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**‘How can I help?’ What impact does our language have on student perception, understanding and the development of academic skills?**

— Sam Thomas  
Learning Development Tutor —

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# Why focus on language?

- Background in libraries – helping, supporting and finding information
- Learning development – what's different? What's the same?
- Critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 2010)
- The University context
- Our role
- Our language
- Authority
- What does this mean for us?

# UON



THE SOCIAL ENTERPRISE MARK  
THANK YOU FOR PLAYING

## OUR VALUES

**DELIVERING**  
a student experience of the highest quality  
**ENTREPRENEURIAL**  
the commitment to innovation, value for money and financial sustainability

**VALUING**  
opportunity diversity, a global perspective, inclusion and equality for all

**ENABLING**  
a culture of empowerment, responsibility, tolerance and excellence

**LEADING**  
enhancing the economic, social, cultural and creative life of those we work with across the world

**OPENNESS**  
transparency, adaptability, resilience, celebration of success

**PERFORMANCE**  
through continuous staff development and investment

### OPERATIONAL PLAN

- Setting Targets
- Resourcing
- Measuring Progress
- Accountability



## OUR VISION

By 2020 our student experience is outstanding, motivated by a desire to set exceptional standards, cutting edge digital technologies and a unique, future focused learning and teaching model. Our social impact and support for public and private sector enterprise and skills development; purposeful research and civic engagement is acknowledged as world leading

# TRANSFORMING LIVES INSPIRING CHANGE

ON YOUR SIDE & INCLUSIVE — ENCOURAGING & CARING

## SUPER SUPPORTIVE

INNOVATIVE & AMBITIOUS

## FUTURE FOCUSED

FORWARD THINKING & VISIONARY

CAN-DO ATTITUDE & POSITIVE IMPACT

## SOCIAL IMPACT

PURPOSEFUL RESEARCH

- More market driven and customer centric
- Real term reduction in fees
- Demand will become increasingly unpredictable
- Digital disruption
- High fixed costs
- Future of work
- Winners and losers

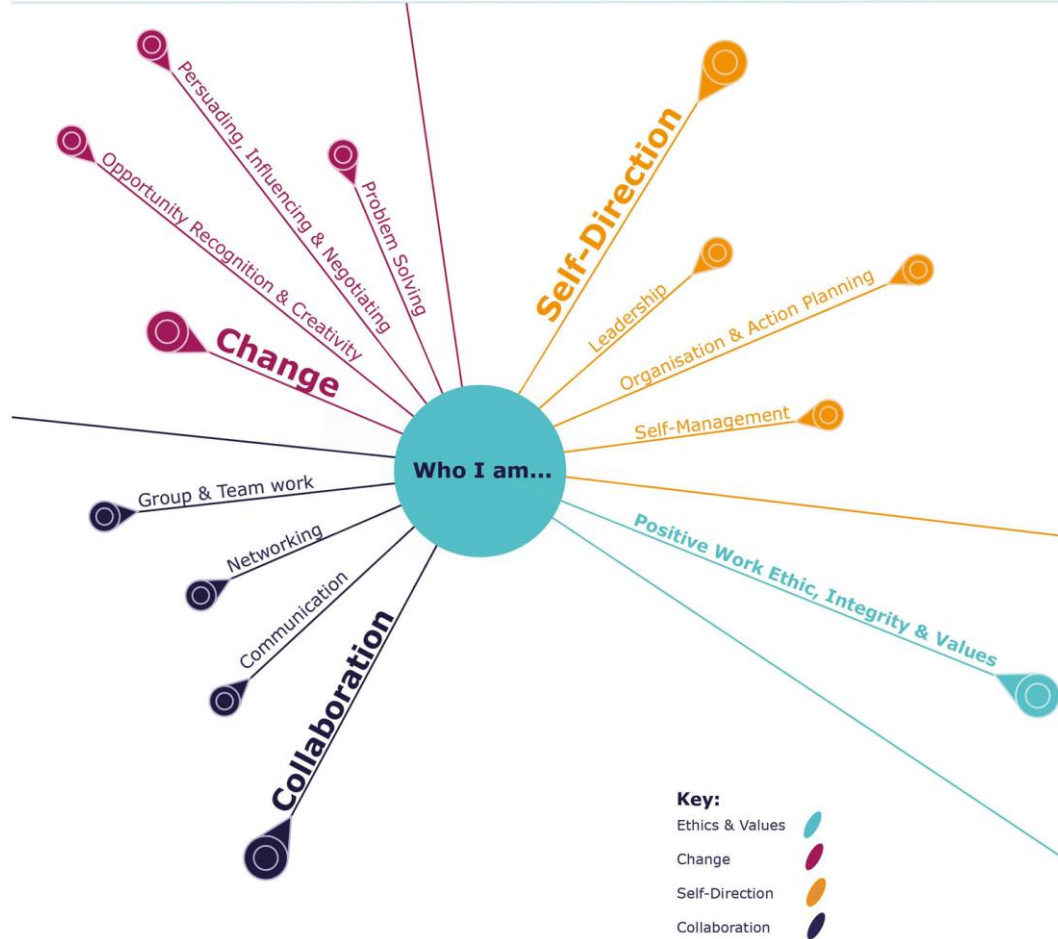
- Create a unique Learning and Teaching model
- Get smarter using technology and data
- Become more adaptable, flexible and resilient
- Diversify and grow revenue streams
- Collaborate to compete
- Invest wisely
- Fulfil our Mission ✓
- Be impactful
- Transform to a digital world
- Thrive!



