



Centre for Research in Lifelong Learning

Student Engagement: From Research to Practice

Conference Programme

9th September 2015,
Glasgow Caledonian University,
Scotland UK

Introduction

We have great pleasure in presenting the 2015 CRLL and GCU LEAD conference programme for the conference hosted by the Centre for Research in Lifelong Learning (CRLL), GCU LEAD, Glasgow Caledonian University on the 9th September 2015.

The conference theme – Student Engagement: From Research to Practice provides a platform for researchers engaged in the student experience and research in Higher Education to address key areas of international concern. The conference aims to promote discussion and networking opportunities across a broad field of interdisciplinary study. It will include keynote presentations by Professor Bruce Macfarlane and Dr Alex Buckley. Student engagement has become an area of great interest in higher education and this conference aims to consider the links between research and practice in the area, to critically examine and to challenge.

We hope you enjoy the papers and that they continue to provoke stimulating debate and provide the basis for ongoing research.

Anna Jones, CRLL
Ruth Whittaker, GCU LEAD

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Student Engagement: From Research to Practice

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Background and Aims

Conference Theme

The CRL Conference provides opportunities for researchers and professionals engaged in Higher Education to explore student engagement. We aim to address key areas of concern and to consider the ways in which practice is informed by research and in turn how the research agenda is influenced by practice. The keynote presentations by two very distinguished speakers will challenge and inspire. Key questions from the conference theme include:

- How is student engagement conceptualised?
- What are the current key issues in student engagement?
- What are the directions for the future?
- What are the gaps in the research and how can these be addressed?
- How can the links between research and practice be strengthened?

Key Notes

Dr Alex Buckley, HEA

Professor Bruce Macfarlane, University of Southampton

We hope that you enjoy the conference!

Summary Programme

Wednesday 9 th September 2015		
09.45-10.15	Registration and Coffee	Govan Mbeki reception
10.15-10.30	Welcome Address by Michael Stephenson, Student President, Glasgow Caledonian University	Room A- Govan Mbeki
10.30-11.30	Keynote Presentation by Dr Alex Buckley, HEA	
11.30-11.45	Coffee	A527 – Govan Mbeki
11.45-13.15	Parallel Papers Session 1	Rooms A, B, C Govan Mbeki
13.15-14.00	Lunch	A527 - Govan Mbeki
14.00-15.30	Parallel Papers Session 2	Rooms A, B, C Govan Mbeki
15.30-16.30	Keynote Presentation by Professor Bruce Macfarlane, University of Southampton	Room A - Govan Mbeki

General Information

Event Venue

The event is being held in the Govan Mbeki building at Glasgow Caledonian University. The University began in 1874 as a small college with 110 students. Since then it has grown and diversified into one of the largest universities in Scotland with over 17,000 students. The University is located in a modern purpose-built campus in the heart of the lively city of Glasgow.

<http://www.gcu.ac.uk/>

Glasgow is a vibrant post-industrial city. It combines outstanding Victorian architecture with many innovative modern buildings, and was designated as the UK City of Architecture and Design in 1999. It has a number of world-class art collections in the Burrell, the Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum, and the Gallery of Modern Art. The city has an impressive range of high quality restaurants and bars, and a very lively club scene. Scotland's wonderful mountains and lochs are within easy travelling distance, and the capital city of Edinburgh can be reached in 45 minutes by train.

<http://www.seeglasgow.com/>

Registration

Registration will take place from 9.45-10.15 on Wednesday 9th September in the Govan Mbeki building reception. The registration desk will be open throughout the event for those arriving at other times. Please ensure that you wear your name badge at all times during the event.

Attending Parallel Paper Sessions 1 and 2

Delegates have been asked to remain in their sessions once they have started so as not to disrupt the speakers

Presentation Locations

Parallel paper sessions 1 and 2 will take place in rooms A526, A526c A526f (**Rooms A, B, C**). These are all on the 5th floor of Govan Mbeki Building.

Keynote presentations will take place in room A.

Wi-Fi Access

Glasgow Caledonian University uses eduroam and if you use this network at your home institution then you should be able to connect with your usual log-in details. If you do not use eduroam and wish to connect to our GCU_Visitor network, we have Wi-Fi passwords available at the reception desk.

Social Media

You can find CRLI on twitter: @CRLItweet

To tweet about the conference, please use #CRLIconf15

We also send out bi-annual newsletters and if you wish to keep up-to-date with the research and activity happening in CRLI, then please sign up at the reception desk or online at <http://www.crl.org.uk/contact/>

Finding your Way Around

This event will be held in the Govan Mbeki building. All hospitality will be provided in this building on the 5th floor. Should you wish to ask for help, our staff will be on hand to answer any questions you might have.

Toilets

The toilets in the building are located next to the lifts as you come on to the 5th floor.

Hospitality - Coffee Breaks/ Lunches

Refreshments, including a buffet lunch and coffee breaks will be provided in A527.

Event Support

We would like to thank Radio Caley for providing media support and coverage throughout the day. This is a great learning experience for students studying to become journalists, or work in the media and communications sector.

Keynote Speakers

Alex Buckley

Alex manages the work of the Surveys team at the Higher Education Academy, and oversees all three of the HEA's surveys. He leads on the UK Engagement Survey, and supports institutions and sector bodies in using student survey data to improve learning and teaching.

Before joining the HEA, Alex taught applied and professional ethics at the University of Leeds, after gaining a PhD in philosophy from the same institution in 2008.

Bruce Macfarlane

Professor of Higher Education who specialises in the sociology and philosophy of higher education. In his work Bruce has developed conceptual frameworks for interpreting academic practice, ethics and leadership. Applying a mix of empirical and philosophical enquiry, he has helped to define key concepts including academic integrity, student freedom and performativity, academic citizenship and intellectual leadership.

Bruce's best known works are his single authored academic monographs published by Routledge: *Teaching with Integrity* (2004), *The Academic Citizen* (2007), *Researching with Integrity* (2009), and *Intellectual Leadership in Higher Education* (2012). In other work he has written about higher education as a research field, the changing academic profession, dual sector universities, university degree results and business and management pedagogy. Bruce is a Fellow of the Society for Research into Higher Education and co-founder of the Society for Higher Education Research of Hong Kong.

Michael Stephenson

The Student President is the figurehead of the Students' Association. The Student President is responsible for making sure that the Executive Committee is carrying out its duties and that agreed policies are acted upon. The Student President is the main link between the Students' Association and Glasgow Caledonian University, the Executive Committee and the Trustee Board, and the Executive Committee and staff, via the Chief Executive.

