

**E N G A G E D  
L E A R N I N G  
S H E F F I E L D**

**Co-production and  
community in education at  
the University of Sheffield**



The  
University  
Of  
Sheffield.

**Foreword by Graham Duncan,  
St Mary's Church and Conference  
Centre, and The Art House, Sheffield.**


It is pretty self-evident that we need to find new ways of thinking, new ways of creating knowledge and new ways of doing things. The challenges of disenfranchised young people, of a disillusioned political process, of migration, climate change and of caring for our elders cannot be solved by our current way of thinking. This is why this project is so exciting: Universities occupy a unique civil space from which to contribute to this endeavour.

The ideas and vision behind this project are potentially transformative, both of students and communities. In them is the unique possibility of people encountering each other in a new space where rich learning can take place, and new understanding and knowledge created. For students, this can be a formative experience of growth and challenge. For people working and living in communities, it can be like water in the desert, helping to affirm and resource the courageous and uncertain task of working at the point where things often break down.

At their best, academics, community workers, people of faith, have the courage to try to make something out of nothing: to step into the unknown in the attempt to create new understandings and new insights. I have been personally and professionally nourished through my interactions with the academic community when it acts with the innovation and imagination described by Brendan Stone in his introduction, and demonstrated through the University's determination to move into and alongside the community.

The ideas in this publication are rich with potential, but also fragile and emergent. It is possible for them to be fatally reduced by an unreflective bureaucratic implementation which robs them of life and energy. It is possible that even the finishing of a publication could lead to a false sense of completion, rather than a hopeful sense of journeying.

But if engaged learning can be a new way of creating knowledge about the things which make life worthwhile and sustainable, then the ripples will spread and our humanity will be enriched.

The University of Sheffield is an institution with a strong ‘civic’ identity: we aspire to work with the communities, citizens and organisations of the region in mutually beneficial ways. This aspiration is rooted in our founding principles, which included as a first objective being a university “for the people” of Sheffield. Over the last few years, the University has taken a more focused approach to nurturing and developing this civic identity and purpose in many areas of organisational life, including in learning and teaching 

# Introduction to Engaged Learning



'Engaged learning and teaching' is defined by the University of Sheffield as "combining academic rigour and disciplinary knowledge with opportunities for students to learn with and from external partners, 'real-world' challenges, and experiences outside the University." It often has as its focus learning from and addressing issues of public concern. This publication presents a summary of established and new work in engaged learning and teaching at the University.

Engaged learning is important for various and diverse reasons which I will outline further below. Briefly, it has significant educational and epistemological value for students who encounter and learn from differing perspectives on the world, 'real-world' concerns and their innate complexity; provides opportunities to understand the importance of so-called 'cultural agility' (being able to engage with people from various cultural backgrounds and experiences with respect and intelligence); and requires negotiating the gaps and alignments between academic theory and the actual practices, ideas, and knowledge found in the world. Engaged learning is a tangible expression and outworking of the democratic principle that knowledge is not just found in universities or amongst academic 'experts' but that citizens, communities, and organisations also have expertise and knowledge. Moreover, many manifestations of engaged learning are tangible expressions of the ideal that education is an endeavour aimed not solely at increasing knowledge, but also about facilitating and guiding *collaborative action* designed to enhance the public good. More prosaically, but no less important, participating in engaged learning projects enhances students' personal and professional development, and their employability.



The aims of publishing this book, and of producing the accompanying short films (see [www.shef.ac.uk/als/current/engaged](http://www.shef.ac.uk/als/current/engaged)), include bringing together and consolidating our activity in this area, sharing what we do in an easily accessible way, inspiring academic staff to consider developing civically engaged learning projects, and encouraging further external partners to work with us. We also wish to begin a wider 'conversation' with other institutions in the UK and across the world which share a vision of learning and teaching in which, as part of their education, students have opportunities to work with, learn from, and contribute to civic society. Perhaps most importantly, this publication helps us to further define a 'Sheffield approach' to this work, an approach which is distinctive, and rooted in the particularities of our region and our history.



“Engaged learning and teaching is about recognising that learning from and with communities outside of our own enables a deeper more mutually enriching understanding to emerge. It’s about more than education, actually - it’s about the way we work together and develop as a society.”



