimate administrative overhead when working with multiple partners. Coordinating dates so all in-person activities have the same preparation time requires additional work.

How to

- 1** Work with your university's public engagement support for funding, event lists and partner introductions.
- 2** Identify a partner museum and link into an established event (this reduces logistics and ensures attendance).
- 3** Arrange a preparatory tour and a training workshop with museum staff.
- 4** For initial module creation, recruit a small, paid team of student co-creators to design activities and take ownership.
- 5** Schedule regular drop-in planning sessions and an officially arranged museum visit.
- 6** Ensure students prepare materials such as posters and models well in advance. Pre-deliver larger items or arrange transport.
- 7** Allow several weeks for administrative and payment forms when engaging with external partners.
- 8** Confirm final logistics (setup, storage, supervision) with the museum well before the event.

NCCPE Partnership Tools



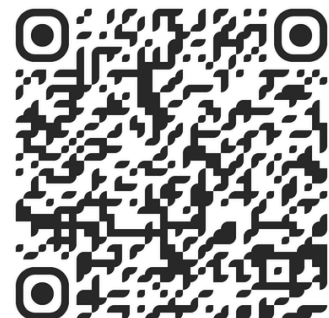
Consider alternatives

If possible, offer on-campus alternatives (e.g., Royal Institution Masterclasses) to lower barriers for students reluctant to travel.



It's an absolute joy to be able to do the things that inspired me to study maths in the first place, and to see that valued as highly as any other module you take here." - Student

Explore Communicating Mathematics students' work



Student Pitching as an Engaged Pedagogy

Naomi Kay, Sophie Martucci, Rachel Turner-King & Cheryl Cane

Across Warwick, student pitching is used as a flexible and effective pedagogic approach. Key reasons for using pitching include:

- Developing transferable employability skills, such as public speaking, collaboration, organisation, and professional communication.
- Providing a safe space for practice, particularly where students are preparing for public or real-world engagement, protecting students and the university's reputation.
- Encouraging deep learning, requiring students to synthesise and apply understanding (this is a particularly good skill in a world with AI).
- Enabling inclusive and flexible assessment, especially through group pitches that allow students to contribute in varied ways.
- Reflecting real-world professional practice, helping students build confidence for industry-facing contexts.

Drawing on three case studies, this chapter explores how pitching can support learning across diverse disciplinary contexts.

Top Tips

1 Be clear about why you are using pitching and how they connect to learning outcomes

Align pitches explicitly to learning outcomes such as communication, synthesis, collaboration, public engagement, or professional practice

2 Scaffold pitching skills

Provide workshops, guidance, templates, exemplars, or marking rubrics so expectations are transparent

3 Anchor pitches in real-world or realistic contexts

Frame pitches around plausible audiences (e.g. funders, educators, industry, community partners) to encourage feasibility, relevance, and applied thinking.

4 Don't over-schedule

Allow plenty of time for the presentations and don't schedule too many back-to-back. They'll blur together and make it challenging to mark. Allow time for Q&A and feedback after each presentation and give yourself space to mark in the moment.

5 Consider inclusive participation

Allow non-speaking or partial-speaking roles (e.g. slide design, evaluation planning, logistics) to enable students to contribute through their strengths, supporting Universal Design for Learning.

6 Require students to articulate purpose

Ask students to explain why an activity matters, who it is for, and what it aims to achieve without expecting them to 'solve' complex social problems.

7 Include practical and ethical considerations

Encourage students to address evaluation plans, risks, resources, and constraints.

8 Pair pitches with reflection

Individual reflective components help students articulate what they learned, and how theory connected to practice.

Formative Pitches for a UG Interdisciplinary Public Engagement Module

Naomi Kay

“Public Engagement” (IL217/IL317) is an interdisciplinary module. Students are assessed on a group project where they create and deliver hands-on public engagement activities. As the module is available to Level 5 and Level 6 students from a range of programmes, groups are assigned to ensure a balance of disciplinary background and level of study.

Pitching is a formative step in the design of the students’ activities. Each group is given 10 minutes to present their planned activity to the class. Including:

- outlining the activity, including a key message for the audience and the role of different group members on the stand,
- a plan for evaluation,
- resources required, space requirements, any kit to purchase,
- any risks with the activity, and
- references.