Parallel Paper Session Programme

Parallel Paper Session 1: 11.45- 1.15			
	Room A	Room B	Room C
Author:	Catherine Bovill	Laurence Giraud-Johnstone & Fernando León Solís	Tomke Lask
Title:	<i>A whole class cohort approach to co-creating learning, teaching and assessment in higher education</i>	<i>Fostering student engagement via short outward mobility</i>	<i>Teaching fieldwork: discovering a world outside the internet</i>
Author:	Alistair, D. Robertson, Andrea Cameron & Siobhan MacAndrew	Karla H. Benske	Karen Thomson
Title:	<i>Collaborative pedagogic investigations involving staff and students to strengthen links between research and practice: a case student from Abertay University</i>	<i>From research to practice: enabling staff to design and deliver a FAIR curriculum @GCU</i>	<i>Engaging international students: A fundamental understanding of learning conceptions in our classrooms</i>
Author:		Kate Reid, Dely Elliot & Vivienne Baumfield	
Title:		<i>In pursuit of 'a third space': Strengthening the links between research and practice for international PhD students</i>	

Parallel Paper Session 2: 2.00 – 3.30			
	Room A	Room B	Room C
Author:	Vicki Trowler	Nicola Andrew & Lesley McAleavy	Robert Ingram
Title:	<i>Critical engagement or 'selective' affinity? Neoliberalism, tyrannical participation and the meanings of student engagement</i>	<i>Student engagement in research and practice: partnership working at Glasgow Caledonian University</i>	<i>Glasgow Caledonian University's College Connect Strategy: Are students engaged?</i>
Author:	Paul Trowler	David Beards & Philip McGuinness	Helen Cormack, Kenny Anderson & Andrew Quinn
Title:	<i>Student engagement, ideological contest and elective affinity: The Zepke thesis reviewed</i>	<i>Partnership and student engagement in co-creation and assessment practice</i>	<i>The FORMULA Project: Engaging with learners as peer mentors</i>
Author:	Margaret Petrie, Christina McMellon & Jim Crowther	Larissa Kempanaar, Sivaramkumar Shanmugam & Elspeth Donaldson	Bronya Calderon
Title:	<i>Conceptualising student engagement through the lens of community education</i>	<i>But we want to be taught: Experiences of using an engagement-through partnership approach in a physiotherapy module</i>	<i>The research-practice gap: a multidimensional approach</i>

Presenter Abstracts

Dr Nicola Andrew and Lesley McAleavy
Glasgow Caledonian University
***Student engagement in research and practice:
partnership working at Glasgow Caledonian
University***

Engaging students as partners in Higher Education (HE) is identified by Healey et al (2014) as an important 21st century challenge. The majority of UK Universities recognise this challenge and are moving from a position of student engagement as a comparative novelty, towards that of serious institutional commitment (Thomas 2012). Fundamental to this change is the core requirement to ensure that the student is at the centre of the HE sector and the institution. The National Union of Students publication; *'Building a Framework for Partnership with Students'* advocates that Universities should now consider partnership working with students to be the norm and not an 'add on' activity (NUS 2014).

A team of students and staff from Glasgow Caledonian University (GCU) are currently developing '[GCU Engage](#)', a model that aims to enhance the student experience through a visible, integrated and sustainable institutional approach to student engagement and partnership working.

Student Engagement Research

Working in partnership with students requires institutions to take a cultural U-turn and do things differently. Working with students challenges existing norms, potentially raising the student voice to a level of influence traditionally not experienced by academic and professional staff. Students themselves may not seek out or be comfortable in a democratising system.

Student engagement research is often undertaken as small scale qualitative case studies (Trowler et al 2010). Collectively however the literature builds a case for early engagement that extends throughout the student life cycle and for that engagement to be placed within the academic sphere (Thomas 2012). Zepke (2014) reports different understandings and perspectives of student engagement. These include student and teacher roles and the conceptualisation of engagement as a formal, staged process. Other authors describe engagement as the interplay of psychological, behavioural and emotional characteristics; a combination of emotional investment in learning and behavioural indicators of engagement (Fredericks et al 2004). Student engagement research generally offers multiple views on 'how students, teachers, institutions and the

external environment facilitate engagement' (Zepke 2014 p699).

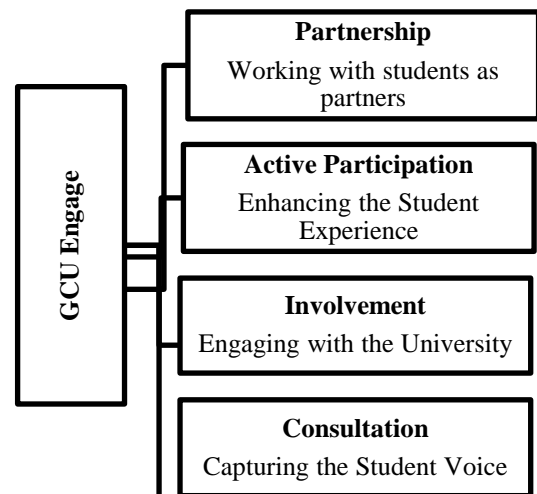
Successful engagement is defined by Thomas (2012) as an approach that develops identity and belonging and crucially, nurtures and supports the growth of intellectual maturity and personal confidence. If this is accepted as institutional practice these characteristics can contribute to a University experience that is relevant to the future goals of both the individual and the institution (Healey et al 2014).

Student Engagement Practice

In 2014, Glasgow Caledonian University (GCU) established GCU Engage; a partnership between the Students' Association and the University. Engage is the outcome of the work of a highly motivated team of students, academics and professional support staff working collaboratively, over a two year period, to establish an institutional approach to student engagement and partnership working.

Engage aims to enhance the student experience through a visible, integrated and embedded model of student engagement and partnership working.

Figure 1: GCU Engage



Engage utilises a 'wide reach' approach, incorporating the academic sphere, student body and professional services. It is situated in 'a fluid space between and among academic and professional domains' (Trowler 2010 p43).

GCU is creating an integrated model of student engagement and partnership working, supported by the work of Trowler (2010), Thomas (2012) and Healey et al (2014) and underpinned by the sparqs

(student participation in quality Scotland) Framework (2011); specifically;

- Students feel part of a supportive institution
- Students engage in their own learning
- Students work with their institution to shape the direction of learning

Collectively this research and practice base supports the ongoing pedagogical development of a realistic and sustainable institutional model of Student Engagement and Partnership Working.

Engage won a *sparqs Student Engagement Award* in May 2015.

David Beards, SFC
Philip McGuinness, sparqs

Partnership and student engagement in co-creation and assessment practice'

The approach to quality in Scottish further and higher education is underpinned by Learner Engagement and partnership. sparqs has a particular role in supporting learner engagement through its Student Engagement Framework. One approach to partnership is around models of co-creation, which can be seen in recent developments in assessment practice. By reference to some examples of co-creation in approaches to assessment, the paper will attempt to show how learner engagement is currently being conceptualised in Scottish colleges and universities; where this has been effective and where it has been problematic. In this way the session will seek to inform the discussion of future research priorities.