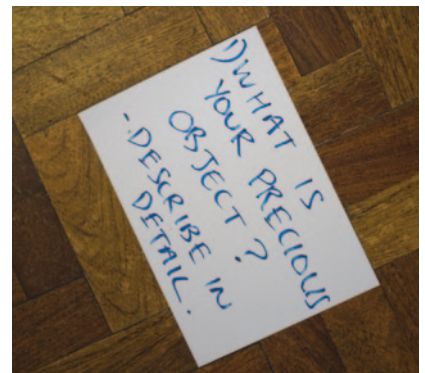
**“Doing anything that genuinely engages with others is intrinsically more complicated and demanding, but also more rewarding. A clear ethical stance is paramount with any engagement activity. Sustained engagement is a commitment not to be underestimated.”**



Given the increasing interest in engaged teaching, we have developed a set of Sheffield principles for best practice, drawing on the expertise of experienced academics working in engagement, to help staff understand the challenges and opportunities inherent in this kind of work, and to ensure that what we do and how we do it is ethical, truly collaborative, and fruitful. These principles include the following:

- Reciprocity. Community partners and the University should benefit from the engagement.
- Co-production. Community partners and University should work to co-develop initiatives wherever possible.
- Partner-led approaches in which initiatives respond to and emerge from community needs and aspirations are welcome.
- Sustainability. It's important to maintain (and avoid instrumentalising) relationships with community partners.
- Good and timely communication with partners is important, and should ideally include feedback about outcomes and the sharing of outputs.
- We need to appreciate impact on organisations. Activities involving external organisations should be carefully planned to avoid repetitious or numerous requests.

Particular ethical and practical challenges do indeed arise in engaged learning and teaching. Successful projects need to be developed in a 'dialogue' with the communities and organisations of the region in which a university is sited. Sometimes, that dialogue is begun by a community partner, for instance as with the Literacy Exchange project detailed here. Moreover, one cannot simply take a project which worked well elsewhere and transfer it wholesale from one location to another; one needs to understand and work with the specificities of place, communities, and aspiration. Perhaps most important of all, truly civically engaged work is not something which universities do to communities, nor even about 'doing good'. Rather, it is about co-producing projects in partnerships founded on mutual respect, and recognising that expertise is not just sited in educational institutions, but that local communities, organisations, and citizens also have great expertise and knowledge. Students (and staff) benefit from accessing that knowledge just as much as they do from more traditional modes of learning and research.



In addition, engaged learning and teaching helps us to address other learning and teaching priorities in interesting ways. There is considerable evidence, for instance, that through participating in engaged projects students acquire skills and experience which enhance their 'employability', and their personal and professional development. Most engaged projects require students to develop team working skills, to learn to be flexible, resilient, and responsive as projects evolve in unexpected ways, to develop cultural sensitivity, and to be able to assume leadership roles and manage their own learning independently. Further, engaged learning is usually authentically 'interdisciplinary' in nature (life, after all, does not happen within neat disciplinary boundaries). What is attractive about engaged learning and teaching projects is that they typically address these priorities 'obliquely'. That is to say, they tend to be driven by intellectually challenging questions and address issues of public concern, and often arise from or align with academics' research. They are, therefore, 'authentic' academic projects, in which, as a 'by-product' of participation, benefits for students include the priorities listed above. It's worth noting here that these ideas along with the principles articulated above have helped to inform the University's major curriculum change initiative, 'Achieve More' (see: <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/undergraduate/why/achieve-more>).

The case studies which follow, and the discussions we have had in the university over the last two years, enable us to sketch out a distinctive approach to engaged learning and teaching, and also point to the kind of practice we should continue to support and nurture. Many of the

case studies, for example, highlight questions of principle and ethics: a "clear ethical stance is paramount," states one contributor, while others highlight the importance of qualities such as "patience", "integrity", "humility", respect for diversity, and "equality in knowledge-production". Such qualities are important for both ethical and epistemological reasons: "Respecting diversity and promoting equality enriches the depth and legitimacy of knowledge." Practitioners often have "a strong desire to address inequalities" in their projects, and aspire to equip students "with skills and tools to tackle inequalities at all levels." That engaged learning facilitates the possibility of new *action* as well as new knowledge is reflected in one academic's reflection that engaged learning doesn't merely offer students "an outlook or perspective for analysing the world" but rather enables them "to gain the confidence and commitment to change it", with this distinction also rooted in the difference between *telling* students "how it is" and providing "the means to *experience* how it is".

