

FEASST@8



Embarking on a PhD should be a journey lasting a lifetime of discovery

A job would be nice too!



Life Beyond a PhD: Working with PhD students as co-researchers to re-imagine their employability skills

Cristina Devecchi

University of Northampton

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Preamble

UK universities are under increasing accountability pressures to ensure that their students are ready for employment. Cast within the mantra of 'value for money', this discourse is mainly framed within a utilitarian modernist view of human capital as the cumulative aggregation of discrete skills.

A proliferation of petrifying and slippery skills

- Core skills,
- Researcher skills,
- Transferable skills
- Soft skills
- Hard skills
- Skills for life ...

The skill discourse presupposes a common agreement on what skills are needed now and in the future (Bridges, 1993). Such a managerialist and reductivist discourse (Craswell, 2007) erases the complexity of addressing the interplay between skills, attitudes, competencies but also motivation and personal development, and the economic and geopolitical forces which shape the available opportunities.





Scylla, Charybdis and the treacherous waters of employability

The nature and purpose of a PhD is caught between the Scylla of Humboldtian memory and the Charybdis of transferability while navigating the uncharted waters of employability outside the 'safe' harbour of academia.

Embedding Employability: interconnected challenges



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Solution @UoN

Co-learning by doing

A step at the time: involving students as co-researchers, designers, leaders and influencers

PGR community

In June 2018 the SuCCEED@8 students presented a revised strategy to the Vice Chancellor stressing the need to sustain the work done so far, the need to build an inclusive PGR community, and the enhancing the visibility of students' research, contribution and innovation.



TECH4All etc.

Involving PGR students in learning by doing broadens its reach. Students will now be involved as researchers in 3 ILT funded projects (TECH4All, COAD, and one on ethics), they are employed as administrators, associate lecturers, and widening participation initiatives

UoN Research Conference

Digital and project management skills together with a broader understanding of University's strategy and initiatives help the students on SuCCEED@8 to support academics to organise the 1st UoN research conference disseminating the research done across all 4 Faculties, Institutes and other services



FEASST@8

Following pre-existing opportunities for students to contribute to research environment, FEASST@8 gave students the opportunity to learn how to design programmes and lectures to gain valuable skills and reach distant and off-campus students

FE&H Faculty conference

FEASST@8 researchers and students from the newly established Faculty of Education and Humanities put their newly learned skills (digital, project management, communication) into practice and organised the first Faculty PhD student led research conference

SuCCEED@8

PhD students from FE&H present their vision for a PGR community to the Vice Chancellor and a number of them co-write the SuCCEED@8 proposal for the Enhancing Learning and Teaching internal funding grant sponsored by the Institute of Learning and Teaching

