

# Changemaker in the Curriculum

The University of Northampton

Case Studies  
2013-2014



 THE UNIVERSITY OF  
NORTHAMPTON

  
INSTITUTE OF  
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# Welcome

The University of Northampton has a significant profile as a leader for social innovation and social impact. In 2013, the University was recognised by AshokaU as a 'Changemaker Campus'—a designation that reflects the University's commitment to catalysing positive social change.

As we seek ways to embody Changemaker values as an institution, it is vital that we consider how to embed social innovation and social impact into the curriculum. Ultimately, it is our mission to develop students as agents of positive social change, and we have a tremendous opportunity to support that development through our learning and teaching activities.

Being named a Changemaker Campus has been a source of pride, as well as a source of continued momentum, for the past year. Multiple initiatives have been launched that champion the Changemaker theme, some of which are included in this publication. Among these is the EmbedCM project that aims to develop a sustainable model of education for social innovation and social impact.

A key strand of the EmbedCM project is to develop mechanisms for sharing good practice across the University. This case study publication captures 12 examples of how University staff have incorporated principles of positive social change into their teaching practice during the 2013/2014 academic year. Importantly, we have included examples of extra-curricular and co-curricular activities, as we recognise how these provide powerful learning opportunities, too.

We hope you enjoy reading these case studies and, more importantly, we hope they inspire your own practice. Please continue to share your good work with us as you embody social innovation and social impact in your pedagogy.

The Institute of Learning and Teaching

The University of Northampton

[www.northampton.ac.uk/ilt](http://www.northampton.ac.uk/ilt)

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## Case Study 1

## Embedding social innovation and social impact across the disciplines: Attributes for Changemaker

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*Bethany Alden Rivers, Ming Nie and Alejandro Armellini*

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The University of Northampton has a considerable profile as a leader toward positive social impact, and it aims to be the leading higher education institution for social enterprise in the UK by the end of 2015. Recently, these efforts and ambitions have earned the University recognition as an AshokaU<sup>1</sup> “Changemaker Campus”. AshokaU has the “ultimate goal of making everyone a Changemaker” by helping individuals embrace the “unifying principles” of social innovation listed in Table 1.

Table 1: Unifying principles for “everyone a Changemaker” (adapted from Curtis, 2013)

- 
1. Believe in a responsibility to make positive changes in society.
  2. Have the power and resources to make a difference (tangible and intangible).
  3. Take initiative to bring about innovative change, local and systemic.
  4. Work with others to maximise impact, working in groups and networks.
  5. Know and live authentically according to one’s values.
  6. Practice empathy by engaging in another person’s world without judgement.
- 

These principles suggest that the development of personal values, beliefs and activities lead to one’s ability to influence positive social change. Phrases such as “Believe in...”, “Take initiative...”, “Practice empathy...” all point to an individual’s capacity. Whereas phrases such as “...make positive changes in society”, “...make a difference”, “bring about innovative change”, imply a social dimension. The dual-focus on the personal and the social does not imply a dichotomous relationship. Inherent in these principles is the reflexive and overlapping nature of developing the individual’s capacity through active social engagement (e.g. “engage in another person’s world”, “work in groups”). In this way, the personal and the social can develop,

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<sup>1</sup> AshokaU is a global network of social entrepreneurs that works to nurture cultures of social innovation across university campuses. See [AshokaU.org](http://AshokaU.org) for more information.

experientially, in a learning cycle. The AshokaU initiative to foster social innovation across universities campus offers an extension to this model by suggesting that it is the higher education institution that can mediate this learning process (see Figure 1).

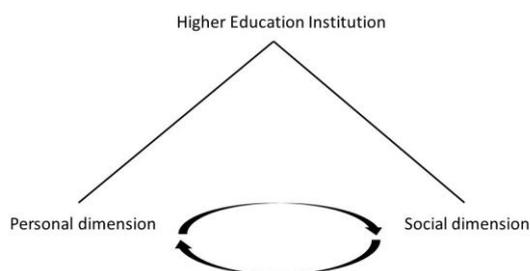


Figure 1: The role of HEIs in developing individuals as Changemakers (Alden Rivers et al., 2014b)

A challenge for the University is how to embody “everyone a Changemaker” across the disciplines and different levels of study. AshokaU provides guidance for incorporating Changemaker principles into learning and teaching activities but it also encourages universities to develop their own strategies for fostering a culture for social innovation. In an effort to develop a model of learning and teaching for Changemaker that is relevant and impactful to the learners and teachers at the University, a project is underway to develop our own conceptual framework. The first phase of this project was a phenomenographic study of 30 academic staff at the University of Northampton. Findings from this study suggested that academic staff understand Changemaker in five qualitatively different ways:

- Changemaker as institutional strategy
- Changemaker as critical thinking, perspective shifting and problem solving
- Changemaker as enhancing employability
- Changemaker as social betterment
- Changemaker as personal transformation

These conceptions are shown in Figure 2 as a possible outcome space. See Alden Rivers et al. (2014b) for a full report on this study.

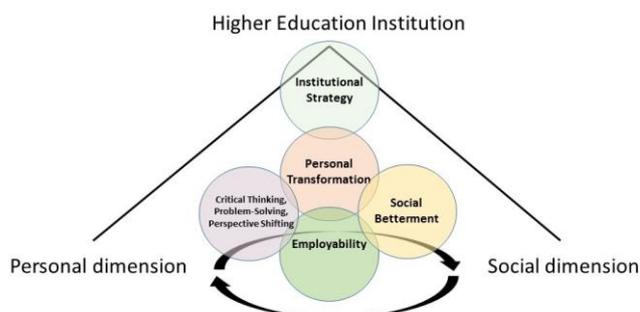


Figure 2: A possible outcome space for teachers’ conceptions of Changemaker (Alden Rivers et al., 2014b)

The second phase of research aimed to understand the human attributes associated with being a Changemaker. This study used a thematic literature review to explore the skills and behaviours related to each conception of Changemaker (found in the first study). The findings from this study suggested there were 14 attributes for Changemaker, as shown in Table 2. See Alden Rivers et al. (2014a) for a full report.

Table 2: Attributes for Changemaker

Attributes	Relationship to Changemaker	Reference to literature
1. Self-confidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>in having and sharing one's point of view</li> <li>in challenging others' assumptions</li> <li>in being able to instigate change</li> <li>to deal with issues when they arise</li> <li>to work with others</li> </ul>	Flavell (1979); Kolb (1984); Baxter Magolda (1998); Grice (2005); Stepian & Baernstein (2006); Yorke & Knight (2006); QAA (2012); Jackson (2014)
2. Perseverance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>be optimistic</li> <li>have resilience to engage in ill-structured tasks</li> <li>adapt in positive ways to changing circumstances</li> <li>practice tolerance to stress and ambiguity</li> <li>have grit</li> <li>work to thrive in the face of adversity</li> </ul>	Grice (2005); Sherman (2011); QAA (2012); Jackson (2014)
3. Internal locus of control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>be self-regulated in monitoring progress against a plan</li> <li>work in a self-directed way, without supervision</li> <li>collect and maintain up to date records of achievement</li> </ul>	Gough (2003); Grice (2005); QAA (2012); Edexcel (2014)
4. Self-awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>have awareness of own strengths and weaknesses, aims and values</li> <li>believe that personal attributes are not fixed and can be developed</li> <li>be independent</li> <li>be willing to learn and develop</li> <li>have an understanding of one's learning style</li> <li>be a "self-author"</li> </ul>	Baxter Magolda (1998); Gough (2003); Yorke & Knight (2006); Jackson (2014)
5. Action orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>take action unprompted</li> <li>engage in action planning</li> <li>set goals</li> <li>have ambition</li> </ul>	Gough (2003); Yorke & Knight (2006); QAA (2012); Jackson (2014)
6. Innovation and creativity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>be original and inventive and to apply lateral thinking</li> <li>be a future-thinker</li> </ul>	Grice (2005); Yorke & Knight (2006); Sherman (2011); QAA (2012); Jackson (2014); QAA (2014)
7. Critical thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>be motivated and skilled to locate, interpret and evaluate a range of evidence, using tools where appropriate</li> <li>understand knowledge as uncertain and contextual</li> <li>evaluate methods for problem-solving</li> <li>question assumptions</li> </ul>	Brookfield (1987); Pascarella & Terenzini (1991); Baxter Magolda (1998); Mezirow (2000); Grice (2005); Stepian & Baernstein (2006); Yorke & Knight (2006); Edexcel (2014); Jackson (2014)
8. Empathy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>be motivated to consider others' perspectives</li> <li>develop an aptitude for understanding another's perspective</li> </ul>	Stepian & Baernstein (2006); Sherman (2011)

9. Reflective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• be motivated to engage in active reflection as a means of problem solving</li> <li>• work as a reflective practitioner</li> <li>• use learning logs, journals, blogs or diaries</li> </ul>	Flavell (1979); Kolb (1984); Mezirow (2000); Gough (2003); Yorke & Knight (2006); Jackson (2014)
10. Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• possess high level of literacy, numeracy and digital literacy</li> <li>• share findings and good practice with others</li> <li>• have awareness of communication and language across other cultures</li> <li>• influence, persuade and negotiate to positive ends</li> <li>• be a networker</li> <li>• co-construct meaning with others</li> <li>• learn cooperatively</li> </ul>	Baxter Magolda (1998); Mezirow (2000); Gough (2003); Grice (2005); Yorke & Knight (2006); Edexcel (2014); Jackson (2014)
11. Emotional intelligence and social intelligence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• be socially aware</li> <li>• understand the role of emotions when working with others</li> <li>• use emotion in positive ways</li> </ul>	Grice (2005); Sherman (2011); Jackson (2014)
12. Problem solving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• recognise problems</li> <li>• develop a strategy for problem solving</li> <li>• evaluate the strategy for problem solving</li> </ul>	Jackson (2014); Yorke & Knight (2006)
13. Leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• inspire others and secure commitment</li> <li>• make decisions</li> <li>• look for the big picture</li> <li>• articulate your vision</li> <li>• implement change</li> </ul>	Neumann & Neumann (1999); Yorke & Knight (2006); Kabacoff (2009); Sherman (2011); Wharton School (2013); Jackson (2014);
14. Values-driven	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• be ethical</li> <li>• be a global citizen</li> <li>• be an environmental steward</li> <li>• be an advocate for social justice and wellbeing</li> </ul>	Jackson (2014); QAA (2014)

The next phase of this project seeks to do two things: 1) to explore a developmental model of education for social innovation and social impact and 2) to evaluate the use of the Changemaker Attributes in the design, development and review of academic programmes. Considering the range of ways students engage with and understand the notion of positive social change, it is sensible to create a developmental tool that recognises the levelness and diversity of university students. However, in order to move forward, the Attributes proposed in Table 2 need to be validated by those who will rely on this framework as a tool for embedding social innovation and social impact into their teaching and learning activities.