The experiential aspect of engaged learning is important for several practitioners. One notes that "knowledge isn't just in libraries [...] Much knowledge is embodied; it comes from becoming aware of the way we move in and through the world or from asking others how they move in and through the world"; another describes her project as merging "academic discourses with authentic personal narratives"; while another speaks of "compassionate engagement with differences" and an "acknowledgment of different kinds of human experiences with democratic imagination [and] freedom of expression."



**“Working with people who are able to engage with a more fluid learning environment, are adaptable to change and unafraid of risk.”**

The value of engaged learning for students' academic and professional development is also described by several academics. For instance, it actively encourages students "to participate in unfamiliar activities and learn new skills", and affords the opportunity to "appreciate how they will use the skills learned over the course of their degree in the 'real world', and to understand the applications of their subject." One contributor notes that it affords "an important opportunity for students to gain expertise in real-life research"; while others speak of the value of looking "beyond the classroom and into the town or city they're studying in", and of encountering "different forms of knowledge presented from a variety of sources and perspectives".


The case studies also contain practical advice on what works in engaged projects. For instance, one academic notes the importance of self-reflexivity, and learning from experience as projects proceed. This highlights a difference to some other types of teaching – in 'live' partnerships, schedules and plans have to be continually adapted as new developments and challenges arise, and participants and leaders need to be flexible and responsive to change. Another notes that "patience, preparation and perseverance are key, as is clear and regular communication between stakeholders." The challenges of this kind of pedagogical approach are also described: "harder to manage, labour intensive, and involves more risk, not least in taking students, community partners and staff out of their comfort zones." However, the same contributor notes that "when it works the benefits of this risk and hard-work far outweigh the difficulties."

In conclusion, I'll quote from two of the contributions here. David Reid's project focuses on involving people with dementia more closely in dementia education. Drawing on the work of Stephen Post, David calls for staff and students to develop an "epistemology of humility", in which, "in the human sciences at least", people are not regarded as objects to be studied but are recognised as subjects with agency, who have valuable knowledge and insight, and are involved as equal partners in project work and development. Such an epistemology of humility directs us towards an understanding that "the boundaries between universities and the wider world are fragile, illusory or contrived", as Bob Johnston of Archaeology puts it, recognising that knowledge and expertise exists in multiple locations, not just in universities.

*The case studies which follow are divided into two sections: brief descriptions of longstanding projects, and longer pieces detailing new work developed and supported by the University's Engaged Curriculum initiative over the last year or so. It's important to note that this new work has drawn on and emerges from the excellent tradition of engaged learning and teaching in the University of Sheffield. This publication presents a sample of work, and is not a comprehensive listing.*

**“It is academic work with meaning and context. If done well, it has built-in satisfaction for students who can see the impact of their work very directly. It models a new kind of learning which is progressive, agile and suited to 21st century lives.”**

In this section you can find some brief details about established work in engaged learning at the University of Sheffield. For much more information about these projects please see our website at see [www.shef.ac.uk/als/current/engaged](http://www.shef.ac.uk/als/current/engaged).

The remarkably diverse and creative projects detailed in these pages range across a wide range of disciplines and have set the scene for the newer initiatives described in the rest of the publication. It is largely thanks to all those who have contributed to these projects that the University has been able to develop its profile in engaged learning 

# Established Projects



This is not a comprehensive list:  
please consult the website for full details.

### **Sustainable Communities, Department of Landscape**

Students on the Sustainable Communities module (and two other allied courses) work on 'live' projects, with a focus on planning, designing and managing landscapes for sustainable communities, with a particular emphasis on the social aspects of this. In the latest iteration of this work partners included Hillsborough College, the Livesey Street Project, National Grid, Sheffield Council, and the Friends of Wardsend Cemetery. The project aim was to improve the area along Livesey Street in order to bring new uses and vibrancy to this neglected area; balance the needs of stakeholders to develop imaginative yet realistic proposals that deliver social benefits; work with ecological principles to create a rich landscape for people and wildlife; use imaginative planting to deliver a coherent design with a strong aesthetic quality and which delivers environmental benefits.

