

Co-designing an award for students as co-creators of impactful learning experiences at university

Dr Lia Blaj-Ward (NTU) &

Dr Helen Bowstead (University of Plymouth)



Nottingham Trent
University



UNIVERSITY OF
PLYMOUTH

Background

- We both value the contribution that students make to the creation of impactful learning at university – for their peers but also for colleagues who work in a university*
- Lia – introduced TILT Student-Staff Co-Creation funding scheme at NTU; supported the launch of the Students as Teaching Observers scheme; introduced several BALEAP awards; critical friend for SEDA Student Partnership Impact Award
- Helen – co-founded the Hello Project and Writing Café at UoP; secured UKCISA funding to provide [international] students with opportunities to showcase their experiences; contributed a case study to the Advance HE compendium of Student-led Peer Learning and Support.
- Are student contributions celebrated enough (specifically but not only ‘international’ student contributions) – contributions to learning, not just economic value?

Today...

- We are co-designing the blueprint for an award for students as co-creators of impactful learning experiences at university
- We are taking the blueprint back to our institutions and inviting you to use this – with any relevant changes – in your institutional contexts
- Your input into the co-design will be formally acknowledged in the blueprint and follow-on case studies (if you are happy for your name to be included).
- Session format: questions to consider + key words to reflect on (10 mins), three components of the blueprint (25 mins), group reflection (10 mins).

Questions for all of us to consider

- Existing good practice: SEDA SPIA is a sector-wide award with growing international reach – how is the student contribution acknowledged and celebrated within my university?
- Sector benchmarking vs celebration in specific institutional contexts – what would an institution-specific award look like?
- SEDA ‘Students are being given the opportunities and agency to support and lead educational change.’ (To what extent is this happening within my institution?)
- Today – conceptual work, using the SEDA SPIA example, develop a blueprint for an award.

Key words to unpack

- LEARNING – within the curriculum, or in co- or extra-curricular spaces? As part of a formal institutional framework (e.g., course representative, peer mentor scheme, students as partners scheme)
- IMPACTFUL – all learning is impactful to a certain extent, but what should count towards an award?
- STUDENT/S – individual and teams (SEDA ‘This award is open to graduates reflecting retrospectively on their engagement too, limited up until 12 months post-graduation.’)
- ‘INTERNATIONAL’ – applicants, or students who experience the impact?

Component 1: Draft rationale for the award

Why is the institution offering the award?

Should funding accompany the award?

Should there be an expectation that a (longer) case study is published?

Why should students apply?

- recognition for the impact vs recognition for the individual
- increase visibility of good practice
- evidence education gain at individual level
- learning from the application process

Component 2: Draft application requirements

SEDA SPIA (individual / team)

- Context statement of student partnership activity. Explain your role and the partnership setting/activity. (max.150 words)
- Statement. Give evidence of leadership (and team collaboration) in the context of student partnership; and demonstrate the impact you / the team has had in professional and/or educational development. (max. 600 words individual, max. 750 words team)
- Referee's supporting statement: from an appropriate staff member at the institution. (max.100 words)

Include requirement to reflect on learning from the experience (impact on student's own development)?

Student applicants or students nominated by a staff member?