Students are required to produce slides (a template is provided) and these slides are submitted after the presentation (with time to allow them to make edits). The module team use these slides to inform the planning for their actual live event, including buying the materials they need and ensuring all the necessary equipment is available.

After their presentations, each group is allocated 5 minutes for questions and feedback from the wider class group, tutors, and the researchers who have agreed for students to use their work as the basis of their activity. The aim is to help the students troubleshoot their activity early and provide the team organising the event with the logistical information they need.

The students are given 5 weeks between choosing their research topic and presenting their pitches. They have 2 weeks between the pitch and their final events to make any changes. They receive support in how to develop activities and a dedicated session on presentation skills. Every student must attend the formative pitches. However, not every student is required to present on the day as long as they’ve been involved in the design of the activity.



Seeing your research through the eyes of students offers new insights about the value of your findings to others. It was particularly valuable to offer feedback to students on their planned activity, answer questions the students had, and to correct small misconceptions about the research itself.” - Dr Georgiana Mihut

Summative Pitches for a UG Science and Public Engagement Module

Dr Sophie Martucci

A summative pitch is utilised in the second-year undergraduate “Science and Public Engagement” (LF249) module, open to all life sciences students. The pitch is worth 50% of this 15-credit optional module and is carried out in self-selected groups ranging from 4-6 students in size.

The Herbert Art Gallery & Museum is local to our campus and sets some themes for the students to address. These often stem from the museum’s own key performance indexes. For example, topics have included evolution of dinosaurs to birds, birds and other animals in British climates, and planet sustainability. Students then create tabletop public engagement activities on the themes to deliver at the museum during a school holiday.



Firstly, thank you for creating such an incredible day yesterday! The museum was definitely busier as a result of the students activities. The atmosphere was fantastic, and families were so well engaged. Also, a HUGE well done to the students. The activities were really well thought through, educational and fun!” – Museum Collaborator

In term 1, students attend skills development workshops on ideation and public engagement in museums. Students then generate individual ideas for an activity and subsequently receive a workshop on pitching and presenting.

The following week, a formative pitching opportunity is provided. Each student pitches their activity idea to the other group members. This enables students to practice their newly acquired pitching skills with their peers, trying to convince their group of their activity’s merit.

After the individual pitches are completed, groups must agree on a final project which may be a single idea, or an amalgamation of different members' suggested activities. The skills workshop and formative assessment provide pedagogical scaffolding to enable students to develop their skills and learn from their first pitch.



It was an assessment where I was able to practice and have control, helping me manage my disability during the time far better than traditional assessment methods which I believe improved my outcome.” – Student

The 10-minute **summative group pitches** are conducted at the start of the second term. The whole group must present their finalised activity to the module tutors. Students are graded on the following criteria:

- **How well planned the activity is.** They should pitch a detailed activity plan with clear links to the learning outcomes and consideration of their target audience.
- **Understanding of underpinning science.** The students need to show that they understand the science being communicated by their activity and can clearly and succinctly explain it.
- **Social media campaign.** Students must indicate how they would promote their activity on social media (a topic strongly recommended for inclusion by the module's student co-creators).
- **Evaluation plan.** They must show how they intend to evaluate the success of their event, how they will collect the data, and how they will identify if the learning outcomes have been achieved or not.
- **Content organisation.** This indicates if the pitch has a good structure and is conducted in a logical order.
- **Presentation design.** This is a measure of the quality of the visual props provided for the pitch.
- **Delivery.** This is a measure of the quality of the groups' pace, volume, style and how engaging their delivery is.
- **Response to questions.** This is used to test their level of understanding for their activity, the science and the delivery of the event as a whole.

Students are provided with verbal feedback at the end of their pitch but also receive an annotated rubric with written comments. Groups then further develop their activities over the remainder of the module. This culminates in the production of a creative tabletop activity by each group which is taken to the museum for visitors to partake in during the Museum Activity Delivery Day.

Pitching in MA Drama and Theatre and Drama and English Language Teaching Programmes

Dr Rachel Turner-King and Cheryl Cane

We run two MA programmes: "Drama and Theatre Education" and "Drama and English Language Teaching". Although neither programme is designed as a formal teacher-training route, many of our students are interested in pedagogic approaches to learning in schools and informal learning contexts – both in relation to drama specifically and arts-based learning more broadly.