### **The Miscarriages of Justice Review Centre (formally the Innocence Project), School of Law**

The Miscarriages of Justice Review Centre is student-led and centres upon the study and re-investigation of alleged wrongful criminal convictions. It is a highly impactful project which has attracted international recognition and acclaim. The project is innovative in giving students a unique first-hand experience and insight into this area of criminal justice, utilising a mentored teaching environment to maximize learning opportunities. The project is also now an assessed module.

### **FreeLaw, School of Law**

FreeLaw provides free legal advice to the public and to the University's staff and students. FreeLaw runs two open door drop-in sessions a week. It is staffed entirely by law students who, working within groups, interview the clients and take instructions before carrying out research and drafting letters of advice. Each student group has two group leaders who are responsible for the management of the cases. Two student managers have overall responsibility for the work of the FreeLaw students. All advice is checked by members of teaching staff or the legally qualified co-ordinator before it is given to the clients. FreeLaw provides a unique experience for students to develop their legal and other transferable skills. FreeLaw is also an assessed module.

[www.sheffield.ac.uk/law/about](http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/law/about)

“Engaged learning involves moving away from thinking about learning and teaching as a solely student-centred activity and re-imagining it as much more of a community-centred activity.”

### **ROCS: Residential Oral Health Care Training, School of Clinical Dentistry**

Dental hygiene and dental therapy students gain knowledge and practical experience of providing oral health information to health care workers by developing a training package for care staff in homes. This in turn highlights the need for good oral hygiene routines for the residents. The health care workers gain knowledge, which changes attitudes towards care of the mouth and increases the number of interventions undertaken.

### **Undergraduate Ambassadors Scheme, Department of Animal and Plant Sciences**

This module enables students to gain experience in the teaching of biology including the preparation of teaching materials and the planning and execution of a teaching programme. Students spend half a day per week for 10 weeks during the spring semester in a school or other educational institution helping to educate young people. They are responsible for formulating and delivering an educational project about an aspect of biology during their placement.

### **Undergraduate Ambassadors Scheme, School of Mathematics and Statistics**

This module provides an opportunity for students to gain first-hand experience of mathematics education through a mentoring scheme with mathematics teachers in local schools. Typically, each student works with one class for half a day every week for 11 weeks. The classes vary from key stage 2 to sixth form. Students are given a range of responsibilities from classroom assistant to the organisation and teaching of self-originated special projects.





“Engaged teaching and learning means that students get to appreciate how they will use the skills learned over the course of their degree in the ‘real world’, and to understand the applications of their subject.”

### **Music in the Community, Department of Music**

This module provides a theoretical and practical introduction to community music, giving students an awareness of how to apply their musical skills with diverse groups such as refugees, long-term patients, and children in community settings. The module considers the nature of teaching and learning in music, the benefits and challenges of musical participation, and the range of contexts in which music creates and defines communities. Students work in mentored groups to investigate and support community music-making in Sheffield and are guided in auditing their own skills and employability as community musicians.

### **Live Projects, School of Architecture**

The Live Projects are a pioneering educational initiative in which architecture students work in groups with a range of clients including local community groups, charities, health organisations and regional authorities. In some cases the projects involve actual building, in others design of urban masterplans, in others consultation exercises. In every case, the project is real, happening in real time with real people. The projects draw on the School’s exceptional research base as well as the commitment, vision and resources of highly talented students. The Live Projects set real constraints, responding to budget, brief and time. In each project there is regular contact with the client and a defined end result, normally a presentation, report, and sometimes physical building work. The projects place a large responsibility on the groups to deliver; as opposed to most student projects these are public and accountable. Now in its 12th year, the initiative is responsible for over 100 completed projects.

