ENhance Case Study

Edinburgh Napier
UNIVERSITY

Department of
Learning & Teaching
Enhancement

Themes presented:
Employability; Global Outlook; Inclusion

Programme
BA (Hons) Film

Submission made by
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Case Study

BA (Hons) Film involves a large element of group assessment through student collaborative practices, which is important because it enhances our students' employability through activities that align directly with standard industry practices. We are aware that this can create certain communication challenges for students, and we are currently reviewing our approaches and guidance for collaboration, with a specific consideration to inclusion and addressing a citizenship and community agenda on the programme.

Napier's Student Charter clearly sets out the responsibilities we have to each other as individuals, where the Student Code of Conduct emphasises acceptable or inappropriate actions for both academic and non-academic activity. On BA (Hons) Film students also need to recognise the individual responsibilities that collaborative practice entails, where an individual's actions can impact directly on the ability of others to complete their coursework and assessment. This is not explicitly covered in the charter, so we are creating a code of conduct specific to our collaborative practices with a focus on encouraging healthy group dynamics.

The rationale behind this was in response to concerns raised by students regarding negative behaviours during academic year 2020-21, and specifically misogynist and sexist attitudes by some students during group work. Empowered by wider societal justice agendas and by calls to action such as the MeToo movement, students were proactive in raising their concerns with lecturers, which began a dialogue around positive change across BA (Hons) Film. We have held a number of discussions including open forums that were led by lecturers Paul Gray and Zoë Irvine, and open to all students on the
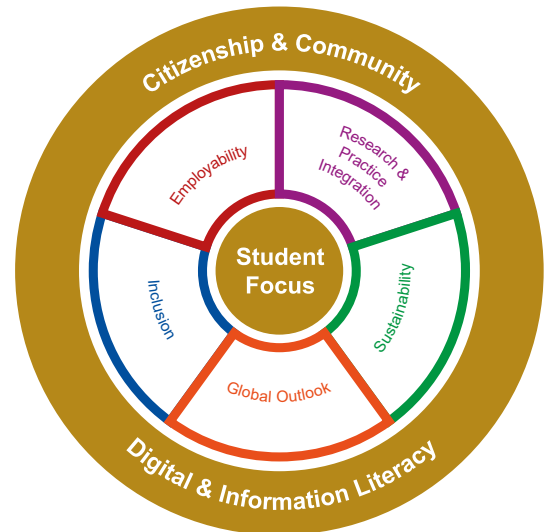
programme. Student attendance was high, with 30-40 student at each of the main two forums from all four years.

The code of conduct for collaborative practices is co-written by students and lecturers, and will be applied across all years as a supplement to the University Student Charter. While still a draft and expected to be completed in January 2022, it clearly states the need to affirm equality and inclusion in all collaborative contexts with a zero-tolerance approach to sexist, misogynistic, transphobic and any other prejudicial behaviours in our learning environments. Rather than listing what is not acceptable, it will outline the positive behaviours and attitudes that are expected, so that students can achieve their work professionally, collegially and respectfully to each other.

Discussion also highlighted how the lockdown necessitated online communications, rather than face-to-face activities, and this was a contributing factor for prejudicial attitudes and behaviours to go unchecked within wider social media platforms. In response other outcomes have included the students' input in to defining the types of questions lecturers should pose during tutorials and seminars, in order to support the opportunity for students to be heard as well as encouraging respectful group dynamics. We plan to continue with this format for student engagement and community building, with the purpose of informing our aim to make inclusion a more prominent and accountable theme across the programme's LTA approaches and be interconnected with module descriptors and associated learning outcomes.

Digital Information and Citizenship & Community
Covered in case study above.

Further links