Drama and Literacy

In "Drama and Literacy" (EQ951), students propose a learning plan or intervention related to a specific real-world literacy need. The module (15 CAT) comprises of 15 hours of workshop teaching delivered across eight weeks, culminating in a 2,500-word learning proposal.

Students explore a range of literacies alongside several drama strategies and propose how selected strategies might address a chosen literacy issue. The module focuses on functional literacy (including writing, reading, and oracy), critical literacy, and cultural literacy. As it also runs as an optional module for students from other departments, there is scope for learning proposals aligned with literacies linked to students' specialisms. For example, Psychology students have explored drama approaches to emotional literacy.

Pitching in formative and summative assessment

Our work is concerned with how drama offers alternative ways of understanding the world: by stepping into different roles, creating imagined contexts for learning, and expanding and deepening empathy. One of the ways we support this learning is through module assessments designed as '**pitches**' to potential funders. Pitching can encourage students to think about how to translate module learning into a concrete activity or project that could happen within a 'real-world' context (e.g. a school, community venue or youth centre).

The module is structured around a series of drama explorations that develop literacy through role-play, writing in role, and reflection through role. Students consider how fictional contexts can support learners in understanding situations from multiple perspectives and how such approaches might be adapted for primary, secondary, further, or higher education settings. One such exploration is Stoneland-Flatland (based on a real-world example), which examines the complex relationship between two communities learning to live together.

Pitching is embedded in the module in two ways.

1. Pitching within the fictional worlds. For example, members of the Flatland Grand Council may be required to pitch ideas to community leaders about how to support their Stoneish neighbours. These in-class pitching moments function formatively, enabling students to test ideas and to recognise limitations.
2. Pitching outside the fictional contexts. The workshops are planned so that individuals or small groups can pitch and try out drama-for-literacy activities with peers and reflect on their effectiveness. This prepares students for the final written assignment.

Final assignment

Students propose a drama-for-literacy idea addressing a real-world issue. Proposals may focus on literacy development in primary or secondary education, or on initiatives within students' own communities, such as within MA cohorts. Ideas initially explored during the module are often developed further as dissertation projects, sometimes involving work within school or university contexts.

Youth, Performance and Creative Learning

In "Youth, Performance and Creative Learning" (EQ964), students engage with international case studies that demonstrate how drama and theatre-based pedagogies have been used to explore social issues affecting young people.

The module also involves collaboration with theatre companies, including the Theatre-in-Education company The Play House. The company shared its programme Split Second, a performance exploring knife crime and its impacts. MA students watched the performance alongside Year 7 and 8 pupils, and discussed how violence affects young people. Engaging with real-world case studies like this helps students make more informed decisions when developing their own pitches later in the module.

"We have developed our creative practice over 40 years in dialogue with children, teachers, and academics. We want to continue evolving this dialogic approach, contributing to debates about what constitutes effective education, and we hope to inform and inspire future educators." - Malcom Jennings, lead teacher-actor at The Play House

**Example:
Acting on
Climate**



**The Play
House**



Final assignment

A **group pitch** presented in class, as either a presentation or mini workshop (25% of module mark). Students are invited to:

"Propose an arts-based initiative that could feasibly take place in a school or youth setting and that responds to a contemporary issue to industry professionals or potential funders."

Students must demonstrate how performance, participatory arts, and creative co-inquiry can foster curiosity, empathy, imagination, or dialogue and clearly articulate the purpose of the activity within the context.

Individual written reflection (25% of module mark). Students are expected to:

- Reflect on the creative process and the decisions made during the project design.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the project in addressing the chosen real-world issue.
- Discuss the potential impact on youth and the broader community.
- Identify any challenges encountered and how they were addressed.



Genetics: Science and Society

Corinna Clark & Felicity Boardman

Down syndrome (Trisomy 21) is a genetic condition caused by an extra full or partial copy of chromosome 21. Advances in reproductive genetics and prenatal screening have intensified debates about disability rights and whether society is moving towards a future in which conditions such as Down syndrome are increasingly selected against.