[www.liveprojects.org](http://www.liveprojects.org)

## Live Works, School of Architecture

Live Works is a new initiative which incorporates an Enterprise Teaching Centre and Social Enterprise. It has created a shop window for the School of Architecture in Sheffield City Centre where local people and organisations can learn about our civic engagement activities, and suggest and collaborate on Live Projects. Live Works is also a facility for community groups and organisations where they can access support with designing/re-designing: resources, buildings, places, spaces, neighbourhoods and towns. Live Works is a place that offers SSoA staff and students the opportunity to work with clients from the community at the interface of research, teaching and practice. Live Works embodies the spirit of Sheffield's City of Makers. It is a place for collective endeavour underpinned by innovation and creativity.



[www.live-works.org](http://www.live-works.org)

## MSc Science Communication, Faculty of Science

For this course, students have undertaken projects working with schools on practical science experiments and how this helps pupil learning; climate change and how to use positive narrative to explain it to younger people; and using cartoons to reduce the fear of children who have to undergo anaesthesia for surgical procedures. Other projects include: stand-up comedy as a vehicle for science communication; and one on how the gender of the presenter influences understanding of 'hard' and 'soft' science.



## **Technology Strategy and Business Planning, Department of Mechanical Engineering**

Students work in teams to find solutions to a real problem provided by a real customer. Typically the customer will be a member or members of the community: for instance, children with disabilities, or terminally ill people. The challenge is for the student teams to identify a technical solution to the customer problem which will make their lives easier or better. They then develop a business proposition from this. Students are supported by external contributors from a great range of disciplines including business angels, bankers, marketeers, business advisors, manufacturers, etc. At the end of the course, teams pitch their ideas to an invited audience and judges from a mixed background (technical, commercial and legal). Prizes are then awarded to the best presentations.

“Having an engaged curriculum is about helping students to look beyond the classroom and into the town or city they’re studying in, and to recognise that not everyone is living such a privileged life.”

## **Storying Sheffield & Hearing Community Stories, School of English**

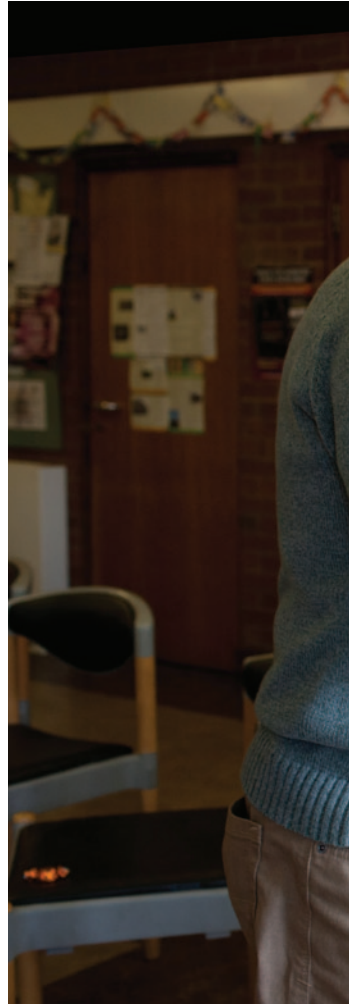
These courses seek to tell and learn from narratives of everyday life and lives, with a special focus on ‘untold’ stories – those which are marginalised, repressed, disregarded, ignored, or stigmatised. Students have worked with many different groups including people who are long-term users of mental health services, people with physical disabilities, older people, some who live with dementia, primary school students, new migrants to the UK, patients in secure hospitals, and others. Stories are showcased in a range of public forums, including exhibitions, events, publications, and film screenings. Two of the broad aims are: to open up opportunities and resources in Higher Education for more people; and for the University of Sheffield and its students to learn from the experience and knowledge of the people of the city and region.

[www.storyingsheffield.com](http://www.storyingsheffield.com)

## **Placement module, School of Education**

This course is taken by students on the Education, Culture, and Childhood degree programme. It requires students to spend a minimum of 60 hours working in an organisation of their choice that is connected to education or young people - for example, schools, council teams dedicated to family support, or third sector organisations. During this time, students carry out a project for the placement provider, bringing their academic skills to bear on a topic of agreed relevance.

There is a strong emphasis on collaboration and responsibility. Students are given direct experience of real-life working environments, and are expected to live up to the challenges of potentially difficult situations (for example, work with families and individuals experiencing multiple forms of social exclusion). The project they carry out is meaningful to them and the partner organisation; and they are supported by academic tutors in reflecting on their experiences.