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**Case Study 2****Exploring social issues through art education**

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*Rebecca Heaton*

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This initiative aimed to develop a bridge between contemporary art education and the study of social issues in educational settings, drawing on the link between higher and primary education. A new art specialism route on the BA Primary Teacher Education Course at Northampton University commenced in September 2013, through this course I intended to embed Changemaker values through the curriculum. I hoped to design a course where future teachers would be able to have the confidence to question society with their pupils enabling both parties to explore social, cultural and moral routes to societal development. Through consideration of a range of perspectives surrounding contemporary issues in society it was hoped that all parties would have a broader view of social problems and would question their action and imprint within their society.

The art specialist students explored a range of social problems through their practice demonstrating how public awareness of social issues may be raised through art and design. Through the development of a body of work surrounding a chosen issue, the students considered the value and associated implications of investigating social issues through art with primary aged pupils. The students worked towards the creation of a small exhibition on campus to share their exploration of social problems with a wider audience; it was this element of controversy that enabled the viewer and students to question their position. Whilst completing this work the students questioned their own 'Multi-Sensory Culture' (Heaton, 2014) and used multi-sensory artistic processes to explore and create a conversation with themselves and their audience. The importance of this was to allow the students to explore ways to realign art pedagogy and curriculum practice with contemporary culture so that they experienced the role of becoming future curriculum change-makers.

**Why explore social issues in the art curriculum?**

The value of contemporary art can sometimes be questioned in society, however within the curriculum delving into the mind of an artist can empower learning. Many art education

researchers (Cornelius et al; 2010, Darts 2011, Song 2012) are exploring how embracing issues such as social justice, environmental concern, war and political agenda through art can inspire students to respond to and influence change. Within the curriculum possessing the ability to do this is a powerful tool, a ripple effect can occur throughout education allowing all parties to become agents of change (Hood, 2008). To explore the influence of this project it is best shared through student voice:

“Creating and setting up our own exhibition gave me a better insight into how social issues can differ across communities and how they can be accessed through different teaching and learning approaches with children.” (Shaheena Khatun, BA Primary Education Art Specialist Student, Year 1)

It was heartening to hear that curriculum change had enabled the students to broaden their perspectives on community understanding, that the students were identifying how their own subject knowledge had increased and that they were now questioning their own pedagogical teaching and learning approaches.

“ Holding our own exhibition and sharing work helped develop our subject knowledge in how to approach social issues through topics in primary schools”  
(Beth Dudley, BA Primary Education Art Specialist Student, Year 1)

The creation of artwork was symbiotic (Duncum; 2002, Payne; 2012): a relationship was established between the process of making and criticality. This experience enabled the students to reflect on their own understanding of the social issue and primary education pedagogy in question whilst developing their analysis of the making process, perhaps leading them to be more socially conscious of the culture they are personally engaged in.

“The art course has helped me become aware of social issues and how to sensitively approach them with children. I chose to explore homelessness which was a real eye-opener to how bad the issue currently is in the United Kingdom” (Natalie Green, BA Primary Education Art Specialist Student, Year 1)

The main implication of the project revolved around the issue of sensitivity and appropriateness, the students had to adapt their practice for different audiences without reducing the importance of some of the controversies addressed. This became particularly important when considering how to approach controversial subjects with children, many areas required consideration including pupil prior experience, both personally and socially, cultural awareness and image exposure to ensure safeguarding. These are all considerations, which would need to be built into curriculum design.

## **Outcomes**

The diversity in student approaches towards the course was insightful, two students depicted the same issue- homelessness, but in visually diverse ways (Figure 1-3 and 4-6). This demonstrated the potential of the visual voice; through the display of the artwork accessibility to the issue may have been increased. Both the students and viewers of the art were able to make connections between the two responses questioning what, why and how the issue had been approached and how the two depictions were inter-related.



(Figure 1, Natalie Green, Presents Homelessness, 2014)



(Figure 2, Lino prints depict common street scenarios)



(Figure 3, Film Still shown in student documentary on homelessness)

Through the creation of their work both students attempted to involve themselves in what it would be like to experience homelessness. Natalie Green created a short film (Figure 3) from the perspective of a homeless person using messages depicted on cardboard to have a conversation with the observer. Whilst Leona Jest experienced how to create a blanket to keep warm (Figure 6) using found material. Although only short insights into the real experience it was this entity that brought the message home to the students about how serious social problems in our society are and how important it is to raise public awareness through education of these issues.



(Figure 4, Leona Jest, Homeless installation, 2014)



(Figure 5, Charcoal drawing, Shoes)



(Figure 6, Deconstructed clothing creates reconstructed street blanket)

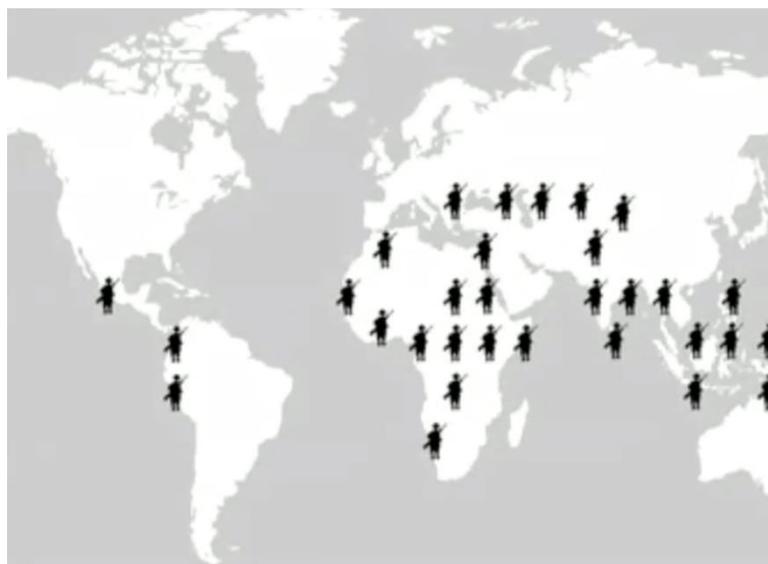
As stated previously the students' projects also taught them about accessibility and how to approach social, cultural and political issues sensitively in the curriculum. Sarah Hill addressed the issue of conflict by exploring the lives of child soldiers, making comparisons between different children's lives. A sensitive yet powerful topic, she uses the bear as a symbolic representation between childhood and power. Due to some of the explicit and frightening content for young children surrounding this issue a way in to address learning in this domain could be through exploring comparisons in identity. This project highlights how all of the students adapted their exploration for curriculum and classroom use.



(Figure 7, Sarah Hill, Child Soldiers, 2014)



(Figure 8, Layered print demonstrating contrast and conflict)



(Figure 9, Film still: Child soldiers a global concern)

### Future developments

The element missing within the student experience was the opportunity to explore a similar project with children in the classroom; I now intend to build this into the second year of the students' course. Had the students been able to trial curriculum design for themselves, which engenders the study of social issues, the impact of this on learning within the primary phase could be further measured. In addition to consider the involvement of external partnerships with associations conducting research or offering aid and support to people affected by social issues may enhance the students learning experience once again, aiding them to reform curriculum design and continue the journey towards becoming a change-maker.

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**Case Study 3****Developing a learning tool for local Police and Community Support Officers**

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*Tim Curtis*

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Northamptonshire Police approached me asking to help with improving their 'Intensive Engagement' with the communities in the county, so at the start there was only a vague understanding of a capability problem and no clearly defined 'students'. A rapid investigation through the ranks of the force indicated that Police and Community Support Officers (PCSOs) are the primary agents of change in the communities. They were doing lots of problem solving, but by mistake, intuition or vocation rather than by design. Meantime, the rest of the force were gathering quantities data on Locally Identified Priorities (LIPS) but the data wasn't telling them what the real patterns of crime and anti-social behaviour were or what to do about it. What the Police really wanted was to flip the priorities data into solutions.

The teaching strategy, therefore, was a co-produced, problem-oriented set of learning activities, observing the PCSOs work and building a learning experience out of the best of their work, and creating a consistent. The approach brings together elements of community organising (Alinsky 1971), critical community practice (Ledwith), asset-based community development (Kretzman and McKnight 1993) and modified soft-systems analysis (Checkland and Scholes, 1990) into a street-level set of PCSO catalysed activities, built around a Participatory Action Research learning framework. At the start there was no prior experience of working in the Police, but a variety of community development resources and strategies available. There were no learning outcomes but an objective to improve the ability of the Police to lever community action to prevent crime and reduce demand on the Police. There was no learning or teaching material suitable for the PCSOs and it was necessary to create case study material specific to their situation.

An experimental cohort of PCSOs was recruited, and the basic outlines of community organising and social innovation were developed over a day, including some field work. Then the PCSOs attempted to apply the strategies to their daily situation, little by little creating their own case-study material. From these experiments emerged two key case-studies, of which one was selected as one that could be used as a real training location for all 150 PCSOs.