This is a conceptual piece of work that aims to provide an outline of the policy context in Scotland that shapes the current environment around learner engagement and partnership, while pointing to future practice that could inform how we can improve on the foundations existing today. This paper will address the key themes of the conference of how student engagement is conceptualised, and what are the directions for the future? This will be carried out with reference to a number of case studies of effective engagement and co-creation with regard to assessment, and to highlight models that showcase best practice.

Laurence Giraud-Johnstone and Fernando León Solís
University of the West of Scotland
Fostering student engagement via short outward mobility

Building on the success of a short outward mobility pilot-project carried out at a French primary school for BA Education students in May 2014, thirty Education and Science students were selected to undertake a one week observing/teaching placement in France and Spain in May and June 2015. Participants observed a different educational system while being immersed in the target language and culture and got an insight into the teaching pedagogies in those particular countries. They also contributed to guided activities with regard to teaching English to French and Spanish school children and introduced Scottish culture (but not exclusively) to the pupils in their respective schools. The project was designed in the context of the Scottish Government's commitment to the 1+ 2 language policy which is to create the conditions in which every child will learn two languages in addition to their own mother tongue in the years to come. The purpose of the project was to encourage outward exchange among students, with a view to enable them to play their part in this development after the completion of their studies.

Students were given a four section questionnaire whereby the authors aimed to find how engagement process occurred. In this paper, we will analyse and critically assess added value of outward mobility in relation to language learning, intercultural competence and student engagement, taking into account prior expectations and current reflections on linguistic, cultural and pedagogical gains. We will evaluate to what extent a short outward mobility can be identified as an enriching and purposeful educational experience as well as an academic challenge. Finally, it will examine the role of home and host staff and of peers involved in such a project and their role in stimulating and encouraging student deep learning hence reinforcing the constructivist view of the generation of knowledge that demonstrates that student engagement is being constructed and assimilated through a reciprocal process with various actors.

As will be seen, the importance and added value of increasing language proficiency whilst being immersed in another culture as well as the development of cross-cultural sensitivity were perceived as a noteworthy personal development by the end of the week. On considering participants' feedback comments and students' prior concerns and expectations, participants demonstrated that there were gains in general abilities, critical thinking and pedagogical approaches during that very short placement abroad. Some other recurrent themes in the participants feedback were a greater understanding and an increased confidence in the use of both the foreign and the mother tongues; and

improved cultural awareness, perceived as a tool to expand their global horizons and their ability to operate in a multicultural world, to develop generic employability skills and to gain a growing sense of self-belief and self-awareness.

In addition, the short outward mobility experience was recognized as an effective educational practice enhancing student engagement since participants were constantly encouraged to be active participants throughout the week. Highlighted benefits included the valuable insight into French and Spanish primary education and the teaching experience gained. It was felt that observing teaching pedagogies, contributing to guided activities within the school environment and being put on the spot whilst interacting repeatedly with primary school staff contributed to increased cultural integration. Further, it appears that supportive school/campus environment and active collaborative learning were crucial for participants to overcome transition and integration issues, hence instilling a growing sense of belonging and connectedness.

***Dr Larissa Kempenaar, Dr Sivaramkumar
Shanmugam and Elspeth Donaldson
Glasgow Caledonian University
But we want to be taught: Experiences of using an
engagement-through-partnership approach in a
physiotherapy module.***

Background

The MSc Physiotherapy Pre-registration programme at Glasgow Caledonian University prepares students for registration with the Chartered Society for Physiotherapy. While the undergraduate Physiotherapy programme is funded by the Government, the 2 year MSc programme is self-funded. The Health Promotion module, part of the new MSc Physiotherapy pre-registration curriculum, is perceived by many students as a 'non-core' subject in relation to physiotherapy and student engagement has historically been poor. The module team applied action-research to redesign the delivery of the 12 week module using an engagement-through-partnership approach as advocated by the Higher Education Academy (HEA, 2014).

Methods

Partnership was embedded through the VLE, teaching and learning strategies and the assessment approaches. Evaluation data was gathered with questionnaires and a focus group. This presentation concentrates on the student-led teaching sessions, which evoked the most emotive student feedback (both positive and negative). In week 4 the teaching for the remainder of the module was planned in negotiation with students,

based on the learning outcomes for the module and an independent learning task. Each group of students was responsible for teaching one 3 hour session and met with a tutor to discuss and develop the teaching plan and strategies for the tutorial. Each student group delivered their tutorial using a variety of teaching methods and was provided with feedback through a blog on the VLE.

Findings

Engagement during tutorials was very good but evaluation data was much more negative. Students disliked the increased responsibility for tutorial content and felt unsupported. Some struggled with the changed power dynamic in class between students and lecturers, indicating they preferred to be taught in a traditional sense with the lecturers 'in charge' of content and delivery. Students also commented about the value for money when asked to take responsibility for their learning.

Discussion

The experience challenged the module team's views. We assumed that MSc students would relish the opportunity for self-directed learning, take initiative in engaging with staff to discuss teaching related challenges and would have sufficient self-awareness to evaluate their own learning.

However students appeared to be cultured into a system where they were recipients of learning rather than active participants. Students often took a consumerist approach preferring taught 'value-for-money' (Kandiko and Mawer, 2013) rather than deep self learning approaches. Students engaged with the materials and generally provided well prepared, well delivered, appropriate tutorials. However they did not participate in the partnership aspect of teaching. Staff provided feedback and support but the students perceived that they were solely responsible for part of the module and left to their own devices. Many were not aware of their own learning over the course of the module.

The module team set out to improve students' engagement with health promotion which was achieved to some extent. However this module highlighted the need to provide students with the opportunity to review and debrief their own educational experiences and expectations and so create a more positive space for students to accept responsibility for their own learning before introducing partnership learning.

***Dr Robert Ingram
Glasgow Caledonian University
Glasgow Caledonian University's College Connect
Strategy: Are students engaged?***

There is now a wider recognition in many countries that short-cycle higher education (HE) courses such as higher national certificates and diplomas (HNC/Ds) have a multiple range of functions (Parry, 2009). This has led to a growing research interest in recent years on students who study HNs in college and then progress to university (Ingram and Gallacher, 2011, 2013; Howieson and Croxford 2011).

The growing number of students who now use their HN to progress to degree study has resulted in an increased focus by policy-makers on developing policy and strategy to enhance the volume and quality of articulation activity in Scotland with the aim to improve the experience of students who embark on this learner journey (Scottish Funding Council, 2007; Scottish Government 2013). Within the context of the Scottish HE system, articulation, as currently defined by the Scottish Funding Council (SFC), is Students gaining entry into second year of a degree with a Higher National Certification (HNC) or to third year of a degree using a Higher National Diploma (HND) obtained in a college as an entry qualification. (SFC, 2011)

This paper draws on findings from research undertaken with students that has been assessing the impact and success of the SFCs recently introduced Additional Articulation Places Scheme (AAPS). In doing so it has also contributed to evaluating the efficacy of Glasgow Caledonian University's (GCU) College Connect Strategy 2013-2020.

