



PTAS Project Report (for REGULAR PROJECT GRANTS)

Project Title: Keeping the Door Open: Curating, developing and evolving University of Edinburgh teaching in spaces and places within the city and beyond.

Project type (delete as appropriate) :

A Research Project (research focus on particular dimension of teaching, learning, assessment)

Principal Investigator : Prof Robbie Nicol

Schools/department : Moray House School of Education and Sport

Team members (including Schools and Departments) :

Dr Beth Christie: Moray House School of Education and Sport

Dr Dave Clarke: Moray House School of Education and Sport

Ms Catherine Dunn: Moray House School of Education and Sport

Prof Pete Higgins: Moray House School of Education and Sport

Dr Heidi Smith: Moray House School of Education and Sport

For further details, please contact:

Project teams must submit a report within 4 months of the conclusion of their project.

Copies of dissemination material (e.g. journals/newsletter articles, conference papers, posters) should be listed and attached (separate to the word count). The brief report will be published on the IAD web pages.

Report (maximum 1500 words)

What did you do?

The project depended on twin sources of funding through PTAS and Moray House School of Education and Sport (MHSES). The PTAS grant was used to employ a project lead (Catherine Dunn). We were also successful in securing £15k funding from MHSES to pay EDINA, the university's centre for digital expertise, to produce an interactive digital map. As part of our early research we became aware of the range of digital maps being developed in the University for various purposes and the specific niche we wanted to develop was to curate, develop and evolve teaching in spaces and places around the campus and across the city. It had two complementary elements: the development of a geospatial interactive map; and a research approach which creatively captures stories of teaching beyond the classroom.

What did you find out?

Using a snowball sampling method, we collected 'stories' of teaching practice from colleagues across the University. We conducted semi-structured interviews via Teams to gather these stories with ethical approval from MHSES. This process revealed examples of creative approaches to teaching and learning beyond the indoor lecture room, lab and workshop space. These innovations



were occurring in pockets across the University with individual members of staff developing cultures amongst their peers which nurtured and promoted learning beyond the classroom. The exploration of individual educator stories through film also revealed how such teaching must be integrated directly within course design to ensure its success. The project also highlighted barriers that educators at the University face when looking to take their teaching beyond the classroom. Primary barriers were identified as: a lack of perceived experience; a lack of resource/time; and lack of familiarity with outdoor pedagogy.

The interactive map is a living database of these stories geographically plotted as interactive examples. The examples show creative, interdisciplinary teaching and learning approaches in various spaces and places across the City of Edinburgh. It is our intention that this project will benefit student learning and research (prospective and on-programme) whilst also catalysing and supporting the cultivation of staff pedagogy and innovation within the wider university community by sharing teaching expertise and offering opportunities for future partnerships and collaboration.

How did you disseminate your findings?

The full project: interactive mapping tool

- The project including the interactive mapping tool, project summary and film content are all hosted on a designated [PebblePad site](#).
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Presentations

- The full team presented to the Learning and Teaching Conference 2021 and an abstract has been submitted for the Learning and Teaching Conference 2022.
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- Robbie Nicol presented to the Times Higher Education World Academic Summit conference 2021 on Place-based Education. A copy of this recording is featured in the IADs THECampus website. (<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/campus/placebased-learning-digital-universities>)
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Blogs series the team is involved in a number of blog series which alongside any other relevant content will be added to the pebblepad site

- Beth Christie and Robbie Nicol have completed a blog series on Place-Based Education for IAD to contribute material on the use of places and spaces for the PGCAP
 - Heidi Smith and Robbie Nicol have completed a blog series on Place-Based Education for IAD to contribute material on risk assessment, personal tutor meetings and supervisions outdoors.
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What have been the benefits to student learning?

This will become a living database for students (potential and on programme), staff (to stimulate innovative pedagogy), and community (to develop future partnerships and knowledge exchange), all of which will help identify learning and teaching 'affordances' on and off-campus.



In relation to student specific learning the interactive mapping tool helps to exemplify the diverse learning experiences across the University, showcasing the creativity and innovation that exists within disciplines and the opportunities for learning within and beyond the University campus through a University of Edinburgh degree programme. There is also opportunity within the mapping tool to extend the stories to show where potential exists for developing key graduate attributes.

How could these benefits be extended to other parts of the university?

It will also support the University of Edinburgh to realise our ambitions related to the Curriculum Review and will be in alignment with the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

A launch meeting is scheduled for the 1st February 2022. It will be opened by Prof Colm Harmon and Dr Cathy Bovill. Dr Jon Turner will be the reporter at the end. The purpose of the event is to showcase the map and the excellent work that is happening across the University before gathering feedback with a view to developing future directions for the project.