### **Intended learning outcomes**

The LISP training for the Police is an example of a bespoke implementation of the University of Northampton's Changemaker strategy and Ashoka Changemaker values. The learning activities translate these principles into Policing language and apply them to problems of public crime and disorder. As such, the learning outcomes of the PCSOs are identical to those used in the SWK3015 Changemaker Certificate module, derived from the QAA guidance on enterprise and entrepreneurship education (which is the nearest equivalent guidance):

- take creative and innovative approaches that are evidenced through multiple solutions and reflective processes (creativity and innovation)
- persuade others through informed opinion and negotiate support for ideas (persuasion and negotiation)
- manage a range of social problems and situations appropriately, for example by proposing alternatives or taking a holistic approach (approach to management)
- evaluate issues and make decisions in situations of ambiguity, uncertainty and risk (decision making)
- use networking skills effectively, for example to build or validate ideas or to build support for ideas with potential colleagues or stakeholders (networking and social capital)
- recognise and respond to patterns and opportunities in complex situations and environments (opportunity recognition)

The deliverable for the PCSOs was a locally identified solutions and practices strategy captured in a co-designed proforma covering all the key aspects of the taught programme.

### **Tips for good practices, lessons learned**

The mode of delivery was based on a one day deep immersion into a real case-study, with long-term study and action learning opportunities, with ongoing workshops to share good practices and successes, as well as briefing all sergeants and inspectors on the management implications of supporting LISPing action research. The illustrated exemplar case-study in the toolkit, as well as opportunities to showcase one's work in front of peers and superiors accelerated the learning process.

Because the taught element built on existing outstanding practice, it was possible to create a 'zone of proximal development' and attempt to make the good practices mainstream. It was essential to ensure that the Policing culture was supportive of a participatory rather than functionalist approach to community engagement, and this has prompted changes from Police & Crime Commissioner and Chief Constable throughout the whole force- a whole systems approach has been taken to support the professional development of these staff

### **Feedback and evaluation**

An evaluation tool has been developed and is subject to PhD research. Nonetheless, the toolkit website contains feedback from community members, PCSOs and officers on the project.

"I think it's educated us quite a lot" (Community association manager, not involved in the training but involved in case study development)

“ parents were feeling nervous [because of the crime]....I for one want to keep it [the LISP project] going....the last time, nobody came to see us.....you two [the trained PCSOs] are properly geared up for getting this sorted really” (Community member)

### **Resources used**

The day-long field case studies required 20 days of input as well as 15 days of materials development. The face-to-face teaching was held on Police property and in the field. The whole programme was delivered outside of NILE, and hosted on free web spaces (weebly) because of the need to make the same material available to community partners. The toolkit document was hosted on [Issuu](#) after a great deal of testing with alternatives including Calameo and Lulu, as well as webpages. The advantage of Issuu is that it makes the material readable like a magazine, it embeds really well in NILE and ensures that students can always access the most up to date version. It is possible to track the number of views and the average length of reading the text, although it is not possible to drill down to the individual student.



**Case Study 4****Leveraging Professional Expertise & Liberating Choice for Career or Personal Development**

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*Mils Hills*

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The MBA+ is a modern, differentiated and popular programme offered by Northampton Business School (a UK top 10 institution). The MBA+ is offered in full-time, part-time, distance-learning and franchise partner modes. The author is the Programme Leader for the MBA+ by distance-learning, which itself is available as both a full MBA product and a 'top up' for students with a Level 7 extended diploma (or equivalent). Access to the MBA+ programme does not (importantly) depend on having a first degree, as we count managerial and other experience as equally qualifying. This briefing is written from my perspective as Module Leader for two elements of the MBA+ offering: a Critical Issues (10 credit) module and the Business Research Project (50 credits – 15,000 words).

**Our Students**

The majority of our MBA distance-learning students come to us through having completed a Level 7 extended diploma with our excellent partner Stratford Business School. These students are primarily drawn from the British Army, typically being officers who have recently been commissioned after having served upwards of ten years in the armed forces. They may be transitioning towards leaving the army or may have several years of service remaining. Whatever the case, they have a significant amount of trade expertise (e.g. engineering, logistics, operations), a high level of commitment to their studies although often some anxiety about Masters study – specifically in relation to the Business Research Project, which requires secondary and (usually) primary research, literature review, analysis and synthesis over an extended period.

“The freedom Northampton Business School have allowed me to research and establish links between military leadership skills and those in demand in the boardroom during my MBA course work have only served to encourage me in my endeavour to compete for a role in business after 30 years of military service. For me it has created a necessary link between what I know and what I don't whilst I navigate a very difficult transition in my life” - Major Gary Ward, Company Commander, Royal Military Police.

### **Critical Issues and Business Research Project Modules**

The Critical Issues module is a small but high-impact one. It upskills students in some of the pervasive and challenging matters that business and other organisations have to contend with in the contemporary economic, political and social environment. We introduce concepts of change, risk, security, sustainability and new approaches to decision-making in organisations. We choose readings and audio-visual resources (provided through our Virtual Learning Environment) to stimulate and challenge. These materials are selected because they are accessible yet contain robust analysis: whether they are drawn from the Harvard Business Review, Royal Dutch Shell, the reinsurance house SwissRe or from more conventional academic sources – they are well-written (or presented).

The assignment for this Module is a brief essay. This requires students to select some concepts from the Module, discuss them and extract implications for leaders and organisations. In workshops to introduce the assessment, online and telephone consultations with the students – we work hard to enable students to realise that they already know a good deal about these concepts and have a wide range of case studies from their lived experience that they can exploit in evidencing their reactions to the assignment title. Our armed forces students have been on Staff Courses which cover a wide range of geopolitical issues as well as theories of leadership and culture. Having worked in a large and complex organisation, and likely having been directly involved in deployments and operations overseas, they have insights which are both interesting to the assessing staff but also very compelling examples of concepts that we are teaching being applied (or not) in the real world.

“Having spent over 20 years in the military, subject to a variety of different leadership and management styles throughout my career, it is reassuring that I have been able bring and learn from those experiences in the undertaking of my MBA. From my exposure to risk and its analysis in varying degrees from basic military operations up to and including ministerial level, I feel the experience I have gained more than compensates for what may be perceived as a lack in commercial and business acumen. It is however an area new to me and one which I now have an avid interest and thoroughly enjoy learning about. The freedom of choice to pursue the topics for my studies at my own pace (within reason), was pivotal in my decision to choosing Northampton University and definitely one which I would recommend to others. I now look forward to my transition to civilian life in the business world, not with trepidation nor apprehension, but with exciting anticipation of what opportunities lay ahead” - Mick, Warrant Officer, British Army.

What we realised was that most students were unaware that they were allowed to cite or build on their personal experiences – a situation which is common with our other MBA+ students, whether they work in commerce, local authorities, the Police service or, indeed, universities. Naturally, experiences have to be analysed in concert with what established practitioner and academic literatures have to say about the matters in hand – but they are a very rich source of ethnographic or Action Learning data.

Similarly, it is becoming increasingly important to support students (for both the extended project and the initial essay) as they seek to conduct research within the armed forces. The

major changes to the size of and demands on, for example, the British Army, raise a wide range of challenges. Ensuring that capability can be maintained or extended; locating and retaining Reserve talent; growing motivation in stretched units and transforming from a predictable operational environment (e.g. Afghanistan) to a traditional contingency role (ready to handle a wide range of possible crises) are all issues which our students wrestle with on a daily basis.

We have encouraged students to undertake research both within their working environment (a classic Action Learning approach) as well as looking at analogous ones to see if there are lessons and 'quick wins' that can be gathered from commercial environments and injected into theirs. For the majority of students, then, this very applied approach to their study with us is attractive.

"The combination of breadth from initial research, then a focused business research project is exactly what I wanted. I have also taken a BRP [Business Research Project] path that should provide valuable research to my employer, who ultimately contributes to the cost of my MBA and who would not have the manpower to conduct this research in place of this" - Steve, British Army.

They are able to leverage either or both the essay and the project to shed light on or, potentially, begin to solve problems that are part of their daily responsibility. Their academic studies are therefore integrated into their working lives and rather than having a major rupture between work / study – each helps the other. This is very useful when time is at a premium for busy army officers who are often covering more than one post (due to a shortage of personnel) and also have family lives and other commitments.

We have seen students produce excellent research which has been commissioned and welcomed by senior officers. The output of research has and is feeding directly into changes at unit / Regimental and doctrinal (e.g. Army Headquarters) levels. The range of topics is immense – ranging from very specialised aspects of the challenges posed by cyber-warfare, through to recruitment to elite military units and the use of lean approaches to improve the resolution of service complaints.

A good number of students have been liberated to pursue a different path. With a minimum level of service time of a decade, some students actively seek a non-military topic, or have been encouraged to see that their military experience can offer a good deal to the civilian world. Typically, these students are much closer to leaving the armed forces and are looking to develop a second career. We have worked closely with our students and understand that they often have very extensive networks of friends and acquaintances. This enables them to identify routes to individuals and institutions that many of us would struggle to access. Their academic work is therefore often around exploring a topic or issue that they have always wanted to research but have never had the opportunity to do so. Some of our students secure interviews with individuals who mere academics and journalists would never get access to. Suitably anonymised, projects have described how a leading City institution implemented new governance arrangements, for example.

Other students seized on our promotion of the use of the project to help friends with their business problems. One is exploring how a major car sales business can improve sales efficiency by applying British Army principles of 'mission command' (delegated authority). Still others have been licensed to use the business project as a vehicle to develop a business plan for a boardroom leadership consultancy offering. The project will require them to deploy all of their MBA skills to understand exactly how the business will envelop their abilities, brand and market itself, fit or fight with the current consultancy market, differentiate from rival offerings and learn from the successes and failures of similar businesses around the world. On

completion of the project, the student will have both an MBA and a fully-evidenced business plan for the next stage of their career.