The research has assessed the effectiveness of learning and teaching support processes to facilitate the successful engagement, transition and progression of articulating students into GCU. In particular, and which makes this study unique from previous research referred to above, it has focused on evaluating a university's strategic framework on articulation through assessing the experience of the first group of students who are part of a new national initiative on articulation. The research has explored the following issues: students' level of awareness of College Connect and importance attached to its activities; their views on learner identity, views of College Connects' Associate Student Scheme; preparation for degree study and students' level of contact with the University's Student Mentors.

How students engage with College Connect will enable us to gain a greater insight into (a) the extent to which these Schemes and associated activities impact on the students' overall learning and teaching experience at college and (b) the impact of the processes and supports in place to enable successful engagement with GCU and transition into degree study.

Previous research on articulation undertaken by the Greater Glasgow Articulation Project (GGAP), one of six articulation hubs funded by the SFC, has been instrumental in informing development work within the hub and the wider-policy making community and has been recognised by the SFC's Access and Inclusion Committee as an important contribution to the ongoing work of articulation (SFC, 2014).

The current study further strengthens the links between research and practice in the area of articulation. Its findings, and associated recommendations, are being disseminated to relevant internal and external stakeholders across the UK. Importantly, the study is informing the SFCs own evaluation of the AAPS. In doing so it will contribute to the current policy focus in Scotland on enhancing the learner journey into and through HE in order to increase efficiency, flexibility and to widen access to HE, the overall aim of which is to lead to the establishment of a joined-up system that enables learners to readily move between the college and university sectors (Scottish Government, 2013).

Alastair D. Robertson, Andrea Cameron and Siobhan MacAndrew
Abertay University
Collaborative pedagogic investigations involving staff and students to strengthen links between research and practice; a case study from Abertay University

Summary

This empirical paper will discuss partnership approaches involving staff and students to develop innovations in learning and teaching and gain new insights into the student learning experience at Abertay University. The focus will be on our experience of implementing the Abertay Teaching and Learning Enhancement Fund (ATLEF) which launched in October 2013 and which is now in its third round. Lessons learned so far have wider relevance beyond our institution and offer potential value for the sector going forward.

Abstract

Abertay launched a new Teaching and Learning Enhancement Fund (ATLEF) in October 2013 to support the implementation of the University's then new TLE Strategy, to develop new leading practice and to build capacity for scholarship in teaching and learning. It has been funded internally plus monies from the national enhancement theme and proposals have had to align with the priorities of the institution and the Themes; the first call was under the umbrella of "Developing and Supporting the Curriculum" and

the latest call is focused on supporting student transitions.

Although working in partnership with students was not an explicit requirement of proposals of the 12 projects funded in the first round, several did involve active participation of students e.g. in running semi-structured focus groups with other students, designing questions for interviews, analysing results etc. It is important to note that Abertay does not have an Education faculty so students' engagement in pedagogic action research has been novel for our institution with a wide range of benefits to the students but also staff and the institution more widely. Student researchers (mainly undergraduates) were paid and will be recognised on their Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR).

Abertay won the 2015 sparqs award for "Partnership in the classroom in a college/ university" for work involving students as partners in assessment and feedback. We were also nominated for ATLEF projects focused on student perceptions of and engagement with technology enhanced learning and inclusivity outside of the curriculum.

Following on from successes, our latest ATLEF call has student engagement as one of its core principles and all proposals are required to include an element of student engagement which not only includes students as subjects of the research but also key participants in design and delivery of the research methodology. Utilising students as researchers in their experience is quickly becoming embedded across the university beyond ATLEF. For example, a working group tasked with reviewing academic support for students across the university commissioned student led research on student perceptions of current support mechanisms and ideas for improvement. It is our belief that as the focus groups were student led, the institution probably gained deeper insights than if they had been facilitated by staff.

In conclusion, we believe that the approach we are taking at Abertay i.e. strengthening our partnership with students and helping them to shape their education experience through collaborative pedagogic research, has wider relevance and application beyond our institution going forward.

Margaret Petrie, University of Edinburgh, Christina McMellon, Edinburgh District Council and Jim Crowther, University of Edinburgh
Conceptualising student engagement through the lens of community education

Two of the authors of this paper presentation work in the vocational preparation of community educators

in Higher Education and one in the field of practice in communities. All of the authors have extensive experience in community engagement. An important feature of the degree programme in community education is student placements and work experience in communities that involves a wide range of agencies across the voluntary and local authority sectors.

As part of the changing landscape of Higher Education there is a trend towards considering real world impact with an increasing emphasis on a wide range of students being expected to engage with communities. Whilst this is something we believe to be important and potentially beneficial for students it is equally important to focus on how communities might benefit from this arrangement. In our contribution we seek to problematise student engagement and in particular the construction of communities as a straightforward resource for student learning. We will argue that curriculum content must encourage critical reflection on the meaning of community, ideologies informing practice, and whose interests are being served by engagement and what form it might take. We will present case studies of practice to illustrate our argument that students need to be encouraged to think critically about what student engagement might mean for communities and how professional involvement can be 'part of the problem' rather than 'part of the solution' for communities. Theoretically we subscribe to a range of critical perspectives that converge on highlighting the need for educators to be engaged with 'problem posing' rather than merely 'problem solving' activity. We believe this extends to a range of professional contexts and not only to the field of community education.

Our argument is illustrated through three case studies. The first case will consider a short programme offered to pupils in an Edinburgh secondary school to tackle alcohol harm to demonstrate that the conceptualisation of the problem to be addressed with young people has a profound impact on the style and content of the programme delivered. The second case is one of preparation of students in the academy in relation to thinking politically and ideologically about 'social problems'. Very few students have been exposed to political education so that beginning to think critically about policy 'problems' and 'solutions' is central to widening the choices and opportunities communities might engage with. Unless students are able to engage critically with policy they may end up merely working 'on' rather than 'with' communities. The third case study will use a model of young people's action research groups to explore ways of challenging the dominant agenda in engagement and creating

opportunities for genuine dialogue between communities and policy makers and providers.