### THESE CHALLENGES MEAN WE NEED TO SO WE CAN



Do the right things, in the right way, with the right people, for the right reasons.



# What is our role?

## **University of Northampton vision:**

'Super-supportive': on your side and inclusive - encouraging and caring

## **ChANGE Framework of Graduate Attributes:**

Self-direction, problem-solving

**What does 'super-supportive' look like when developing independent learners?**

# The role of language(s)

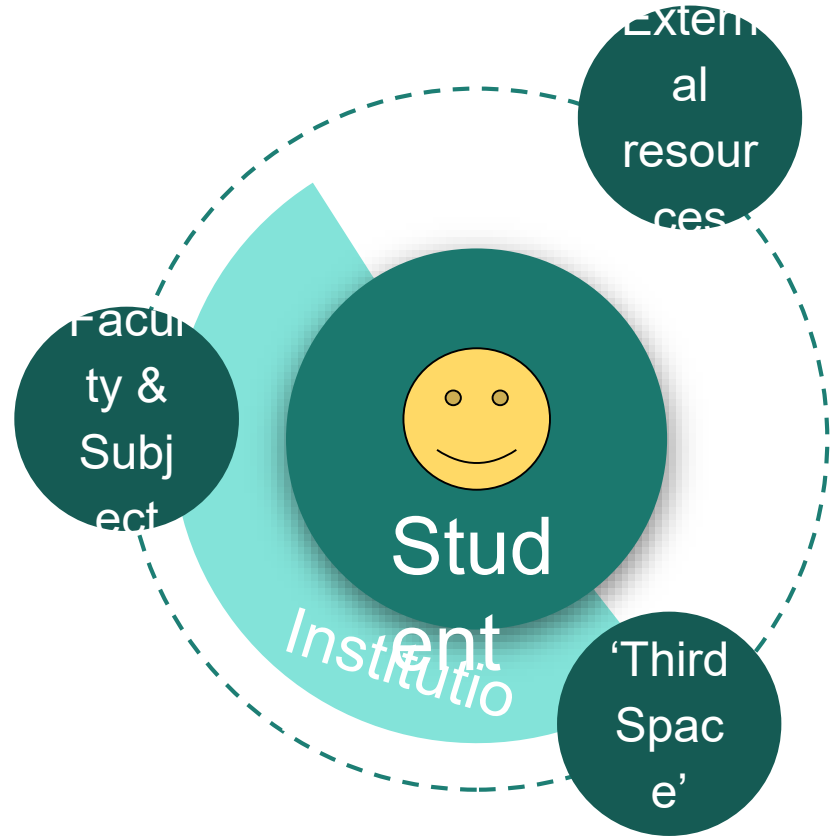
Learning development / writing centre approach:

- Modes of language - direct instruction; motivational scaffolding, cognitive scaffolding (Thompson, 2009)
- Teaching through questions (Limberg et al., 2016)
- Use of pronouns (Pantelides and Bartesaghi, 2012)
- Importance of body language (Thompson, 2009; Beattie, 2013; McNeill, 2005)

# You, me and authority

How do we position ourselves in relation to:

- The institution
- The faculties
- Other 'third space' colleagues (Whitchurch, 2012)
- The student?



# Consultancy, collaboration and control?

What is the students' understanding of our role and how does that affect their perceptions and expectations?

How do we know?



# 'How can I help?'

Refocus on the student - what is their role in the interaction?

What would **you** like help with today?

Is there anything **you** need?

What are **you** working on?

What would **you** like to focus on?

# Summary

- Think about the impact of your choice of words
  - Emotional impact
  - Pedagogical impact
  - What messages do they send about our role in their learning?
- Research: how can we find out more about the impact (or not) of our language?

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