Component 3: Draft criteria and guidelines

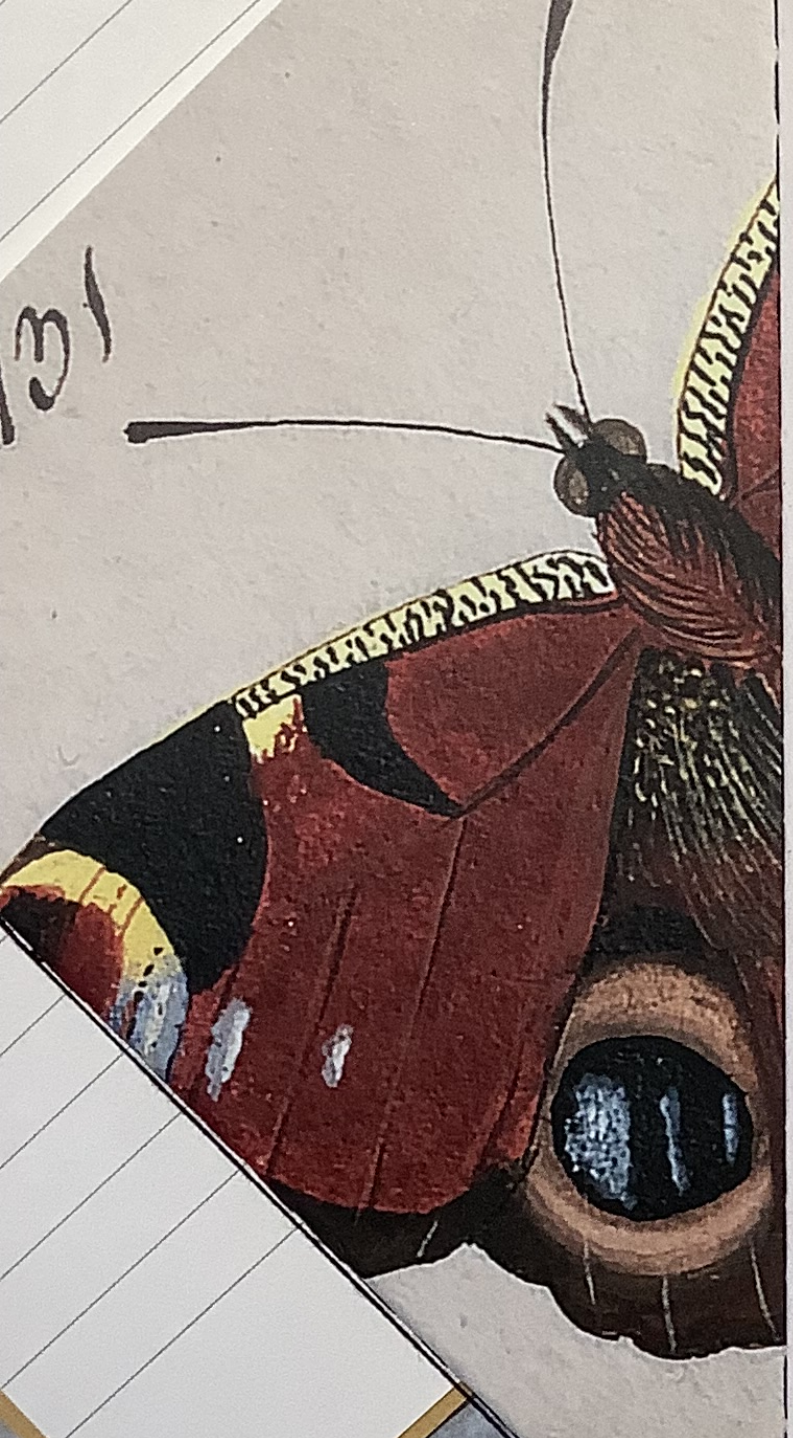
BAS Impactful Collaboration Award 2023 & 2024 (1000-word case study)

- The extent to which the collaborative project is deemed to enhance students' success at university and beyond graduation in the context in which it is delivered. Impact can be at any level (applications that focus on support for an individual student will be accepted if potential to scale up the initiative exists).
- The extent to which the project has generated useful learning that paves the way for future collaboration.
- Plans to ensure longer term value and impact.

Component 3 continued

BALEAP Collaborative Practice 2019 (max. two sides of an A4)

- Brief, clear step-by-step summary of what was provided.
- Rationale built on clearly identified and articulated need, acknowledging sector-wide trends and specific local institutional context. Range of data used to justify provision.
- Impact on students: the application shows depth and relevance of learning (and what students were able to achieve as a result of engaging with the provision) rather than simply indicating student satisfaction level. Supported by a range of evidence.
- The main learning points for the team that designed and delivered the experience are clearly articulated and show the provision has been thoroughly evaluated and will lead to further good practice and sustained impact within its institutional context. Consideration included of how others could benefit from the case study.



Your reflections and questions

-

Some writing which underpinned our thinking

- Blaj-Ward, L. (2022). Academic Literacies Provision for International Students: Evaluating Impact and Quality. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Blaj-Ward, L. (2022). Student engagement: Reflections on the 2022 RAISE conference. Educational Developments 23.4 pp. 21-23, <https://www.seda.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Educational-Developments-23.4.pdf>.
- Blaj-Ward, L., and Perrin, S. (2025, forthcoming). A thinking (and writing) partnership in the digital space about creative, impactful ways to frame qualitative data insights in V. Aiken and L. Norton (Eds), Writing Partnerships in Higher Education: A Guide for Academics and HE Professionals. Routledge.

What next



What will you take back to your institution from today's workshop?

Please share with us your email address if you are happy to receive a copy of the blueprint and updates from us, and be acknowledged as co-designer.

We would love to hear from you:

Lia.Blaiz-Ward@ntu.ac.uk

Helen.Bowstead@plymouth.ac.uk