As part of the module “Genetics: Science & Society” (IL023), this session explores growing tension within genomic medicine, between the expansion of genetic technologies (for example, screening for and preventing children being born with certain conditions) and the lived experiences of disabled people living with these conditions, many of whom report having a high quality of life.

The session occurs once per academic year and is structured in three parts: a 20-minute introductory lecture, followed by a guided independent exploration of curated resources, and a 20-minute facilitated group debate. Parents of children with Down syndrome are present throughout the workshop. During the resource exploration phase, students are invited to engage with them informally and ask questions. Parents can also contribute to the final discussion. The curated materials (written and video formats) represent a range of perspectives. These include:

- Opinion pieces reflecting pro-choice perspectives, including stories of pregnancy termination
- Materials critical of screening and termination, including positive accounts of living with Down syndrome
- Information on financial and care implications for families
- Clinical and public health information, including NHS information and statistics on screening and pregnancy termination

The intention is to present a balanced and diverse set of perspectives to support critical engagement.

For which contexts is this activity particularly appropriate?

This type of activity is particularly suited to teaching that aims to explore the lived experience of complex or sensitive health conditions. It is especially relevant where students are engaging with:

- Policy decisions (e.g. what conditions are included in screening programmes)
- Practical decision-making (e.g. what information prospective parents need)
- Social and ethical questions about how society understands health and disability
- Fundamental moral questions, such as what constitutes a life worth living

How to

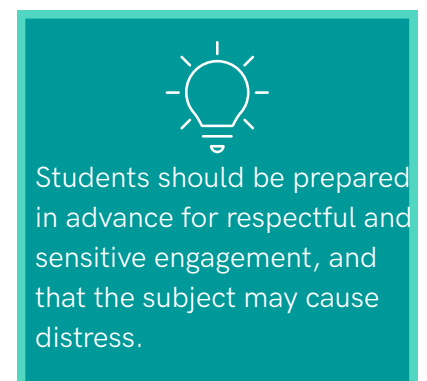
Contacting and preparing participants

- Identify and invite contributors with lived experience well in advance. Recognised local or national support groups can often be helpful in finding people willing to take part. Here, Down Syndrome UK was pivotal in putting us in contact with parents.
- Speak to potential participants ahead of the teaching. Discuss expectations, roles, and boundaries (e.g. whether they are comfortable answering questions, contributing to discussion, or observing).
- Provide them with practical support in finding the teaching building, plus visitor access and parking (if relevant). Where possible, ensure contributors are compensated for expenses and time.
- Meet participants when they arrive and show them the room and other facilities before the students arrive (including toilets and places where they can take a break). Ask them how they would like to let you know if they are uncomfortable and need support or a break. Ask them if they would like to be introduced or if they would prefer to introduce themselves.
- Check-in with them after the workshop.



Preparing students

- Provide pre-session information outlining the topic and format.
- Set clear expectations about respectful discussion and sensitive topics.
- Acknowledge that the session may raise personal or emotional responses and signpost sources of support if the session raises difficult issues.
- Offer students the option to talk to you ahead of the session about any concerns they have and discuss how these could be addressed.



How does this activity support student learning?

By engaging with diverse resources and perspectives, students are supported to

- recognise the complexity and nuance of real-world decisions,
- critically evaluate information and identify underlying perspectives,
- reflect on how narratives around disability are constructed,
- and develop and articulate their own informed positions.

- Introductions – either introduce the contributors or allow them to introduce themselves.
- Remind everyone present what they can do if they feel distressed (e.g. let facilitator know and take a break).
- Make contributors available for informal questions but ensure this remains voluntary and be present so that you can be vigilant to any signs of discomfort or distress.
- During the debate, invite contributions from students first, then offer contributors the opportunity to add perspectives if they wish.
- Actively facilitate discussion to maintain respectful dialogue and manage any challenging interactions.
- When closing the session, as well as summarising the key themes and tensions explored, acknowledge the contributions of participants with lived experience.
- Again, signpost support if the session has raised difficult issues.



The facilitator must actively facilitate discussion to reduce the risk of harm or distress and make sure not to put undue burden on public contributors to represent or defend particular perspectives.

Follow-up

- Gather feedback from both students and contributors to inform future sessions.
- Reflect on what worked well and what could be improved.