Helen Cormack, Kenny Anderson, Scottish Wider Access Programme (SWAPWest)
Andrew Quinn, Glasgow Caledonian University
The FORMULA Project: Engaging with Learners as Peer Mentors
(Facilitating Opportunities for Role Models to Underpin Learning for Adults)

The FORMULA Project was a Grundtvig project funded by the EACEA, Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency of the European Commission, as an innovative approach to adult student engagement, focusing on those from socially and economically deprived communities. It aimed to aid their progression back into education, using volunteer role models, who have themselves been adult returners to learning. These adults have the experience and maturity of having been late returners to education and are familiar with the commitment and pressures on adults in balancing life and the need to study. It is this wealth of experiences which can be deployed in a variety of ways that underpins the strength of using adults as role models.

The main aims of the Project were to:

- Identify and establish a volunteer adult peer network
- Produce materials and resources to support the volunteer adult role model using mentor training
- Produce materials and resources for adult learning organisations to support adult role models working with adult learners
- Develop, where possible, a European peer network through the partnership work of the project and the mobility meetings to support partner/country networks

The paper will consider the European evaluation and external evaluation of the completed project and discuss the key issues in student engagement highlighted in both these evaluations. The paper will also discuss the future use of adult learners in student engagement based on the evaluations and of the empirical survey of 637 European adult learners carried out during the project.

There were four main activities of the project. Partners devised and administered a survey to a target of over 500 (637) adult learners to gauge their response to the principles of role modelling and investigated their attitudes to participation in learning.

Materials were drafted for both a Facilitator Handbook and Mentor's (Role model) Guide to support the training of adult volunteers in all partner countries. Training was given to the role models to complement their guide and training was delivered to the facilitators who would be working more closely with the adults in recruiting and supporting their local network.

Adults were recruited, on a voluntary basis, between October 2013 and June 2014 and were provided with training sessions organised and evaluated by all partners. The adults then formed themselves into local networks. The SWAP local network currently has 83 members.

Dr Catherine Bovill,
University of Glasgow
A whole class cohort approach to co-creating learning, teaching and assessment in higher education

Colin Bryson (2014: 239) in a recent book about student engagement, argued that "partnership and all that it entails offers the most fruitful way forward for student engagement, as so many of the good practices for engaging students...resonate with the principles and practices of partnership". However, partnership implies a level of reciprocity and equality within a relationship (Cook-Sather et al., 2014) that is not always present or possible in collaborations between students and staff, while student engagement is a term so broad it often refers to quite different things. Co-creation offers a possible alternative term that falls in between student engagement and partnership implying that there is meaningful collaboration between students and staff, but that the collaboration may sometimes fall short of full partnership (Bovill et al., 2015).

Ryan and Tilbury (2013:5) claim that "... learner empowerment – actively involving students in learning development and processes of 'co-creation' that challenge learning relationships and the power frames that underpin them..." is one of six new pedagogical ideas in higher education that contribute to more flexible pedagogies. Yet co-creation of learning, teaching and assessment requires a shift in the roles of students and staff, and to the ways in which students and staff work with one another. These shifts are often experienced as unfamiliar, unsettling and risky and may need to be supported (Bovill, 2014; Cook-Sather et al, 2014; Healey et al, 2014; Huxham et al, 2015).

Existing co-creation research and practice exhibits a range of different student roles in co-creation as well as different types of activity (Bovill et al., 2015;

Healey et al., 2014; Healey et al., 2015). And one of the key issues that has arisen in the co-creation of learning, teaching and assessment is the concern to ensure that we adopt inclusive approaches to engaging students (Felten et al., 2013).

This paper will highlight that certain types of activity and student roles are by their nature exclusive, because only small numbers of students can be offered the opportunity to participate. In contrast, by focusing on inviting all students in a class to act as 'pedagogical co-designers' (Bovill et al., 2015) alongside their teacher, many difficulties related to selection of students can be overcome. Challenges remain in relation to: students' different levels of contribution to co-creation processes; ensuring voluntary participation; being transparent about how decisions will be made; and enacting co-creation in large classes. However, co-creating learning, teaching and assessment with entire cohorts of students emphasises the importance of: enhancing the relationship between the teacher and all students in the class; enhancing the learning and teaching experience and the skills development of all students and the teacher; reducing the imposition of pedagogical (co)design by others; and promoting a more democratic approach to higher education learning, teaching and assessment. I will present co-creation examples that have involved teachers collaborating with a whole cohort of students and promote discussion about the challenges and benefits of a whole class cohort approach to co-creating learning, teaching and assessment.

Vicki Trowler

University of Edinburgh

**Critical engagement or 'selective' affinity?
Neoliberalism, tyrannical participation and the
meanings of student engagement**

Recently, the focus of research on Student Engagement (SE) appears to have shifted from the more normative, atheoretical literature discussed by Trowler (2010) to a more critical discussion of the construct itself, how it is deployed and what underlies its popularity. Examples of this shift include Trowler's (2015) portrayal of SE as a "chaotic conception", Ashwin & McVitty's (2014) exploration of the meanings of SE, Gourlay's (2015) denunciation of the "tyranny of participation" and a slew of recent publications from Zepke arguing that SE, as portrayed by the "mainstream" (2015), has become an "orthodoxy" (2014a) because it enjoys an "elective affinity" with neoliberalism (2014b).

Student engagement has been described elsewhere as a "meta-construct", whose use has involved "chaotic conception", or as "vague". While Ashwin

and McVitty characterise the construct as "shifting and chang[ing] even when there is a shared sense of the focus and level of student engagement", this paper argues that it is not so much "shifts" or "changes", but different aspects of a multi-faceted construct that become more or less visible within a particular context.

Oppositional engagement was coined (Trowler 2010:9) to describe those activities previously considered outside of the ambit of SE, or even contradictory to SE, which evidenced students engaging with their studies or study context more generally but with values which conflicted with the prevailing interests. Much publicised examples of oppositional engagement in recent times include the UK student fees protests, the Chilean student protests, and the #RhodesMustFall movement. However, oppositional engagement is not limited to newsworthy acts of public defiance.

While research has typically focused on the behavioural (see Zepke 2014a), cognitive (see Ashwin *et al.*, 2014 as example) or affective (such as Kahu, 2013) dimensions, it has seldom considered the intersectionalities of these, and in particular, where students engage positively along one or more of these dimensions and negatively, or not at all, along others. The deployment of the construct by policymakers and others similarly positions SE as something students do, or don't do, in the contexts and to the ends they deem valid, rather than representing the nuances of how and to what extent students are engaging variously with different objects and along the different dimensions, within a particular context.

Data from interviews of students who identify as "non-traditional" within their own study contexts, and from the #RhodesMustFall movement, raise concerns about the potential limitations of current framing. This paper addresses these by way of an amended model, and seeks to contribute to the debate by arguing that SE itself is a nuanced and multi-faceted construct, albeit deployed "chaotically" in particular contexts for particular purposes. It argues that SE requires more than a static, binary (engaged / not engaged) or hierarchical understanding (such as that argued by Ashwin & McVitty, 2014) if it is to be understood in its complexity and harnessed usefully in policy and practice.