A final example of the personalisation of approach to assignments is that of a student who used the critical issues essay to explore the nature of risk and sustainability to his dream of transforming his hobby into a business. His hobby is breeding rare tropical fish. Usefully, but unfortunately, his analysis demonstrated that in order to maintain the style of living that he and his family have come to be accustomed – he would have to sell upwards of forty thousand fish a year. An alternative second career is now actively being explored.

### **Supporting an Atypical Student Body**

Northampton Business School is robust in instructing students that they can tailor their approach to the Critical Issues essay and the Business Research Project to fit to their needs. This is an unconventional and valued approach. When a student workshop is told that we don't set them a topic or apply suffocatingly tight criteria to how they approach their assignments – attendees visibly relax and a good deal of the stress and concern that characterises communications ahead of that meeting evaporates. We know that other institutions do not liberate their students to personalise, tailor their assignments in this way. But it is perfectly possible to extend this freedom and have robust academic foundations, the presence of extensive literature reviews, detailed analysis and synthesis with critical thinking and so on.

“As a full time British Army officer in a busy operational unit my study time is at a premium so having the flexibility and freedom to select topic titles that are relevant to my current position and potential future second career has been invaluable. [My supervisor's] wealth of knowledge, positive feedback and encouragement has allowed me to progress quickly and produce results far above my expectations. As a mature student having to fit my studies in around full time employment, having a tutor who responds so rapidly and professionally to requests for information and advice has been pivotal to my successful studies” - Captain Guy Batchelor, British Army.

These freedoms need to be backed-up by assigning supervisors with, preferably, a background of expertise in a commercial or public sector organisation and a commitment to applied research. Northampton Business School is fortunate that we have a substantial pool of in-house and associate talent to draw on for this purpose. Given that our students are generally idea-rich but time poor, we embrace providing motivational, organisational and 'critical friend' support via email, on the telephone and in person – often at unusual times and in unusual locations. As the testimonials that illustrate this briefing indicate, this flexibility is vital – underpinned by the empathy of tutors for their students, the students' choice of topic and a commitment to fostering their intellectual curiosity and academic skills. The results are very heartening – with an excellent quality of submitted work, assignments that markers enjoy reading and (most importantly) that make a real, transformative difference to the lives of our students. Impact is achieved in current roles and in the development of sustainable second careers – with emerging evidence that students would not have considered some of these careers without our influence.

“Whilst studying for an MBA in your own time is a challenge; I write this in the Middle East following a short notice deployment, it is proving more valuable for my current career, and undoubtedly my next one, than I ever imagined. It is professionally and personally rewarding in three areas: in my current employment critical study of and around my professional experiences has added insight and 'the science behind the art', in looking ahead at my next career an understanding of the relevance my existing strengths and weaknesses) in relation to the business world is invaluable. Underpinning it all is the chance to develop academically at Master's level, building on my practical experiences and taking me out of my comfort zone, expanding my understanding and thinking critically - skills I am already utilising” – Ben, British Army Officer.

**Case Study 5****Working with schools and communities: A postgraduate module where students undertake a mental health or well-being intervention in a school or community setting**

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*Rachel Maunder, Catherine Fritz and Jane Callaghan*

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The MSc in Child and Adolescent Mental Health (MSc CAMHS) is a multi-disciplinary programme aiming to promote an advanced level of knowledge and understanding of child and adolescent mental health. The programme is taught by practitioners and academics from varied disciplines including psychology, social work, law and therapeutic settings, and therefore engages with a diverse range of perspectives. Students develop their understanding of child development and mental health difficulties in children and adolescents and consider the implications of theory and research in their work with children and young people.

One of the core modules on the programme, called 'Working with schools and communities', involves students designing and planning mental health or well-being interventions in school or community settings. During the taught component of the module, students learn about a range of intervention approaches that can be used to address a variety of issues in child and adolescent mental health. Examples include counselling in schools, tackling stigma, building resilience, nurture groups, creative techniques and cognitive strategies to improve learning. For their module assessment, students have to design, conduct and evaluate their own small-scale school or community intervention which is designed to improve wellbeing and/or mental health for the groups they are working with. This involves students going out into the field, assessing need and identifying an issue or problem that needs to be addressed, and then working with members of the school or community setting to try and 'make positive change' for them. The module assessment is broken into 3 components, each focussing on the three main stages of the intervention process:

Producing an intervention proposal. This involves students critically designing and planning an intervention in a school or community setting based on an assessment of need, justification for the approach taken, and consideration of relevant ethical issues involved.

Obtaining ethical review approval and conducting an intervention, built upon the proposal in 1), which involves students implementing their proposed intervention in the school or community setting, and providing a record of this process including application of professional skills and appropriate ethical conduct.

Critical reflection of the intervention. This assessment requires students to show that they have evaluated the intervention they conducted in order to reflect on how effective it was, what impact it has had, analyse their own role in that process, and make recommendations for ongoing improvements that may be needed.

### **Examples of interventions that have been undertaken**

The students have conducted a varied range of interventions in school or community settings over the 2 years that the module has been running.

Examples have included:

- A school-based intervention to promote awareness and tackle the stigma of mental health issues in adolescence, which took the form of two one-hour classes with Year 10 students in a secondary school.
- A therapeutic intervention to improve emotional regulation in adolescents with emotional and behavioural difficulties, involving interactive tasks and games with adolescents with a diagnosis of autism or attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) who have been excluded from mainstream school.
- A community intervention to introduce practitioners to the principles of cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), which involved a practice-based workshop for staff who work with children and young people displaying aggressive behaviour.
- A school-based intervention to support primary school children in preparing for transition into secondary school, comprising circle time, storytelling and narrative role play with Year 6 students in a primary school.
- A community intervention to promote internet safety for young people, which involved an interactive information stand set up in a youth club.
- An intervention in north-eastern Nigerian schools (in an area where girls from one school were recently kidnapped and other atrocities have occurred to young people) to brief teachers on the signs of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and to educate them on the process of obtaining professional screening for students who appear likely to be experiencing PTSD.

Rehana Raheem, a current student on the MSc in Child and Adolescent Mental Health, conducted her intervention on the use of Social Stories to aid the transition of pre-schoolers in

Dubai from their home to classroom environment. Specific to a preschool setting, social stories are created by teachers for students on topics that are relevant to the specific child, and this can offer help for those pre-schoolers who need extra support with the transition process. A classroom teacher can create short personalized social stories about various subjects like routines in the classroom, appropriate behaviour, and social interactions; therefore addressing the needs of the particular child while ensuring appropriateness. She says:

“My intervention was carried out with 4 pre-school teachers who are employed at a British nursery in Dubai. I conducted a short presentation explaining the concept, history, and application of Social Stories, along with examples. Afterwards, I was able to have a brief discussion with the teachers on how they felt the information presented could be used in their classrooms, and if they found it useful enough or not. They also started brainstorming on which children they could use Social Stories with. The second part of the intervention (which is not completed yet) will be a follow up with the teachers to find out if and how they have implemented social stories in their practice, and what impact it had. Speaking from prior experience as a pre-school teacher, I feel the use of Social Stories in teachers’ day to day classroom activities will have considerable benefits. Dubai is a multi-cultural city, and because of this I used to have a lot of children being brought to pre-school who spoke various languages, most of them did not know English. Particularly for these children, separating from their parents and getting used to their classroom environment can be tough as they don't understand what teachers are trying to communicate, and vice versa. In cases like these I have myself used pictures to communicate with these children, so when I learned about Social Stories I imagined this should work well with transitioning children. During my intervention, the teachers looked positive and discussed how this could be useful in their classrooms. I feel they understood the concept well as they started to bring out excellent examples in the discussion. In terms of what I got out of it, it was definitely a great opportunity to share my enthusiasm for Social Stories. It was also beneficial for me to understand what some of the main challenges of the teachers were in dealing with children who have difficulty transitioning. It was also a good chance to practice my presentation skills.”

### **Evidence of impact and ‘making change’**

The students who have participated in the module have reported that they really enjoy the experience and gain valuable skills from doing it. They leave the module with concrete examples of having designed and facilitated a small scale intervention, which is very beneficial for their own professional development and employability. In addition, the experience itself can improve students’ confidence and open doors into opportunities they may not have previously considered. Importantly, the outcomes of this module are not limited to the students themselves. The evaluation phase of their assessment also involves them taking lengths to show impact/benefit for the school or community setting where they carried out their intervention. This means critical reflection on the work they did, feedback from participants and key stakeholders (where appropriate) about its usefulness and change in practice/behaviour as a result, a consideration of lessons learned from the intervention, and how things might be improved/done differently. Therefore, we believe that the work students do on this module involves Changemaking for them in terms of their own skills and experience, but also Changemaking for the schools and community settings where they are based.



**Case Study 6****Positive Psychology**

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*Graham Mitchell*

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Positive Psychology has been well represented in psychology courses at the University of Northampton for some time. Two very popular existing positive psychology undergraduate modules are the second year 'Psychology of Well-Being' and the third year 'Motivation and Emotion' modules.

Up to the present there has not been a first year Positive Psychology module. This is to change in September 2014 with the introduction of new first year module entitled 'Positive Psychology'. This will be offered as a designated module for students enrolled on three single honours psychology courses: 'Psychology', 'Developmental & Educational Psychology' and 'Psychology & Counselling'.