Pop-Up Shop Owners for a Day

Inge Hill

Pop-up shops feature in shopping centres, where startups test customer reactions to a new service or product. In this one-day teaching activity at Birmingham City University, learners from different courses created a pop-up shop to sell a service or product to raise money for a charity of their choosing through sales and not donations (Hill, 2018). This learning intervention has a high employability value (Hill and Bass, 2019, Hill, 2015), requiring students to practice team and leadership skills, resourcing, and cost calculation. It enables authentic assessments: report writing, presentations, or written reflections.

Learning outcomes include to

- experiment with an entrepreneurial activity in the safe campus environment
- explore the application of business concepts in strategy and business planning (e.g. strategy, business planning) in a real activity



DO



- Limit the charity location to the UK to avoid issues with cross-border money transfers.
- Name activities not allowed on the day in advance (shisha lounge, betting, etc.).
- Remind learners regularly of the upcoming pop-up shop activity.
- Inform learners that they can deduct expenses with receipts from the revenue.
- Support learners on the day with mentoring, suggestions of what else they could do, encouraging them to become more proactive, to walk around with product tasters, and to create offers.

DO NOT



- Criticise students on the day for not doing something in the best possible way. Instead, wait for them to ask for feedback and ask questions only.
- Use a location that is open to the public to provide a safe space for learners to explore entrepreneurship.
- Offer too much support to students if they do not ask for it.

Further reading

Hill, I. (2018). Birmingham City University. Using EntreComp to bring credibility to practical entrepreneurial learning activities. In: European Commission (Ed.), *EntreComp into Action. Get Inspired Make It Happen*. A user guide to the European Entrepreneurship Complete Framework, 86-87. Publications Office of the European Union: Brussels.

Hill, I. & Bass, T. (2019). Embedding emotional resilience and reflection in the curriculum – pop-up shops as a tool to learn about and reflect on enterprise. In A. Diver (Ed.), *Employable scholars in Higher Education: Challenges and choices in times of austerity*, 415-428. Springer: Berlin, New York.

Hill, I. (2015). *Start-Up. A practice-led guide to new venture creation*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education. (2018). *Enterprise and Entrepreneurship Education: Guidance for UK Higher Education Providers*. Access: <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/the-quality-code/enterprise-and-entrepreneurship-education> (Accessed 22/06/2026).

How to

Before the activity is introduced to learners

- Familiarise yourself with relevant university policies (e.g. health and safety).
- Gain approval from university professional service teams and the head of department/course director for running such an activity, submit a risk assessment.
- Integrate the assessment into the module learning and assessment strategies.
- Gain suggestions on the activity and its introduction by student course representatives.
- Book the location: ideally an open space on the ground floor with flexible use of furniture.
- Brief colleagues and ask them to spare 45 minutes to act as customers and to monitor the activity on the day.
- Plan to introduce the activity in class for two or more hours.
- Define criteria to select a winning pop-up shop activity.

Introduce the activity to learners

- Discuss the concept and practical reality of pop-up shops at least 5 weeks in advance.
 - Explain practical arrangements for running the activity: date, resources, legal and institutional limits to activities, practicalities for the facilities. Require submission of a form outlining the proposed service/product one week before pop-up shop day.
- Set a deadline for learners to agree on a charity. Remind learners in subsequent weeks of the necessary form and decision on charity.
- Ask learners to form groups for the activity (group size between 3 and 6) and offer one-on-one or group support at the end of each weekly session.
- With course representatives and students who suggested the charity, explore how to present the charity on the day (e.g. using branding).

During the pop-up shop day

- Early in the morning, check that the ordered resources are in place.
- Coordinate with professional services colleagues to ensure compliance with health and safety regulations throughout the day.
- Ensure colleagues take turns acting as customers and provide them with a checklist of health and safety issues to check on during their visits.
- Engage with all table groups regularly to support learning, insights and possibly provide mentoring to address challenges.
- At the end of the activity, ensure students remove their waste, return facilities, and bring cash to you to store securely on university premises.