Dr Karla Benske

Glasgow Caledonian University

***From Research to Practice: Enabling staff to design
and deliver a FAIR Curriculum @ GCU***

The past few years have seen a drive towards developing and embedding an inclusive curriculum in higher education to enhance student engagement, based on developments and research undertaken to examine the key issues regarding student engagement, such as

- 'Embedding Equality and Diversity in the Curriculum' (HEA Scotland 2013-15) supported by the Equality Challenge Unit (ECU);
- 'Engagement through partnership: students as partners in learning and teaching in higher education' (Healey et al., 2014);
- 'What Works? Retention and Success' (Thomas 2012);
- 'Inclusive curriculum design in Higher Education' (Morgan et al., 2011);
- Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Scotland's Enhancement Themes.

The move towards a 'transformational approach to Widening Participation' (Thomas 2005) and Sally Kift's (2010) transition pedagogy which views the curriculum as the one common denominator that all students share, regardless of any other conflicting commitments they may face, also informed recent developments to enhance the student experience and engagement through curriculum design. These approaches take into account the educational, social and cultural background of students or, in other words, their real-life experiences through developing and applying new pedagogical approaches (Hockings, 2010; Morgan et al. 2011; Thomas, 2012).

Supporting GCU's Strategy for Learning and Equality Outcomes Framework, FAIR Curriculum @ GCU centres on the HEA definition that '[i]nclusive learning and teaching is where all students' entitlement to access and participate in a course is anticipated, acknowledged and taken into account...' (Morgan et al., 2011). It reaches beyond the Equality Act 2010 compliance model and recognises that developing a 'sense of belonging' is crucial for student engagement (Thomas 2012). Acknowledging students' educational, cultural and social background within curriculum design provides an opportunity to move away from deficit models and enhance student engagement for all students (Allen, 2010; Gorski, 2010; Hockings, 2010; Morgan et al., 2011, Thomas, 2012). It is about meeting students' entitlements (not needs) and to help staff and students recognise these entitlements.

Representing an empirical piece of work, FAIR Curriculum @ GCU undertook a horizon scanning and literature review on what constitutes a flexible, accessible and inclusive curriculum, followed by a

staff survey to establish a benchmark of current practice and to identify any key issues and gaps with regards to flexible accessible and inclusive learning and teaching. The FAIR survey results, combined with statistics on the GCU Student Profile, formed the basis for developing Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for staff to enable them to design and deliver a FAIR Curriculum and thus enhance student engagement. This includes a FAIR Curriculum CPD workshop that can be tailored to subject-specific needs, a workshop for Graduate Teaching Assistants on delivering a FAIR curriculum and online resources within the University's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE).

The paper presents the FAIR Curriculum @ GCU journey from research to practice, including key issues in student engagement at GCU, details on the FAIR survey results, the development and design of CPD for staff, the cycle of evaluation and review based on feedback from staff and postgraduate students, and how they are going to apply what was learnt to their practice.

Paul Trowler
Lancaster University
Student Engagement, Ideological Contest and Elective Affinity: The Zepke thesis reviewed.

This paper addresses the argument I set out in Trowler (2014). It takes up issues raised in three articles by Nick Zepke (2014a and b, 2015) and portrayed here as 'the Zepke thesis'. At one level this paper counters many of the assertions that underpin the Zepke thesis, challenging them as being based on a selective and tendentious interpretation of that literature. It also points out the misuse of the concept of 'elective affinity' within the thesis. However, more significantly the paper argues that an understanding of how ideas are taken up and used requires a more sophisticated ontological understanding than the Zepke thesis exhibits. That thesis has strayed into the territory of the sociology of knowledge while ignoring the accounts and debates in that area developed over more than a century. In concluding, the paper considers what the proper application of the notion of elective affinity might mean in research and higher education practices oriented to student engagement.

The Zepke thesis of the title as set out in Zepke (2014a and b, 2015) makes the following set of propositions about research and writing on student engagement in higher education:

1. The literature is predominantly uncritical of the concept of student engagement.

2. It is myopic in two senses: first that it neglects the significance of context in understanding and applying that concept; second that it predominantly addresses engagement in relation to pedagogy and ignores curricular issues.
3. The approach taken in the literature has an affinity with and supports a neoliberal, commoditized, instrumental view of knowledge, performativity and accountability. This explains the current high profile that student engagement enjoys among policy bodies in higher education: it has “traction”.

In summary, then, the thesis posits that the literature on student engagement is uncritical, myopic, ideologically homogeneous and supportive of the neo-liberal agenda which forms the underpinning ideological agenda of the ‘global policy ensemble’ (Ball, 2008).

The purpose of this conference paper is not to offer a thorough critique of all aspects of the Zepke thesis. Rather it is to concentrate on the last issue, the claim that the research literature on student engagement has an affinity with and supports the neo-liberal agenda. It does however offer a few initial comments on the other aspects of the thesis because the last issue relies on assertions about the literature which are at best over-stated and at worst fallacious.

Bronya Calderon
Spaces for Learning
The research-practice gap: a multidimensional approach

The purpose of this paper is to contribute to the research-practice gap. To do this I will draw on the ‘meaning-making’ analysis, an intervention research methodology I have developed. I argue that this type of research is useful in understanding not only my own practice, but also to theorize about the research-practice gap. While this interventionist research differs from other types of research, for example, from descriptive or observational methodologies those that are concerned only with analysis and interpretation, the meaning-making methodology becomes a tool for combining analysis, interpretation and development. As this methodology draws on activity theory (Engestrom, 2000), it acknowledges that research and practice are different activity systems. Consequently, Knowing-of-practice differs from Knowing-in-practice (Lave, 1996).

While this study focused on children’s practices with digital technologies, it recognises the new semiotical

landscape, the affordances of digital technologies, and the new forms of social practices that emerged and continue to emerge. Digital technologies present many challenges to educators; among them is the need to reconsider our view of learning, teaching and pedagogy. Digital technologies also have changed the traditional forms of communication, representation and how we create knowledge. They also challenge the individualistic practices of school based on the transmission of information and a print-based literacy base on reading and writing. On the other hand we would have to consider that digital technologies challenge traditional epistemological concepts.

The methodology is based on a framework (Calderon, 2009 & 2014). The framework developed has been influenced by the work of several disciplines, but it also has its own characteristics. This methodology gave me a way to acknowledge individuals’ development processes; they also provide a language of description aiming to capture and illustrate the circumstances and conditions in which particular practices are produced (Roth, 2014).

