

INHWE Nicosia 2019 Abstract Submission

The opportunities of advances in technology allow educators to be more creative and innovative in their learning and teaching design, The University of Northampton's (UoN) approach to learning and teaching is 'Active Blended Learning' (ABL), which is a student-centred approach to support the development of subject knowledge and understanding, independent learning and digital fluency. By ensuring face to face teaching is practical and collaborative with clear links to related interactive e-learning; learning is multidimensional, encouraging students to develop autonomy, confidence and adaptability – key attributes for health and social care students in contemporary practice. By adopting innovative learning, teaching and assessment strategies to incorporate the judicious use of technology to complement more traditional approaches, the University of Northampton ensures its health and social care students are prepared to meet the demands of their chosen careers (Power and Cole, 2018).

As the first university in the UK to be awarded the Changemaker Campus designation by Ashoka U in 2013, Northampton is internationally recognised for its commitment to developing student employability through engagement with social innovation which distinguishes the University within the higher education sector (Alden Rivers and Maxwell, 2015). Social innovation is a contested concept emerging from many disciplines (Ayob *et al.*, 2016); however the European Union adopts the definition that draws together a number of perspectives and defines social innovation as:

'...new approaches to addressing social needs. They are social in their means and in their ends. They engage and mobilise the beneficiaries and help to transform social relations by improving beneficiaries' access to power and resources' (TEPSIE, 2015)

For students at Northampton, Changemaker is about spotting a social problem and doing something about it. In 2014, the University committed to social innovation as a core competence that would enhance the student experience and contribute to improved student outcomes, thereby aiming to fulfil our aim to be the UK's number one university for Social Enterprise (UoN, 2010). Alden Rivers *et al.* (2015) identified a Changemaker employability framework which mapped social innovation competencies to 21st century skills development and how employability and curriculum could be aligned to Changemaking (Irwin and Maxwell, 2015). The adoption of this framework created an approach that embedded Changemaker into the curriculum and allowed for subject specificity to be articulated (Maxwell and Armellini, 2018).

Central to the approach was the priority to provide students with the opportunity to explore social problems within the context of their chosen subject. This enabled student to apply social innovation techniques to real world situations giving them the opportunity to develop their ideas and potentially, entrepreneurial mindsets, within their chosen career or places of work. Involvement with Changemaker would allow students to be socially innovative, explore social issues they are passionate about and make a real difference to society.

In relation to Interprofessional Education, the Faculty of Health and Society at The University of Northampton are introducing an interprofessional 'collaborative curriculum' in September 2019 for its midwifery, nursing, paramedic science, occupational therapy, podiatry, policing, social work and dental nursing undergraduate programmes. It will adopt an ABL approach and will have Changemaker embedded in its face to face and online elements.

Historically, students learned about the theory and practice of interprofessional collaboration and working as a uni-professional activity – the antithesis of IPE, since such an approach does not support professional socialisation within an educational context. Logistically IPE is challenging to organise in terms of co-ordinating multiple timetables and finding appropriate teaching spaces. Add to this the mindset that IPE is somehow perceived as an additional 'learning burden' and it is clear that an innovative, engaging and authentic strategy (ie students learning with, from and about students they will actually work with in the practice setting) to help students from across the Faculty understand the relevance and importance of IPE and motivate them to engage with it is key to its successful implementation (Power, 2019). ABL affords educators the flexibility to design and deliver interprofessional learning opportunities that transcend physical, geographical and logistical barriers.

The University of Northampton is committed to providing its students with an innovative, engaging, high-quality learning experience as they prepare for employment and beyond. Our commitment to pre-registration education for health and social care students within the interprofessional 'collaborative curriculum' is to ensure that on qualification our students are confident and competent practitioners, equipped to deal with the ever more complex demands of their chosen profession within the multi-professional/multi-agency team. The fact that students are unique individuals, with individual preferences is acknowledged and celebrated. Active Blended Learning offers a range of learning and teaching approaches both face to face and online to meet the diverse needs of students, thereby supporting them to develop their autonomy, confidence and adaptability. By embedding Changemaker in the curriculum our students will be knowledgeable graduates, who are socially responsible and digitally proficient with the potential to make a positive impact on the communities they serve as qualified practitioners.

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