

Prof Mark Huxham Engagement at Scale

We had a guided conversation around the challenges of student engagement (and particularly co-creation) at scale. I started with a short spoken introduction about lessons from three projects I have conducted:

- 1) focused feedback – this was a failure because I didn't understand student perspectives on assessment 'at scale' (I assumed that a large mass of students were like the ones I was teaching in my honours classes).
- 2) 'natural lines' in which we re-designed a module quite radically, with students suggesting a more demanding assessment task than previously. This worked really well, but was very intensive and would be hard to replicate at scale
- 3) Students as colleagues (observation has set in..). This recruits student volunteers, trains them in giving feedback and pairs them with staff to help module evaluation. It is successful at scale, but I worry that the kinds of students who volunteer are those with the most time and social capital to start with, so we are not always benefitting and hearing from other groups e.g. first generation students, MD20, distance learners etc.

We had a very constructive discussion with the main point emerging that we needed to find ways of 'belonging at scale' – of humanising our systems. Suggestions for how to do this, with larger groups and with distance learning cohorts, included:

- Dividing large groups into smaller groups to work together outside of class, and perhaps to sit together in class, to create belonging
- Allocate new students to a 'home group'; an idea coming from conferences where people are directed to meet with others early on
- Try to meet students face to face, even if this means replacing other types of contact
- Humanise your introduction to students; try to record a video with information about you
- Use technology like jing to help with screencapture and added voiceover for distance students