

From Cube to Tube

Summary of Workshop

Mark Sutcliffe and Ruth Matheson introduced the workshop participants to the 'Belonging Tube', which was shortlisted in the 2016 Guardian Excellence Awards. This cardboard cube provides a platform for students to explore, through pictures, where they come from, their expectations and aspirations for both the course and their future. Sharing the cube provides the students with the opportunity to learn about each other, see common hopes, fears and aspirations and begin to develop a sense of shared 'belonging'. The cube can be used to explore any concept and the workshop participants were asked to consider how they might use the cube within their own teaching settings and share their thoughts with others from different discipline areas.

Since developing the concept of the belonging cube Mark and Ruth have furthered the idea of capturing the student journey and their academic and personal development in a 'Transition Tube'. The tube, a Pringles tube, is used to house artefacts that capture the students' PDP throughout the year and is gifted to forthcoming students on the MSc International Business Management. Nine activities make up the contents of the tube ranging from, survival tips for new students, though to a 3 minute film (captured through augmented reality) presenting a graduate skill that has been developed throughout the year. Participants were asked to consider the various transition points that their students face throughout the first year/course and to think of activities that could be used to fill the tube.

Discussion

There was a real buzz of excitement and chatter within the room as participants identified both activities for the tube and saw the potential of the cube for exploring student perspectives on various concepts such as globalisation, justice, poverty, sustainability etc. The use of the cube to share experiences and provide all students with a voice was seen as a positive. See the world through others eyes and stepping into their shoes was highlighted as being different to using purely verbal communication. Both activities were seen as promoting reflection and in enhancing identity in recognising values, culture and heritage.

The tube also enabled student, using a variety of creative media to map their development and journey and the idea of developing the tube to give to someone else was considered as particularly powerful in promoting reflection on learning.

Recommendations

- Experiential learning and in particular the creation of physical interpretations of critical, reflective thinking and concepts provides an opportunity for all students to have an equal opportunity of share and feel valued.
- Students value opportunities to share their culture and in doing so begin to understand more about themselves and others.
- Think of transition as longitudinal and consider what and where the sticking points might be.