In April 2013, the University of Northampton became the first UK Ashoka U Changemaker campus. It was clear from this early point that the changemaker concept resonated totally with the tenets of Positive Psychology. It therefore made good sense to meld the two; changemaker and positive psychology. Three agendas were to be satisfied with such an amalgam. First of all, it would mean that Psychology could contribute to the University's changemaker work and ethos. Secondly it would mean that for the first time Psychology students at Northampton could study positive psychology in all three undergraduate years. The popularity of the second and third year positive psychology modules provided some reassurance that 'Positive Psychology' would also be a successful first year module. The third reason for developing this new module was related to a pre-existing objective to strengthen the employability and progression opportunities for psychology students. Psychology graduates may progress to the psychology professional areas including clinical, educational, health, counselling, and occupational psychology. Graduates are also employed by a wide-range of employers seeking the communication, data-analysis and other generic skills developed during an undergraduate course in Psychology. Despite these excellent employment opportunities, psychology staff at Northampton wanted a vehicle to generally raise the employability profile in order to help to ensure that students were both aware of and prepared for graduate employment

Emerging then from this Positive Psychology initiative are three interconnecting strands, around which this new module will be organised. Each of the three strands is now described.

**Strand I – Positive Psychology**

Sometimes psychology is represented as a means to attend to mental dysfunction, a treatment for the psycho-pathologies and only of use if someone is mentally ill. Positive psychology addresses this misconception by placing an emphasis on the good that Psychology can do for normal people. It is therefore associated with well-being, thriving, achievement, human potential and optimal development. Catalogues of psychological illness characteristics and

symptoms are crucial in the treatment of mental illness, but so too are catalogues of mental health characteristics or personal strengths. One study of personal strengths has been entitled 'Values in Action' (Linley et al, 2007).

Positive psychology also focuses on cognitions such as optimism, hope and self-efficacy. Implicit views of self, the world and the future are examined, as are cognitive-behavioural strategies that can be employed by clinicians, teachers and coaches to improve achievement and well-being. Psychology is about change and development, regardless of the level of analysis undertaken. Brain plasticity at a neuronal level, together with positive group effects at societal level, represents the subject matter of positive psychology. The notion that individuals can improve and experience achievement and well-being is important for a wide range of practitioners in hospitals, schools and sports fields. The concept of changemaker fits well in the field of positive psychology.

### **Strand II – Employability**

Pegg et al (2012), highlight the importance of personal development planning in preparation for work after university. The new Positive Psychology module will provide an opportunity to embed employability in course design. From the moment a psychology student arrives at the University, the opportunity to explore and identify future work-related goals will be available. Early audit activities will serve to permit the recognition of personal strengths, but only as a platform for future development. The George Bernard Shaw quotation, "Life isn't about finding yourself. Life is about creating yourself." sits comfortably with the psychological concept of the growth mindset (Dweck, 2006). Whereas a fixed mindset sees every result or grade as an indication of a stable self, the growth mindset sees the same grades as incremental stages of a journey of improvement. Employability therefore must be much more than the delivery of information about labour market opportunities. It is a study of the psychology of self and the nature of growth and achievement. Hope, as a psychological construct, has two components. These are pathways and agency (Lopez et al, 2004), or as they are sometimes described, "waypower" and "willpower" (Snyder, 1994). These two components will be considered in the context of four thinking strategies (Lopez et al, 2004), which are:

- The conceptualisation of reasonable goals
- The production of multiple pathways to achievement
- The generation of sufficient motivation to travel the pathways
- The adoption of alternative pathways when existing routes are obstructed.

The capability to identify pathways to goals and the motivation to travel along these pathways are two relevant strengths in the personal management of career development.

Wrzesniewski et al (1997) have identified three orientations to work. They call these 'jobs', 'careers' and 'callings'. A more reflective part of this first year positive psychology work will visit the relationship between people and their work. This will provide a means of examining the sources of work satisfaction and happiness. Csikszentmihalyi's (2002) work on the personal strength:challenge ratio will be examined to investigate routes to work engagement and work satisfaction.

### **Strand III – Ashoka U and the changemaker concept**

An examination of strands I and II reveal the complementarity of positive psychology and employability with the Ashoka U changemaker concept. The Ashoka U foundation values and behaviours can be mapped onto the 'Values in Action' character strengths (Linley et al, 2007),

discussed above. Psychological variables such as mindset (Dweck, 2006) provide theoretical underpinnings for the changemaker process. Psychology undergraduates prepare to change others, but the ability to change self may well enhance and make more effective the changing of others. This positive psychology changemaker initiative brings together a set of changemaker objectives with the study of the psychological processes that make change possible in self and others.

The Positive Psychology module will be organised around five central headings:

- Strengths and virtues
- Resilience
- Normal and Needy – the nature of Positive Psychology
- How to... - the applications of positive Psychology
- The Future for Positive Psychology

Students will encounter a number of different topics from a Positive Psychology perspective. These topics include stress and resilience, health and happiness, work satisfaction, spirituality, relationships, and optimal performance and achievement. A critical approach will be used throughout the course and students will be introduced to the many controversial aspects of positive psychology.

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## Case Study 7

## GAMEchanger: a Game Jam for Social Innovation Education

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*Bethany Alden Rivers, Ale Armellini, Rob Howe, Martyn Simmons, Maurice Hendrix, Rachel Maxwell and Jim Harris*

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GAMEchanger is a 48-hour event in which staff and students at the University of Northampton come together to design games. This year, the Game Jam focuses on games that explore themes around social innovation and social impact.

The event is scheduled for a weekend in late November 2014. GAMEchanger is open to any member of staff and all students, with a maximum capacity of 100 attendees. See [www.gamechangeratnorthampton.org.uk](http://www.gamechangeratnorthampton.org.uk) for more information.



The aim of GAMEchanger is to engage students and staff in a creative, team-based activity that explores social innovation themes. Creating games—including video games, board games, card games, any type of game—gives teams a focused opportunity to develop team-based problem-solving skills. Although this event focuses on the process, rather than the product, we are hopeful that the event results in several usable learning games.



**Case Study 8****Photography and Changemaking**

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*Sri-Kartini Leet*

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Changemaking photography combines the ideas around social innovation and contemporary image-making to improve society through conscious visual intervention and community engagement. Within the BA (Hons) Photography programme in the School of the Arts, students are encouraged to engage in external activities and work experience opportunities as part of their Professional Development. In addition to undertaking commercial assignments (recent clients include John Lewis, Weetabix and Two Seasons - Billabong), both staff and students have a long-standing and extensive engagement in a series of community-based projects to create a positive impact on audiences and communities; the newly-designated status of Ashoka U and its values being embedded at UoN reinforces the ethos of the programme, providing a clarity of purpose and a global framework within which to develop.

Indeed, throughout the history of photography, particularly in the genre of documentary photography, the camera has been used as a social weapon towards reformist ends. In addition to the direct use of images to create social impact, photography students are encouraged to engage others through their practice; for example, through their work as STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) Champions and Ambassadors, empowering them to be creative professionals and changemakers by delivering interactive and participatory learning experiences and offering support to others, as well as continuing an ongoing connection to industry. Staff and students within Photography are constantly seeking new challenges and opportunities to make positive changes to the broader community.

**Strategies to embed Changemaker values into the programme**

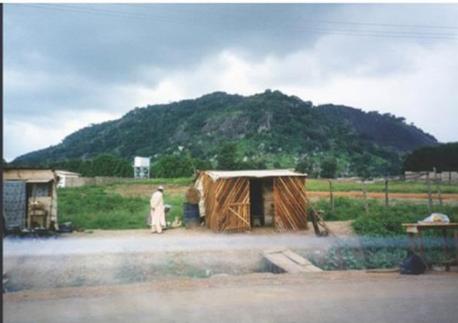
Reference to the work of Photography groups and organisations of shared purpose, specifically PhotoWings, instilling in students an awareness of the importance of the social impact of their photography.

Working in partnerships with community-focused organisations, such as The Prince's Trust and Basti Ram Charity to run photography programmes or photo-based projects for young people from diverse backgrounds.

Using photography to try and change society for the better through work with charities such as Autism Concern, Sustrans, and Macmillan Cancer Charity.

**Sri-Kartini Leet**

## I Dream of Home

Avenue Gallery  
University of Northampton  
14 April - 8 May 2014

Private View: 24th April, 5-8p.m.





In October 2013, the Subject Leader of Photography was awarded an international grant in photography for the *InSights* project, jointly sponsored by Ashoka U and California-based PhotoWings. PhotoWings is 'dedicated to utilising the power of photography to further deep thinking, communication, and action'. Students in Photography are introduced to their extensive online content, and their outreach programmes offer a range of educational applications and possibilities (see [www.photowings.org](http://www.photowings.org)); while Ashoka U, an initiative of Ashoka (the world's largest network of social entrepreneurs), builds on their vision for a world where "Everyone is a Changemaker", 'taking an institutional change approach to impact the education of millions of students'. Students on the BA programme were selected to assist in the project, which set out to engage almost a hundred individuals in the University community through a participatory photography exhibition developing notions of their 'past, present and future self', featured around ideas of 'home'. The goal of *InSights* is 'to demonstrate ways that photography and the ideas around it could act as conversation starters in cross-disciplinary, cross-cultural, and cross-generational contexts, engaging communities and catalysing social change'. (<http://photowings.org/ashokau-photowings-insights-grant-winners/>)



## Prince's Trust

The Photography programme also has The Prince's Trust as a long-term partner, and we deliver 'Get Started in Photography' workshops for the Trust to individuals aged between 16-25 who need the additional support and motivation to make a positive change in their lives. The objective of these workshops is to build skills, confidence and self-esteem in individuals who face socially-challenging situations (such as homelessness, mental health problems, being in or leaving care, or having been in trouble with the law). By using participatory photography and personal storytelling methods, we offer them a means through which they are given a voice to express themselves and create tools for communication to achieve positive personal and social change. Photography students contribute as facilitators and demonstrators alongside staff to engage participants in the workshops. The success of the programme also lies in the depth and length of support that the Prince's Trust offers these participants beyond the end of the workshop, and in the emphasis on supporting and developing them on an individual basis. The structure of the programme empowers others to learn, to develop and to thrive independently.