After the pop-up shop day

- Debrief with learners in the next module session.
 - Provide a questionnaire to all learners to evaluate the learning activity.
 - Invite learners to start writing reflections, using question prompts, reinforce assessment links.
 - Inform learners of funds raised, discuss event to handover funds to charity.
 - Identify one or two students to give a short talk at the event.
- Organise the event with the charity, inform university public relations department.
- Identify a winning pop-up shop activity and award certificates to students at the event.

The Dissemination Component of an Undergraduate Final-Year Dissertation Module

Gioia Panzarella

As we encourage students to choose meaningful topics for their dissertations, it is worthwhile to embed in the curriculum opportunities to take their year-long research into the real world, beyond their university coursework. By incorporating an assessed dissemination component as part of their dissertation module, we guide students to conceptualise a final-year research project as content that will be communicated to a wider audience, therefore emphasising its intrinsic value and potential impact. As part of their learning, students will work on how to translate academic jargon into accessible language by reflecting on how to target an interdisciplinary audience.

“I’m a very visual person and getting my ideas across on paper in a poster format was very good to make me see my ideas come to life.” - Student

This case study refers to the dissemination component of the “Dissertation/Independent Study” (GD307) module, which is core to all final-year students in the Global Sustainable Development (GSD) courses (single and joint honours). Throughout their degree, GSD students learn how to present their research to wider audiences in a variety of formats, so the module does not include any taught sessions to teach dissemination techniques. However, it is essential for students to reflect on which dissemination format to choose. Even if most opt for ‘standard’ formats, such as oral presentations and poster presentations, in the past, students disseminated their research through podcasts, performances, paintings, exhibitions, music, TikTok videos, etc. Some students may wish to use this opportunity to develop new skills by experimenting with unfamiliar formats, while others may prefer to go for a format that they are already confident in. To help implement this choice, thanks to the support of the WIE Public and Community Engagement Module Development Fund, in 22-23 and 23-24, we conducted a series of co-creation workshops with GSD students and graduates. One of the outputs was a self-learning tutorial on Moodle that includes quotes and short videos from students in previous cohorts discussing their chosen formats and experiences.

The majority of GSD finalists disseminate their research at a department-organized Dissemination Event taking place at the start of term 3. The event aims to be a celebration of undergraduate research in GSD and an opportunity for finalists to see each



Maya Lindley, “My experience as a Student Co-organiser for the GSD Dissemination Event 2024”

“This event was very helpful in preparing for my final submission. I was very stressed before coming but the tutors were supportive and made me feel comfortable. They asked me great questions that helped me engage more deeply with my research question and develop new ideas.” - Student

other one last time before graduation. In recent iterations, a central concern has been to demystify the Dissemination Event, making it more familiar and establishing it as a yearly fixture in the department calendar. From a community-engaged pedagogy perspective, this event serves as a central moment for first- and second-year undergraduate students to learn about the opportunities their course provides, for example in terms of learning from each other and supporting each other with questions and feedback. Attending the event is particularly beneficial to second-year students, who will have the chance to observe how the event runs and explore the topics that final-year students have chosen for their dissertations, which can be helpful when considering their own future projects.

How does this activity support student learning?

Presenting to a wider audience in a concise manner helps students distil the core of their dissertation and sharpen their arguments. For this reason, even students who do not present at the event (for example, if they pick a written format for their assessment) still benefit from the exercise of disseminating their research to the audience that they choose. In addition, students learn and practice skills linked to disseminating their research, which may vary depending on the format that they pick.

How to

- 1** If you wish to include the dissemination as an assessed component of your module, you need to go through the module amendment process in your department the year before. You may also want to secure departmental funding (if available!) to cover any associated costs well in advance.
- 2** Start your prep as soon as possible. Make sure you book rooms once the room booking system opens and add the event to your colleagues' and students' calendars at the start of the academic year to minimise scheduling conflicts with other events.
- 3** Ensure students have access to the relevant learning in preparation for disseminating their research. Depending on the context, you may want to organise workshops or prepare asynchronous materials for them to consult independently. In our case, students had already been exposed to relevant teaching in other modules throughout their degree. To support them further, a set of curated resources co-developed by staff and student co-creators as part of the WIE-funded project proved particularly effective.
- 4** Consider whether students will be able to choose their dissemination format. Where possible, encourage them to consider alternative formats to the ones presented as "standard" and provide them with guidance on how to gain approval.
- 5** Create a form through which students can submit a title for their presentation and their preferred format. Reassure them that the presentation title does not need to match the final dissertation title. Consider students' reasonable adjustments and make arrangements when needed.