FEASST@8

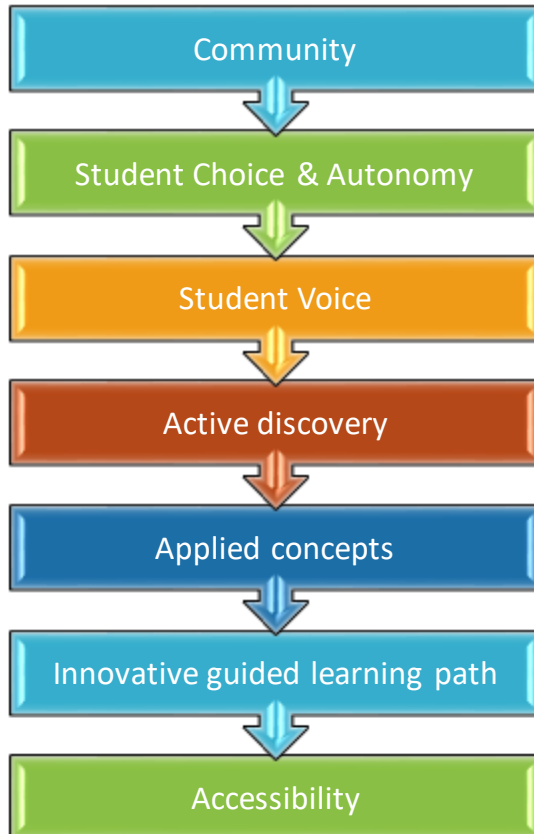




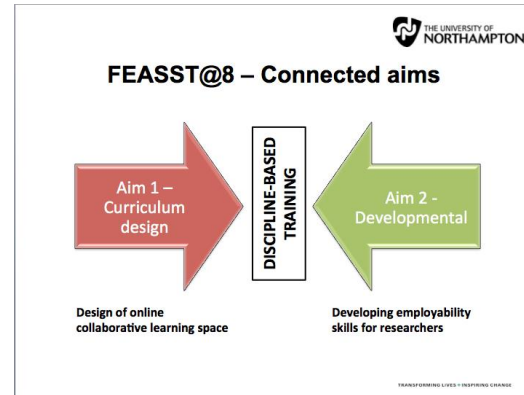
@8 at a Glance



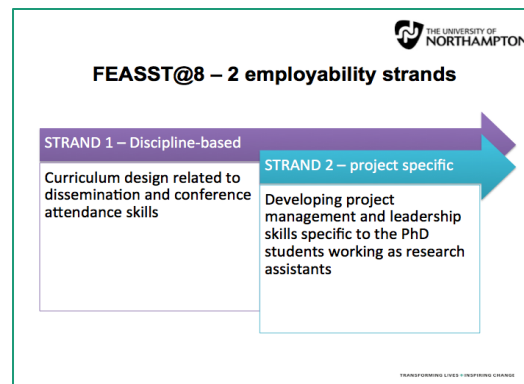
Core values



Aims



Strands

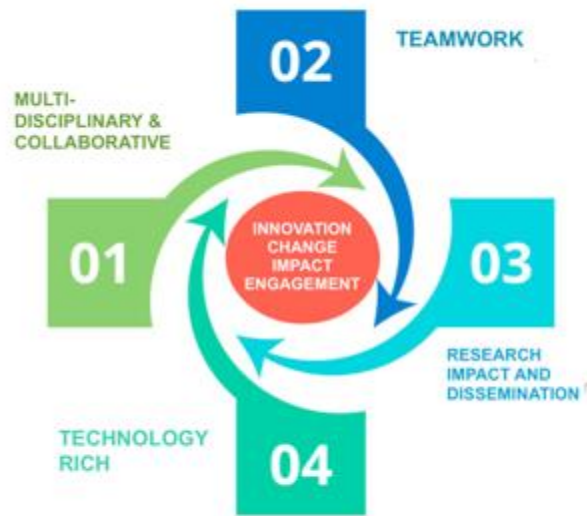


Project management

Workpackage
WP 1: Project management (Leader: Cristina Devecchi)
WP 2: Pedagogical development – Review (Leader: Yu Zhao)
WP 3 Pedagogical development – Training and Design (Leader: Remi Odunsi)
WP 4 - Pedagogical development - Delivery (Team)
WP 5 Technical development – (Leader: Ratika Velu)
WP 6 Evaluation (Leaders: Chau My Tran & Cristina Devecchi)



1st FE&H PhD Conference

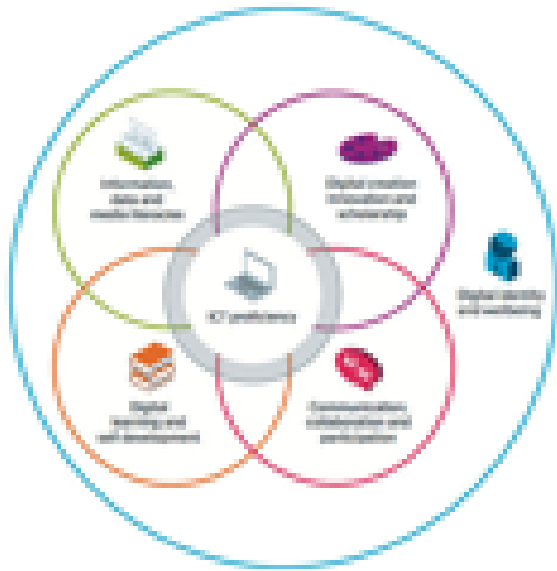


1st FE&H PhD
Annual Conference



Less than 6 months to build a team, organise a conference, build a website, market the conference, collect and review the abstracts, manage two heavy days of presentations: supportive, risk-taking and future looking

A combination of skills



JISC Digital capabilities

ChANGE Graduate Attributes



FEASST@8 WATERSIDE-READY PhD COMMUNITY



What did we learn and what is the impact?

What we have learnt

- To work together
- To think outside the box
- To solve problems
- To network
- To deliver
- To embrace change
- To aspire
- To imagine a different future

What is the impact?

- Intrapreneurial mind-set
- Reaching out – networking
- Increased confidence
- Closer ties with student reps
- Digital skills confidence
- Organising future PhD students' led events

Recommendations

1

Raise awareness and increase uptake of FEASST@8 within Faculty and University to give more students the opportunity to engage with online learning and developing their researcher and teaching skills

2

Involve and seek the cooperation and support of supervisors, research managers, and University Senior Leadership Team

3

Embed FEASST@8 as part of annual induction, part of the discipline-based development provision, and part of the Annual Review for PhD students

Final considerations

There is no single recipe to equip students with they they might need
It is our responsibility to create opportunities for learning skills, competences and develop attributes and attitudes
We should do this:

Through 'learning by doing' using a collaborative and inclusive approach

Work with students as colleagues

Harness their innovation and commitment, motivations and inspiration

Embed this approach within the organisation structure and culture



Thank you!

Any Questions?



References

- Bridges, D. (1993) Transferable skills: A philosophical perspective, *Studies in Higher Education*, 18:1, 43-51
- Craswell, G. (2007) Deconstructing the skills training debate in doctoral education, *Higher Education Research & Development*, 26:4, 377-391
- Disney, T. et al (2013) Doctoral researcher skill development: Learning through doing. *Planet*, 27, 2, 14-20
- VITAE (2011) Researcher Development Framework. London: VITAE