"We have been working with the Photography department at the University of Northampton for around 2 years now, delivering Get Started, a personal development programme. They are one of our most specialised and engaging delivery partners who go above and beyond to support the young people who participate in these programmes. Following the programme, a lot of the young people involved have been inspired and passionate about photography, and gone on to study or have a deeper interest in this subject. The impact the Photography department, and in particular the members of staff have on supporting these disadvantaged young people is tremendous. We pride ourselves to be working in Partnership with the University of Northampton."  
(Rebecca Bailey, Programme Executive, The Prince's Trust)



Photograph by Adam Billing

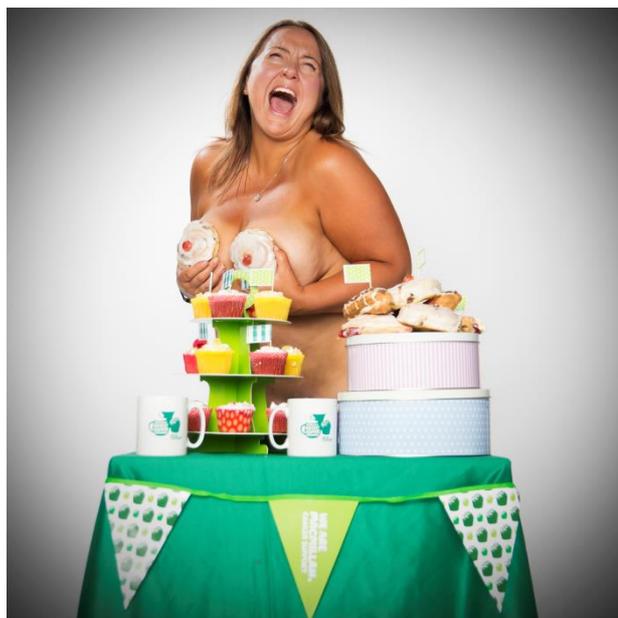
In the summer of 2011, 4 graduating photography students embarked on a journey to North Rajasthan in India with the Basti Ram charity (which supports under-privileged communities both in the UK and India) to teach photography, English and Maths to a village of orphans. Wayne Lennon comments: *"I was selected as part of a team to teach creative subjects to male youths living in India. Along with our teaching we photographed the trip, the participants and the progress of the youths throughout the course. The images helped the charity evidence the support the youths received, and their enjoyment of their newly discovered creative practice. It also created a bond that wouldn't be possible with words alone. This bond is what helps the charity raise funds and awareness for future projects."* (see <http://vimeo.com/29052781> for Wayne's video-diary). The success of their experience and indeed the wider publicity of their work through exhibitions has led to further links being made with other photographers who share a similar purpose, such as in projects for *Save the Children*, and connected these photographers into a broader network of socially-committed practitioners.



The work of students as documentary photographers is often utilized by groups and charities such as Autism Concern, and more recently, Sustrans (a sustainable transport charity) where students not only photograph the charity's activities, but also undergo training to conduct workshops to schools and colleges regarding sustainable transport and environmental issues. Matthew Cooper, a final year student, has been working with Sustrans for a year:

“Sustrans works to promote both the health and environmental benefits of alternative transport at both a national government and local level. The images I have produced for them are used in many ways, from posters and leaflets that are used to engage, inform and persuade the public to engage with their work; to reports for funders and partners and newsletters for schools, which help get new and existing schools engaged and excited about their work. My time with Sustrans has allowed me to use my work to make a positive change in attitude towards the innumerable benefits of sustainable transport. My work with the children of Northampton schools is the biggest reward I will take from this experience; seeing the children engage and respond to the positive messages Sustrans promote is incredibly rewarding.”

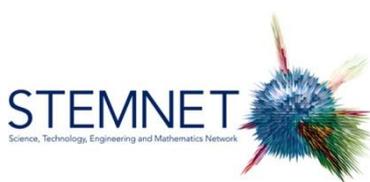
# WE ARE MACMILLAN. CANCER SUPPORT



In the summer of 2013, 3 photography students were commissioned to create an advertising/fundraising campaign for Macmillan Cancer Charity. Alisdair Tait, Sarah Kilpin and Rachel di Ciccio produced a studio-based series of images which developed from a 'Calendar

Girl' style of imagery in relation to the recognizable campaigns of Macmillan, such as their Coffee Mornings and organized sponsored walks. Alisdair comments:

“The Macmillan Cancer Support Trust is a charity that provides support for cancer sufferers and their families. Macmillan approached the University of Northampton to help create and photograph a charity calendar. I along with two of my peers volunteered our time and expertise to plan and photograph the ladies of the Trust for the calendar. In the work that we carried out, we provided an effective medium for them to raise funds for a nationally known charity. We gained invaluable experience in working with dedicated individuals of all ages, and returned to them a professional product, without charge, for a very worthy cause. We the photographers, by lending our skills, helped the charity raise financial support for better cancer care and create awareness within the wider community. In doing so, we have made a change for good. In a wider context, we have changed lives.”



STEM Ambassadors and Champions use their enthusiasm and commitment to encourage young people to enjoy STEM subjects. Photography occupies a unique position between the arts and sciences (through its optical, chemical and technological phenomena and processes), and Photography students are often encouraged by staff to enrol on the Champion training programme. As such, our Photography students have trained as STEM Ambassadors and are recognised both within the University and nationwide. By providing workshops and support to young people in schools and colleges, and at national events, they open the doors to a range of opportunities and possibilities which come from pursuing STEM subjects and careers. They not only inspire young people, they also support teachers in the classroom by explaining current applications of STEM in industry or research, and developing workshops which are embedded in the national curriculum. As such, our students contribute to their local community and also develop their own professional skills, experience and confidence. Emma Hagger, a graduating Photography student and STEM Ambassador, states: “As a STEM Ambassador, I have developed several different workshop activities, including teaching and supporting children of all ages, the different aspects of photography from digital to cameraless techniques such as photograms and cyanotypes. These activities engage the young in a fun and accessible way, and encourage participation and exploration of the possibilities of the medium.”

### **Impact**

Through these varied strategies, the Photography programme is able to effect positive change in a broad range of communities. Furthermore, there are clear benefits to all the students who participate in these initiatives, who emerge from these experiences having developed their sense of self-confidence, integrity, professional ethics, with a compassionate outlook and informed awareness of the wider society. It also helps them to define future career paths. These successes would not be possible without the sustained commitment of the students and staff on the programme. As Tracey Sherwood, Senior Lecturer in Photography states: ‘I feel privileged to be involved in photography across a number of platforms for change and understand how important it is to share skills and enthusiasm with others’.



**Case Study 9****Embedding Changemaker values within a post-graduate part-time module for teachers**


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*Cristina Devecchi, Jane Murray and David Preece*

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All students studying for a Masters' Degree in Education at the University of Northampton are required to carry out an independent piece of research and to present this in the form of a dissertation. Before they are able to do this, they have to undertake training in the use of research methods in education.

Research methods training is provided by the three 'core researchers' within the School of Education's Centre for Research and Education (CeSNER) – the authors of this vignette. Having taught this module multiple times per year as an evening course to students on a range of pathways – Early Years, Special Education, Mathematics, MA International – and from a range of professional settings – schools, nurseries, further education – we felt that there was room for development in a number of areas.

Students seemed to be simply attending from 5pm to 8pm to instrumentally 'learn the methods necessary' to get their MA, without developing a deeper understanding or connection with education research or the issues surrounding it (which – in these days of the consumerisation of education, Ofsted and Gove are myriad)

Due to their 'after-hours' pattern of attendance, students seemed to feel separate and dissociated from the rest of the academic community – undergraduate and post-graduate – within the School of Education

And we picked up strongly – despite the many posters, placards and screens highlighting its centrality to the University – that the Changemaker agenda meant little or nothing to these students. Many had no idea what it meant. These were the issues that we sought to address.

**What did we do?**

We made a number of changes both to the mode of delivery of the module and to its content.

- We 'flipped' the way that we taught the module, so that students were expected to access more of the PowerPoint presentations and carry out reading at home, before the lecture.
- We used the extra time that this gave us within the classroom sessions to develop discussion sessions and activities, bringing in speakers from

- within the School of Education
- from the wider academic community, including visiting international scholars
- from the Changemaker community within the University and beyond.
- We developed our use of the NILE site. We not only used it as a repository of material related to the course materials, but also added:
  - video links to relevant external material
  - links to the news stories relating to current academic debates
  - reports and articles relating to the wider social impact of education in the UK and beyond.
- We embedded Changemaker principles within the module, in order to enhance the students' understanding of how their knowledge, expertise and beliefs as teachers could and should impact on the day-to-day practice.
- Within the discussion sessions and activities we engaged with the students to reflect upon the ways in which their values are operationalised and translated into practice; and how – as teachers – they are already responsible for developing social values and social awareness within their students.
- Finally, we aligned educational practice with their chosen research topics and the Changemaker principles.

We embedded Changemaker principles within our teaching in a number of ways.

- We developed activities that addressed issues aligned to research and the Changemaker agenda
- We explicitly positioned and treated the students as active participants within the research and Changemaker communities. Activities and sessions that were developed with these specific intentions included
  - a colloquium on why schools and other educational settings might or might not be research active (and what the implications of this could be, for staff and students)
  - a discussion led by Tim Curtis and colleagues from an Ashoka-U University in the USA, exploring and unpicking the Changemaker concept and discussing what being a Changemaker could mean to them as teachers and to their students

- We explicitly discussed and identified, within the Module materials, how Changemaker principles could and should impact on educational research. This included sharing and discussing CeSNER's mission statement regarding the types of research that staff within it will undertake – which match Ashoka-U/ Changemaker principles.

### Outcomes

Feedback from students has identified that they have preferred the range of activities provided within the new session structure to the older, very compressed and lecture-heavy model. Moreover, their performance in the sessions and their level of engagement with the activities identifies they are still doing the work and reading required in their own time.

They have engaged with the Changemaker content and are much more aware of the University's aims and direction of travel - and of themselves as change-makers for their own pupils. However, we will see the full impact of our intervention only when the students will submit their dissertation in 2015.