- 6 When putting together the programme for the day, you may want to organise panels of presenters according to the topics as much as possible. Allow plenty of time for transitions, breaks, and more explicit opportunities for networking.
- 7 When allocating sessions to markers, keep in mind who each student's supervisor is. To ensure that students are assessed by someone with no previous knowledge of their project, they are allocated as marker a random staff member who is not their supervisor. This arrangement also forces students to ensure that their presentation speaks to a wide interdisciplinary audience, as they don't know until the very last moment who their markers are (and in an interdisciplinary department, their background and research interests are truly unpredictable!).



I got feedback from other students and the markers, which was great for me to improve my final submission before the deadline." - Student

- 8 Make sure the invite to the event/registration form for externals circulates as much as possible. Make the most of other department's newsletters, contacts, physical posters in common rooms and relevant spaces, ask student societies and the SSLC for help, etc. You want to ensure presenters get the audience they were promised.
- 9 During the event, arrange things in a way so that there is always a staff member at the welcome desk to answer any questions students may have. Make the most of student ambassadors from other year groups, a word with a peer can be very reassuring in moments of stress!

DO



- Get students involved in the organisation of the event, for example through an organising committee (see this handbook) or by hiring a student ambassador as co-organiser.
- Present your plan at your SSLC and staff meeting. Get plenty of feedback!
- Keep timing loose in the schedule of your event, as there will be late starts and delays beyond your control.

DO NOT



- Assume that students know what to expect from a day-long event. Put together some guidance with the help of a student ambassador.
- Force students into a specific dissemination format, keep a few options open to them.

In our experience, students were often confused by having to present their research before submitting their dissertation. We explain that the timing of the event is intentional, as it provides them with an opportunity to receive additional feedback through non-assessed questions and conversations with other panellists and staff members. This feedback allows them to finalise their dissertation, for example by incorporating new insights. There is no expectation for them to have the full dissertation ready for submission before the dissemination event, however there is an expectation for them to have completed their research project to be able to present it.

Community Engagement with Seldom-Heard Groups: Considering Students and External Partners

Laura Gelhaus & Jenny Harlock

In many teaching contexts, some of the most relevant and valuable community engagement will involve seldom heard groups. The term seldom heard refers to groups of people or individuals who are often under-represented in consultation or participation activities and who may not have a collective voice. Such groups have historically been described as ‘hard to reach’ but ‘seldom heard’ or ‘seldom involved’ is generally preferred as it emphasises the responsibility of educators to engage with these groups. This is important to prevent further marginalisation.

Guidance on engaging with seldom-heard groups

The design and organisation of activities with seldom heard groups requires careful thought to prevent harm both for the seldom heard group as the external partner and to students. There is guidance on engaging with seldom-heard groups in research which can be useful in the higher education context. This guidance highlights the importance of building trusting relationships among all actors, requiring enough time, space and resources to focus on relationship development (Bevan et al. 2024). Collaborating with organisations that represent or support seldom-heard groups is advised, as these organisations can promote the interests and advocate on behalf of individuals or groups who may otherwise struggle to make themselves heard (Harlock et al. 2023). Outreach work and wider networking may be important to identify and connect with relevant partners.

Importantly, conceiving community engagement with seldom-heard voices as “problem-based” or assuming seldom-heard actors are vulnerable can be inappropriate and even harmful – instead, partners should determine how they want to be referred to and how the project should be defined (Mulvale and Robert 2021). Rather than assuming mutual benefits, community engagement involves careful design to avoid negative unintended consequences, which is paramount when engagement involves seldom-heard voices.

The special case of engagement in teaching

However, when integrating the engagement with seldom-heard voices in teaching, additional considerations arise. Modular contexts in particular risk short-termism and make it more difficult to build trust between the external partners, students, and module leaders. Not only the external partners but also students juggle varying responsibilities such as other modules, assessments, work and extracurricular commitments. Therefore, integrating community engagement into teaching risks that while for external partners, such activities can be central to their lived experience, they may be perceived as only one among many university commitments for students. Short-term activities and the teaching context itself can exacerbate known challenges to initiate collaborations with seldom-heard groups as they may have, understandably,

additional apprehensions about working with students in such contexts. Additional care must be taken so that external partners remain actors – not subjects of study that are only called upon for a short teaching activity – and that they benefit from the activity.