While the first stage of the study involved a macro analysis, I drew on multimodality, social semiotic and ethnographic approach within an analytical framework of activity theory. The second stage took the form of an intervention that drew directly on the contradictions and tensions of the first stage, based on action-research and a community of practice perspective. The methodology has focused on what is involved in constructing a logic of inquiry that is dialectically theoretical-practically driven and conceptually coherent. It also acknowledges the necessity to engage with and intervene into practices for developing scientific knowledge. (Chaiklin, 2011) I argue about the need to acknowledge an interventionist type of research, not only to address the research-practice gap, but also to be able to acknowledge its multidimensional development, personal, social and practical. The personal dimension can be explored as identity and professional development, while the social and practical dimensions can be seen as the capacity to interpret complex environments and enable social transformation. The meaning-making approach has been proven at personal educational level, it remains an empirical matter as to whether this approach is transferable to other practices.

Professor Tomke Lask
Universite Libre de Bruxelles
Teaching fieldwork: discovering a world outside the internet

This paper focuses on questions arising from project based learning. Confronted with a changing teaching situation where students were and are socialised by the Internet and used to encounter reality through this filter, teaching research competences in an applied way demands daring pedagogical measures. How to interest students in the research process? How to transmit that the discovery of the unknown is not necessarily a health and security question, but a fascinating process of creativity in terms of method conception and overcoming the unforeseen fieldwork blues? This paper wants to clarify the pedagogical advantages and the epistemological challenges of this kind of 'research in action teaching'.

The paper is based on a three year teaching experience in a bachelor course entitled 'Introduction to Anthropology of Communication' taught during the second year in information and communication studies at the Université Libre de Bruxelles. The students are enrolled in a research about public space and communication to give them the opportunity to learn the practice of research and to see its usefulness for other communities than the academic one. The local city government participates also in the research as it is interested in the results and the point of view of young citizens.

I conceived a BA second year course in Information and Communication studies at the Université Libre de Bruxelles called "Introduction to Anthropology of Communication" in 2012 trying to enhance research interest among students. The aim of this course is to transmit theoretical and practical knowledge about ethnographic methods such as observation techniques, the construction of the fieldwork, the informal interview and ethnographic writing. The Brussels ward of Ixelles represents the "real world" laboratory for the research. The students worked in teams of six, each one on a piece of public space I attributed. Three different roles are to be performed in each group. "Regisseurs": responsible for the visual documentation by photography and film; "Chroniquers": keep the weekly diary and "Investigators" who search for background information. It was anticipated that each group should find a subject worthy of investigation emerging from the group's observations. The start into fieldwork was harsh for the students because, for the first time, they were on their own without precise directions of what to find. Suddenly the new technologies, Internet and their Smartphones were useless and they felt "exposed" to the "real" reality, initially hermetically sealed from their usual mode of questioning.

As students were integrated into my own research project on public space and communication, one aim

of the course is to create a community of practice (Rabinow, Paul (1996), *Essays on the anthropology of reason*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press), inspired also by the relationship of master and apprentice. Being a member of a community of practice to be constructed (Rabinow, op.c.) is a challenge for all stakeholders, but particularly for students as first-time practitioners.

However the fact that the students take part in a real research and are taken as serious partners empowers them for the years to come as student and as a professional. The constant reframing through the agents in public space allows a taste of the working reality that waits for them after university. The experience shows also the utility of research through the feedback given by different departments of the city administration. Furthermore the thrill of the second hand life experience through Internet is turned down by a real time life experience. The thus acquired competences are a valuable toolbox, when students do a MA or PhD.

Karen Thomson
Glasgow Caledonian University
Engaging international students: a fundamental understanding of learning conceptions in our classrooms

The 21st century has witnessed a rapid growth in student mobility and transnational education resulting in a significant change to student demographics in our classrooms. Cultural differences between students are substantial, yet little consideration has been given to the learning strategies and preferred teaching methods of this new student body. Universities need to increase their awareness of the distinct learning needs of a culturally diverse classroom to ensure they maximise student engagement in the UK educational experience.

There is a growing assumption among a number of senior educators that teachers and course creators should pay close attention to students' learning strategies, identifying and measuring them and encouraging students to reflect on them, designing teaching and learning materials around preferred learning strategies. This has been paralleled by a growth in Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning and increased opportunities for academic promotion through a teaching route in UK universities (Cashmore, Cane, & Cane, 2013). The most popular theories for understanding student learning in higher education derive from a body of research that favours an active view of approaches and strategies rather than learning styles. These models emphasise the role of previous experiences

and contextual influences on student learning. These models have contributed to the vast academic literature on learning styles, some of which address cultural issues; however the multidisciplinary nature of this field has resulted in confusion and a poor relationship with policy and practice in the classroom.

Taught post-graduate (TPG) courses in UK are popular internationally from the perspective of curriculum, as compared with its European, Australian and US counterparts, the UK taught masters' courses retain a competitive edge because of their short, intensive and well-organised features (Kerry & McDermott, 2010). This structure of course makes transition for international students particularly demanding. Not only are they required to make the challenging transition from undergraduate to post-graduate study (West, 2012) but many of them are making the transition from a familiar environment to an alien learning culture. Particular student stressors include educational shock (Yamazaki, 2005) or learning shock (Gu, 2009), this refers to unpleasant feelings and difficult experiences in a novel learning environment that derive from the student not knowing what is expected of him or her and not knowing how to approach the learning material. For internationalisation to be a positive experience, we need to ensure that our international students are fully engaged in their learning experience in our classrooms

This research examines students' learning conceptions in culturally diverse TPG science courses. It explores students' learning conceptions and the relationship between learning conceptions, perceived and actual academic performance and approaches to studying, using a mixed methods design. Much has been published about internationalisation yet little literature from the UK directly relates to our students' and teaching staff's experiences. Universities' learning and teaching strategies frequently include phrases such as 'enhancing student learning', 'promoting life-long learning' and 'developing independent global learners' but students' understanding of post-graduate learning at university is rarely considered. It is proposed that the outcomes from this research will influence institutional learning and teaching policies, feed into staff development programmes and help bridge the gap between policy and practice in the classroom.

Dr Kate Reid, Dr Dely Elliot and Professor Vivienne Baumfield
University of Glasgow

In pursuit of 'a third space': Strengthening the links between research and practice for international PhD students

The Lifelong Learning agenda comprises a truly long programme. The focus of our paper is on student engagement at the doctoral level. Taking cognisance of the increasing number of international students, which contributes to the changing landscape of the British higher education (and elsewhere), a greater appreciation of this group's engagement and experiences are arguably worthy of attention. It is a topic regarded as important not just to higher education in the UK; it is also a key concern globally (Jones, 2013). Therefore, a sound appreciation of the facilitators and barriers to international PhD students' active engagement has implications for a) the overall quality of their educational experience, health and psychological well-being; and b) alignment between the institutional support provision offered and required by international students.