Student evaluations and feedback identified that they enjoyed the increased time to undertake hands-on activities and the greater time available for discussion with lecturers and peers that came from flipping. It was also identified that they increasingly understood and related to Changemaker values. Feedback identified that the additional sessions had '*broadened my perspective and given me an understanding of the wider discussions*', and that students '*found these sessions enjoyable, stimulating and useful*'.

### Next steps

So where could we go from here? There are a number of ways in which we could go.

- We could be bolder and incorporate Changemaker principles more directly and explicitly into the module's learning outcomes and/or assessment criteria.
- We could broaden the range of invited speakers to include students who are currently working towards the Changemaker certificate
- We could make our students aware of the School changemaker Student Award developed by Jane Badger at UCEE
- We could encourage students to carry out research in their own schools which apply the Changemaker principles and ethos.
- We could talk more explicitly about research as Research and Enterprise, to support students to be change-makers in their own schools/settings and to introduce concepts of both intra- and entrepreneurship which will be needed in the newer, more competitive world which education is becoming.

Exactly how we will develop the Module further remains to be seen. But the Changemaker principles are now profoundly embedded within the content, delivery and ethos of our teaching.



**Case Study 10****Undergraduate Research Bursaries at Northampton (URB@N): An institution-wide initiative where students work in partnership with staff on learning and teaching projects**

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*Rachel Maunder*

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URB@N (Undergraduate Research Bursaries at Northampton) is a bursary scheme offering opportunities for current undergraduate students to participate in a pedagogic research project taking place at the university. Staff members from schools and services across the institution are encouraged to propose research questions which have the potential to benefit the department, school and/or institution, and which will ultimately impact positively on the student experience. Research projects are centred on learning and teaching and are explored through student voices. Under the guidance of the academic supervisor, students who are successfully selected for the scheme are involved in the design, data collection, analysis and dissemination of the research. On successful completion of the project, students receive a bursary payment of £500.

URB@N is based on the principle of staff and students working together in partnership to tackle educational issues, and make changes to learning and teaching practice for the benefit of the student experience. A key aspect of the URB@N scheme is students' involvement in gathering data – both as researchers and participants. The URB@N student researchers are expected to take an active role in data collection for the research projects they are working on, including designing and creating surveys, testing out educational resources, or interviewing other students and facilitating focus groups. Through active engagement with students in the research projects, staff can ensure that they are asking the right questions, and gain valuable and meaningful access to the student voice. The student researchers can act as a bridge between staff and the wider student population – addressing the power differential that can sometimes exist in staff-driven pedagogic research, thus improving the authenticity of the information obtained.

### **Examples of projects that have been undertaken**

Participation in the scheme has grown since it began in 2009, and over 70 pedagogic projects have taken place at the university since then. The breadth in topic and scope of projects has been diverse, reflecting varied approaches to learning and teaching across the institution, and disciplinary differences. Examples of projects have included:

- Research into the experience of transition to higher education, involving focus groups and interviews with first and second year students about their experiences of starting university.
- Students' knowledge of social enterprise, explored via a survey of final year students studying health and social care disciplines.
- Capturing the expectations and experience of distance learners, through online focus groups with distance learning students at the Business School.
- Research into the experience of students who are parents, involving a large-scale survey of student parents studying at Northampton, and some individual interviews.
- Investigating the pilot of the University Ambassador scheme, involving surveys and focus groups with the students working as ambassadors in local primary schools, and interviews with the Head teachers whose schools were participating in the scheme.
- Research into the widening participation of mature students, studied through individual interviews with a sample of mature students at the university.
- Student preferences for types of VLE content, which involved a mock-up of different VLE sites containing various types of content, and a survey on students' views and preferences.
- Research into the postgraduate work experience of international students, comprising focus groups and individual interviews with postgraduate Business School students from India, Pakistan, China and Vietnam.
- Understanding the student experience of online assignment submission and feedback, involving a survey from Health and Social Science students about the perceived advantages and disadvantages of submitting and receiving assessment feedback online.

### **Evidence of impact and 'making change'**

Feedback from staff and students who have been involved in URB@N has been very positive - with a range of benefits including employability and research skills, new staff-student relationships, and authentic access to the student voice. Findings from research projects have

also led to demonstrated changes to learning and teaching practice - thus 'making change' for the student experience.

Georgina Dimmock supervised an URB@N project in Library and Learning Services looking at the experience of student induction. She says:

“We often make claims on behalf of students without ever asking them. For years we'd run library inductions based on our assumptions of what we thought first year undergraduate students would need and want. We were always very afraid of patronising them and over the years we'd moved towards a very self-service style of induction. We decided we needed to ask the students what they needed and wanted, but we wanted the students to be open and honest. By getting student researchers to conduct the semi-structured interviews peer to peer, we felt the students provided more authentic responses. Rather than saying what they thought we wanted to hear, they said what they actually thought. We changed our library induction in the light of the findings. Our URB@N students then returned to do some follow up research and semi-structured interviews to assess the impact of the changes we'd made to the library induction. The URB@N student researchers gained something positive for their CV as well as the opportunity to meet University staff and get involved in real-world research that led to direct change.”

Natasha Bayes, a Research Assistant based in the Institute of Health and Wellbeing in the School of Health, supervised an URB@N project investigating undergraduate student opinions/preferences of a variety of assessment strategies utilised within their degree programme. She says:

“The results of the study highlight that students' preferences for assessment methods are wide ranging. Most students were satisfied with the balance of assessment methods within their course, however some students felt the balance was inappropriate and that there were certain types of assessment that they would prefer to engage in but were not incorporated within their course. The results of the project highlight the importance of finding and maintaining an appropriate balance between enabling students to experience a range of assessment styles while also allowing students to thrive from their own individual assessment strategy preferences and strengths. Understanding student opinions about these issues permits a deeper awareness of student satisfaction of the assessment strategies embedded within their course. As an early career researcher, I found the URB@N scheme particularly valuable to my professional development. The scheme enabled me to apply my research skills, to translate my own research ideas into a worthwhile project and to gain supervisory experience. It was particularly rewarding to have been given the opportunity to work with a student who had a genuine interest in research. The URB@N scheme enabled the student to gain some insight about what it is like to conduct research, to gain experience in working collaboratively, and to develop research skills that would benefit her throughout her studies and beyond”.

Rebecca Gilbert, a final year undergraduate student, worked on an URB@N project investigating the effectiveness of different delivery modes upon learning. The research aimed to compare and identify which delivery mode (such as live lectures, video lectures, audio lectures and handouts) is best for learning and also specifically what is best for the types of materials students learn (such as number knowledge, factual knowledge and conceptual information). She says:

“URB@N has been a great opportunity to experience professional research first hand. Being part of this project has allowed me to further my skills as a researcher within a team of highly experienced lecturers. We worked together to accomplish the tasks and this meant that important tasks/roles at particular times became my sole responsibility, and this responsibility has furthered my research skills, team work and organisation skills. I think our findings could have a huge impact on the way higher education, particularly The University of Northampton, progresses. The outcomes of this project will hopefully inform how students learn best, which possibly may not be how we expect. I know the new university campus may possibly have more technology involved in the teaching, and with this research, the type of specific technology could be guided to improve students overall experience and learning”.

Eva Kotterbova worked as an URB@N researcher on a project studying student engagement with mentoring. Reflecting on her experience of the scheme, she says:

“URB@N provided me with the opportunity to gain some new skills, such as research skills, poster design and networking with people from my area of interest. The project that I got involved in was directly connected to the student experience of university life, and will hopefully mean some important changes in order to improve their experience”.

Thus, bursary students are active in 'making change' for the experience of fellow students. Not only do they get a lot out of the experience themselves, but the work they are doing has direct impact on the learning experience of other students. Some of the findings from URB@N projects have been disseminated beyond the university, through peer-reviewed publications and presentations at external conferences. We have also shared our institutional experience of running the URB@N scheme at national and international events, and through written publication. The reach of URB@N therefore is contributing to changemaking in the higher education sector more broadly, as well as having an impact on learning and teaching practice at The University of Northampton.

(Photographs of the recent URB@N poster event held on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2014 can be accessed here for use in the publication as appropriate:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/3r22qjaq8suvwev/AAATgbfmmYRxOVBlIhIhDi9pua/Posters>

**Case Study 11****Changemaker values within the Foundation Degree Learning and Teaching and the development of a Teaching Assistant TeachMeet event**

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*Julie Jones and Jean Edwards*

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The Foundation Degree in Learning and Teaching is a programme within the Education Children and Young People subject area in the School of Education. The programme has the overarching aim of improving the life chances for children and young people through the provision of a high quality, innovative programme which enhances the professional development of support staff, primarily teaching assistants, working in schools and education settings.

The values embedded within the programme are aligned with the University Raising the Bar Strategic Plan and with the University's focus on social enterprise, through Ashoka U Changemaker Campus. This includes ensuring that the student experience and outcomes are central to developing socially aware individuals, with knowledge and skills which support their employability and have positive impact on children and young people. Feedback from students and their employers has demonstrated how the programme impacts upon students' work-based practice and their career paths and identified how their roles, supported by the professional development experienced through FDLT, impacts upon the educational experience of the children with whom they work.

Over the last fifteen years there has been a large increase in the number of teaching assistants employed in the UK. Full-time equivalent figures from DfES/DCSF/DfE statistics indicate 61,260 teaching assistants employed in publicly funded primary and secondary schools in England in 1997 compared with 232,300 in November 2012. Alongside this, demand for professional development and training for teaching assistants has experienced growth in response to the increased numbers and diversity of roles undertaken by teaching assistants. Appropriate training and professional development is needed at HE level in order to support teaching assistants as they play increasingly integral and significant roles within school teams.