At the same time, such activities require not only the careful recruitment of reliable students, but their training and ongoing support to mitigate risks to them. Students may initially underestimate the challenging emotions they may encounter (Amann and Sleight 2021). Informed consent will not only be required from the external partner, but from students, and students as well as external partners must retain the right to withdraw. Community engagement with seldom-heard groups will require additional flexibility both in time and location, potentially colliding with the university calendar and often requiring students to leave campus. This however has the potential to disadvantage students, for example if they require module credits to graduate, are asked to pay for their travel or if they have accessibility needs that cannot be accommodated off campus.

There is no single solution to the complex challenges presented here and it is important to consider and address the needs of both seldom-heard partners and students. We present a list of questions that could be addressed by those considering community engagement pedagogies more broadly, and engagement with seldom-heard groups more specifically.

Questions to consider

- How will external collaborators be identified? Is it possible and appropriate to involve a partner organisation?
- How can short-termism be avoided?
- What are the risks for external collaborators and students?
- How will students be recruited, trained, and supported throughout?
- How will external collaborators be remunerated?
- Will students be paid or remunerated in a different way? Will their travel be covered?
- How can the activity retain flexibility within strict university timeframes?

Further reading

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Community Engagement in Purposeful Curriculum Design

Jo Kukuczka

Most educators are aware of the need to connect students with communities beyond the lecture hall to develop not just skilled graduates, but active, socially engaged citizens. Yet, community engagement too often remains an add-on: a guest speaker in week five, a field trip that doesn't connect to the assessment, a learning outcome that sounds transformative on paper but changes very little in practice.

The problem is often one of curriculum in the fullest sense: not just content, but the aims of the programme, the intended learning outcomes, the assessments, and the learning activities. All aspects should be aligned with one another and work for the student. When community engagement activities are woven into the curriculum in this way, they have the potential to be genuinely transformative.

Three principles can help us move from intention to practice.

1. Make the intention explicit

The first principle is to name what you are trying to do — and mean it. Both Freire (2005) and Bell hooks (1994) argue that without an explicit pedagogical intention to transform, change is unlikely to follow. In curriculum terms, this means building that intention into your programme aims, visible to students from day one. Compare:

"Students will develop research and communication skills relevant to their discipline."

"Students will develop the knowledge and dispositions to engage critically with their communities and contribute to addressing real-world challenges in their field."

The second describes not just competence, but purpose. And purpose, communicated clearly, can change how students engage with everything that follows.

2. Thread community engagement throughout the programme

One module on community engagement, however well designed, is rarely enough to shift students' ways of being, knowing, and doing. Therefore, the second principle is to weave community engagement throughout the programme. This way, students are gradually introduced to and engaged more deeply with community knowledge and practice, rather than only being exposed to the idea of engaging with the world beyond the university once. Early in the programme, community knowledge could enter through curated materials such as texts and case studies. Students might engage with these critically through academic reading circles (Kukuczka, 2024; Seburn, 2016), a structured small-group discussion in which participants take on different analytical roles to interrogate whose knowledge is centred, and whose is absent. Mid-programme, students might compare academic accounts of a social issue with testimony from the communities they describe.

Later, they act: a photovoice task (Wang and Burris, 1997) asks students to photograph something connected to a social justice prompt in their own community and discuss their images with peers. This places student and community knowledge in dialogue, rather than treating community as a case study observed from a safe distance.

3. Centre community as knowledge, not just context

The third principle is most frequently overlooked. There is a meaningful difference between using community as a backdrop and engaging with it as a source of legitimate knowledge in its own right. The former keeps students as observers. The latter positions them as participants in a dialogue that goes both ways.

At every stage of design, it is worth asking: whose knowledge is being validated here? Are students bringing knowledge in from their communities, or only taking it out? These are not always comfortable questions but they are exactly the kind a well-designed curriculum can help students learn to ask, and act on.

Further reading

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