It can be argued that international PhD students' experiences are both similar and different when compared to other groups of international students:

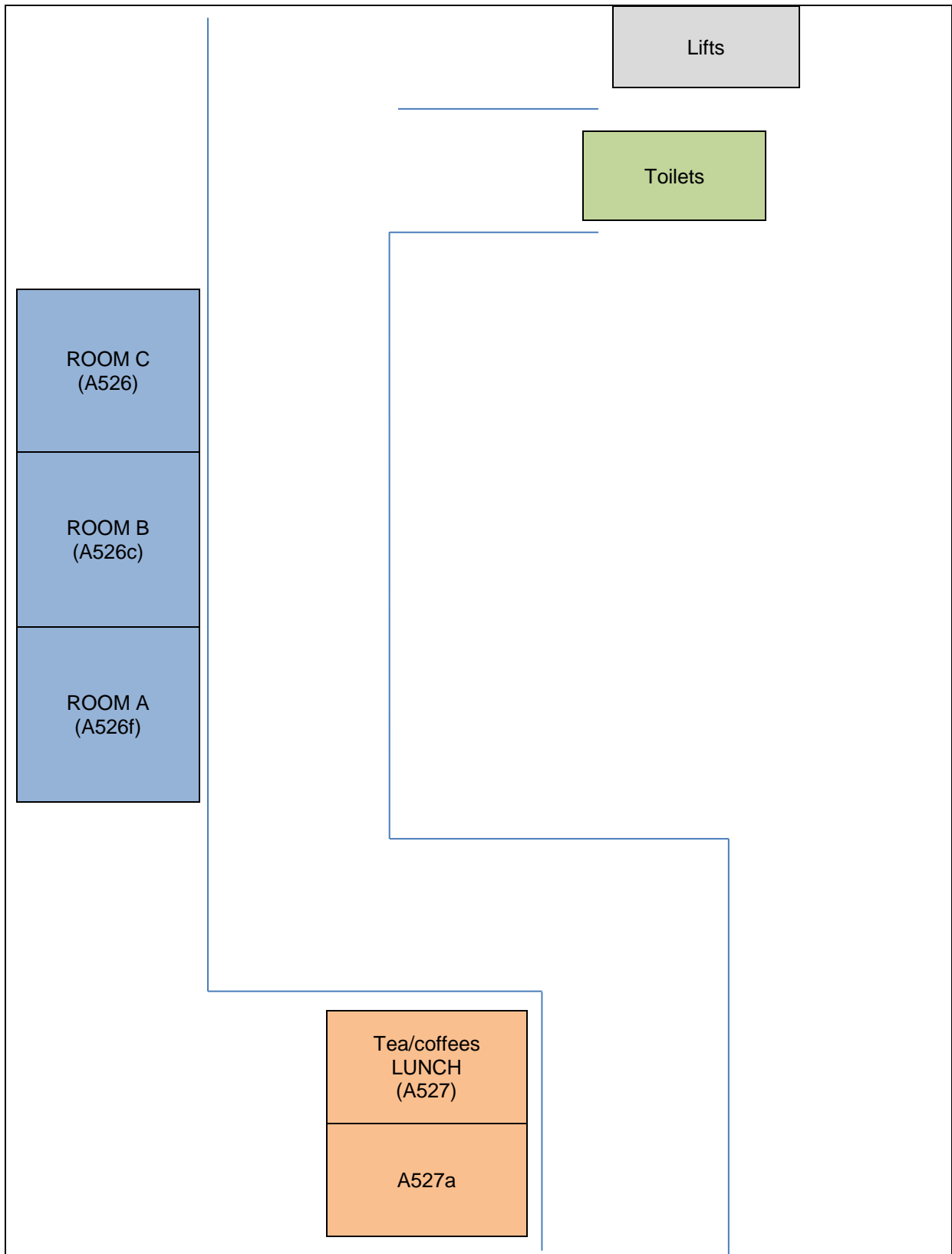
- Coming from a different country of origin, they are cut off from their family and friends, society and culture, including academic culture, as they pursue their studies abroad. Therefore, adaptation and adjustment is regarded part and parcel of their experience (Elliot et al., 2015; Gu et al., 2010; Ward et al., 2001; Zhou et al., 2008).
- Having already completed an undergraduate degree (and possibly a Master's), PhD students are generally older, and have a much richer life experience complemented with mature dispositions (Elliot et al., 2015).
- Despite intellectual guidance and pastoral support from the supervisors as well as institutionally organised workshops, seminars and colloquia, the nature of a three- or four-year research-based PhD in British academia lacks formal curricula. This means that PhD study, by and large, is 'a solo journey' (Brydon & Fleming, 2011, p. 1008; Walsh, 2010).
- In Scotland, a doctoral degree lies at the very top of the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). In this connection, the exceptionally challenging and intellectually demanding qualities of PhD work (Cotterall, 2013; Trafford & Leshem, 2009) is to be expected.
- PhD study is considered as an 'academic rite of passage'. It is also therefore characterised by a professional and personal developmental process, with the aim of preparing students to become a

member of the academic community (Amran & Ibrahim, 2012, p. 528).

Our empirical research has been funded by the University of Glasgow's Adam Smith Research Foundation Seedcorn Fund, which aims to encourage innovative and high quality interdisciplinary research. Taking the distinct characteristics of international students into account and drawing from Urie Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological framework, we will present the key findings from our investigation of the international PhD students' distinct experiences during their study sojourn. Underpinned by the visual metaphors approach to encourage deeper introspection, the lessons from a highly successful

non-British post-doctoral academics as they reflected on their experiences as PhD students, highlighted key academic and non-academic concerns. Their strong endorsement for the use of 'a third space' as a creative pathway and strategy for maximising students' chances of achieving a successful PhD academic acculturation journey is, arguably, worthy of consideration. Through our research findings, we aim to foster and strengthen the link between research and practice, while acknowledging that these findings suggest serious implications for institutional policy and practice.

Govan Mbeki – 5th floor



Campus




Access to the university

- A. Vehicle entrance from Cowcaddens Road
- B. Pedestrian entrances from Cowcaddens Road
- C. North Hanover Street
- D. Dobbies Loan
- E. Milton Street

University buildings

- 1. Britannia Building
- 2. William Harley Building
- 3. Centre for Executive Education (CEE) Building
- 4. Arc Health and Fitness Facility
- 5. Students' Association Offices
- 6. Govan Mbeki Building
- 7. George Moore Building
- 8. Hamish Wood Building
- 9. Conservatory
- 10. Conference Hall
- 11. Refectory
- 12. Buchanan House
- 13. The Saltire Centre
- 14. Nursery
- 15. Charles Oakley Laboratories
- 16. Teaching Block
- 17. Milton Street Building
- 18. Caledonian Court



-  Fire Assembly Points
-  Disabled access (Lifts, ramps, and automatic doors)
-  Food and drink