Schools' workforce remodelling placed emphasis on schools optimising deployment and management of teaching assistants to raise pupil achievement and identified the need to provide teaching assistants with appropriate professional development and career pathways. It also stressed a flexible approach towards deployment of teaching assistants and encouraged the development of Foundation Degrees for teaching assistants enabling them to enhance their work-based skills by underpinning these with knowledge and understanding of theory and educational issues. (National Remodelling Team 2006).

The Foundation Degree Framework (2008) established Foundation Degrees within the Integrated Qualifications Framework (IQF) and endorsed their importance in providing schools with well-qualified FD graduates on flexible career paths. This also identified a foundation degree as a starting point for a route to Qualified Teacher Status (QTS).

The University Strategic Plan; Raising the Bar and Changemaker Plus have informed us of how to grow in directions that have raised standards and provided new opportunities for students. For example, part of Raising the Bar and Changemaker Plus is to work with others in partnership and through networks and this strong principle has led to the Foundation Degree Learning and Teaching programme managing high quality engagement with employers and other partners.

However, we have also identified some difficulties to be overcome in reaching the school support staff who might benefit from the programme:

Budgetary constraints within schools limit their employment of teaching assistants and their ability to commit to supporting their professional development

The reduced role of Local Authorities and altered relationships with regard to networking amongst support staff training providers

Potential difficulty in communicating with and making links with schools associated with changes in schools' landscape, with increased numbers of academies and free schools

This led to the consideration of an additional means of developing outreach to schools and school support staff via the provision of a Teaching Assistant TeachMeet event.

### **What did we do?**

TeachMeet events, where teachers get together to share ideas and good practice with other teachers, are well established. The events are hosted by a group of teachers in a school who then circulate their event details, mainly via Facebook and Twitter. This makes the event very open to anyone who is interested in attending and the event is based on some of the attendees offering micro-presentations of seven minutes or nano-presentation of two minutes. The key requirement of a presentation is that it is a means of sharing real and practical experience of teaching and learning.

We used these principles to set up and host the first ever TeachMeet for teaching assistants (TAs) at the University of Northampton's School of Education on 22 May 2014. Following in the footsteps of the successful national TeachMeet concept, the aim was to use the ethos and structure to allow TAs to share ideas, resources and enthusiasm for supporting learning.



The event also involved a range of companies and organisations who support learning and teaching, such as Toshiba, Ecokids, Twinkl, Thinking Child, SEN Magazine, Crick Software,

Teaching Assistant Focus and Springboard Stories. Some of these companies provided displays of their work and presentations at the event.

There were 48 people in attendance, including TAs and Higher Level Teaching Assistants (HLTAs) from local schools and schools from surrounding counties. The event also included students studying the Foundation Degree in Learning and Teaching and applicants who will be joining the programme in September.

Speakers included:

Sue Dixon, from Thinking Child, who shared ideas based on 'what can we do when children have switched off to literacy'

Junior and Edwina from The Fix Up team who shared ideas about self-belief and motivation of children and young people.

Greg Yarnall from Beanstalk Reads talked about volunteer reading in schools and the charity 'Born to Read'.

Kevin Hewitson from Advocating Creativity Ltd. discussed how children need to overcome challenges and how we can offer motivating approaches to numeracy which are sensitive to learning intelligences and the use of multisensory approaches.

Joy Judge, who has set up the online forum TA Focus discussed the potential of TAs and their opportunity to develop a voice which can influence policy.

Two members of staff from the University's School of Education also gave talks; Dr Estelle Tarry shared her research about teaching assistants in an international context and her development of videos of international TA's practice. Jean Edwards gave a presentation about how TAs can use Twitter to make contacts and share ideas.

Former FDLT student, Dawn Parker, shared a presentation about 'Smart Through Art' and the experience of her pupils from a special school taking part in European exchanges based on art.

There were also presentations from current FDLT students on the following:

- The use of Cued Articulation providing focussed support for individual children
- Everyone can have fun with geography – offering children from SEN provision with a fascinating school journey
- QR Codes in learning and teaching – offering children and parents access to communication via QR codes in the school newsletter and website
- Using digital media and green screen technology to bring children's literacy to life – presentation on training received and the application of this to creating film with children in school, using ipad Apps e.g. Path on a Visual Poet
- Inspiring children's interest in plant life through a school project for children and taking them to the Chelsea Flower Show

Video clips of the event are available at:

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC0QIDSQMbPXTzVw\\_HBctSAw](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC0QIDSQMbPXTzVw_HBctSAw)

Jean Edwards, Senior Lecturer at the University of Northampton, commented:

"This was a very successful event and we are proud to have hosted the first ever TeachMeet for Teaching Assistants. We were also supported by our own students currently on the Foundation Degree for Learning and Teaching who took the brave step of volunteering to share their practice at the event."

James Underwood, Subject Leader for Teacher Continuing Professional Development in the School of Education compered the event and commented that

"These presenters had come along after a day of being teaching assistants and were immersed in the activity of supporting the learning and well-being of individuals and groups of children."

### **Outcomes**

At the end of the evening we evaluated the event via the Twitter Feed used at the event, by asking two questions – 'What did you learn?' and 'What would you like to do next?'

We got useful feedback and will build on the enthusiasm and positive reaction to this event in our development of similar events.

Twitter Feed comments encapsulated how the event was a platform for TAs to share good practice. The comments really indicate how inspirational the participants felt the event to be. Comments show how enthusiastic the participants were to promote ideas which would really benefit the learning and well-being of children and young people, not just in their own school community but in the wider community created by the TA TeachMeet event. Alongside this, the comments show how the event provided the participants with the opportunity to build their IT and other practical skills and the comments indicate that the event supported participants in further developing their own sense of professionalism.

A range of comments from the Twitter feed:

- Wow, really impressed with all the speakers. Enjoyed meeting so many inspirational people
- Great speakers with some interesting ideas and useful apps and websites to use at school
- Great ideas and some really useful websites
- Good apps, for example how to use Padlet
- iPad ideas such as demonstrated in the presentation 'path on a visual poet'
- A formative event and great useful sites
- An amazing range of resources available to help TAs in their role in school
- There is a lot of passion out there
- A great evening. I am looking forward to the next one.

- Fantastic opportunity to learn more and ideas – thank you. Let's hope for more sessions.
- So many ways to inspire children
- Really useful. Inspiring
- Lots of fantastic and useful ideas that we can't wait to try out back at schools.
- A new multiplication strategy
- I have learnt and signed onto Twitter

**Next steps**

The event reinforced our awareness of how the Foundation Degree in Learning and Teaching is committed to delivering life changing opportunities and encouraging students to be enterprising in developing and sharing their practice. The range of presentations offered by FDLT students, demonstrated how they each have very specific roles in schools which impact on outcomes for children. It showed how inspired the students are by the positive support of their employers, their motivation to make a real impact on the lives of the children and young people they work with and the opportunity they have to explore the principles of teaching and learning further within the FDLT programme. The inclusion of presentations from a diverse range of speakers beyond FDLT was a catalyst to further motivate and inspire this.

There are opportunities for the School of Education to develop similar events and Continuing Professional Development for teaching assistants. The on-going developments and improvements to methods of communication via the University website and via social media will support this.



## Case Study 12

# Changemaker Plus Enterprise Bootcamp

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*Gill Gourlay*

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Having successfully applied for the Innovation Fund Northampton Business School Senior Lecturer Gill Gourlay and her team were able to run the first Changemaker Enterprise Bootcamp in July 2014.

Sixth Form students from several schools throughout Northamptonshire took part, including sixth form students from Sir Christopher Hatton Academy in Wellingborough, Malcolm Arnold Academy in Northampton and Lodge Park Academy in Corby. The three-day intensive course was very effective in introducing the concept of Social Enterprise and encouraging the young people involved to consider effective solutions to a range of social problems.

The five mixed teams comprised of students from each school, alongside a recent Business Entrepreneurship graduate who acted as team leader. The teams were challenged to develop a social enterprise idea, research it and present it to a panel in a 'Dragons' Den' style event.



During the three-day course, the trainee entrepreneurs spent some time at Goodwill Solutions, the UK's leading logistics and warehousing social enterprise that works with ex-offenders, homeless people and vulnerable youths across Northamptonshire, and Adrenaline Alley Skate Park, a safe area where young people in Northamptonshire can participate in urban activities. They also had the opportunity to work with local business mentors and discuss their ideas with many different contributors.

The Bootcamp culminated in presentations to a panel of judges where each team presented and valiantly defended their idea to the 'Dragons', fellow students and guests.

The 'Dragons' consisted of Graham Jackson, Managing Director at A Bell & Company, Ayodeji Ogunbuyide, Managing Director at Shine Development, David Brede, SHEQ Services, Dr Liying Meng, Senior Lecturer in Business Entrepreneurship at the University of Northampton and

Simon Longhurst, Executive Education Development Manager at the University of Northampton.

The winning team came up with the idea of a new venture called '1 in 10 Coffee House', which provides a back-to-work nurturing programme, social skills development and confidence for people suffering from depression. The name of the business refers to the number of people who suffer with mental health problems.



The prize for the winning team was a half-day at Adventureways in Moulton for team building fun and activities which is another Social Enterprise supported by the University.

Gill Gourlay who designed and led the Bootcamp commented:

“The work and commitment shown by these young people in developing business ideas with a social focus has been impressive. None had heard of the term social enterprise prior to the Bootcamp but have all left with a strong interest in the concept and in addition many are actively considering coming to the University of Northampton to study.”

There are plans to build on this activity and to offer the Bootcamp concept to a wider audience both within UoN and with partner institutions. This intensive face to face activity encouraged a wealth of discussion and debate and provided an excellent way of introducing the Changemaker principles and values. The Business School graduates received leadership training prior to the bootcamp from UCEE and gained great confidence from the experience. All 5 teams performed exceptionally well; the graduates were able to bring a great deal of their own understanding and expertise from the Business Entrepreneurship course to contribute to the effectiveness of the social enterprise proposals developed.





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