### **Research Project: Applied Theatre, School of English**

Students participate in a staff-led research project exploring the history, theory and social uses of applied theatre methods and forms. They participate in the creative development, organisation and delivery of one or more applied theatre projects in, for example, local schools, museums and community contexts. Examples from previous years include: a storytelling and literacy project for 6 year old children at Firs Hill Primary school; and site specific performances for visitors at Weston Park Museum's galleries. The process of work is investigative, and students are expected to explore specific and current questions about applied theatre practices through their work.

### **The Global Engineering Challenge, Faculty of Engineering**

In this yearly week-long project, all first year students in the Engineering Faculty tackle real-world problems from a global perspective. Students are challenged to think about not only the technical issues in engineering developments, but also the social, ethical and environmental implications of their decisions. Working in teams, students devise solutions to real-life engineering problems faced by developing communities. Projects range from researching alternative fuel sources for a small community in India, to designing new water and sanitation systems. The project is based on the Engineers Without Borders Challenge – a national competition for engineering undergraduates.

[www.shef.ac.uk/civil/ug/global-engineering-challenge](http://www.shef.ac.uk/civil/ug/global-engineering-challenge)

**“This work often happens in challenging circumstances. This is precisely what stretches students and provides good reflective learning but it needs diligent planning and adequate resourcing.”**

### **Business Intelligence, Information School**

This module introduces students to the way in which business people use information and how external information is used to inform business strategy and create competitive advantage. Students are introduced to key types and sources of information and learn to synthesise information from a variety of sources to create a valuable business tool. The module works in partnership with University of Sheffield Enterprise to enable the students to work on real life business information problems. Local businesses act as clients for the students taking the module. Each business partner identifies an information need that the students can investigate and liaise with the module leader to ensure that the problem is of a suitable size and difficulty.



### **The Local Action Planning Project, Department of Urban Studies and Planning**

In this module students undertake a live planning project in which a local area action plan is developed from the ground up within a Sheffield neighbourhood. The module involves understanding a neighbourhood within the city, identifying its diverse community interests, and working with community stakeholders to develop a vision and problem-solution oriented plan for the area. Students work in groups to analyse in depth the planning issues within an area of interest and then, together, they present a broad vision for change. The module is currently run in the St. Vincents/Shalesmoor neighbourhood of Sheffield and is at quite an early stage in its engagement with this area. In previous years, however, it has been focused on working with community groups in the neighbourhoods of Attercliffe, Burngreave and Sharrow.

### **Theatre in Social Contexts, School of English**

This course introduces students to important aspects of the history, theory and practice of models of social theatre. Social Theatre is a term which embraces a wide range of forms, from community celebration to theatres of liberation; from reminiscence theatres to campaign interventions; from prison theatre to theatre of the oppressed. The most dynamic work occurs outside the mainstream, working with marginalised communities, and responding to pressing political, social and communal issues. The module explores this through a blend of practice, theory and historical study. It is a practice-led course, and students participate in the negotiation, development, organisation and delivery of one or more social theatre programmes in collaboration with a variety of external partners.

## **Archaeology Matters, Department of Archaeology**

This module enables students to develop their research skills and to learn how communities value and interact with heritage by participating in a 'live' research project investigating the historical development of Sheffield's landscape, and specifically how industrialisation has shaped the landscape today. Students work in small teams with external organisations (a community group or social enterprise, for instance) on tightly defined 'micro-projects' at different locations within the region. Teams use a variety of archaeological techniques to progress the research, including archival study, buildings recording, topographic and geophysical survey, historic landscape analysis and oral history. Students produce technical research reports and an archive, and a public exhibition is held at the conclusion of the project.

## **MA work placement, School of English**

MA students in the School of English have the opportunity to integrate a work placement into their degree programme. At the heart of these modules is a 100-hour placement with an external organisation. Students work on projects across a variety of sectors, e.g. heritage and tourism, creative industries, archives, publishing, education and literacy, charities, and health and well-being. Recent projects have included: research for the Sheffield Arts and Well-Being Network; social media researcher for Sheffield Archives; project assistant at Grimm & Co., a children's literary charity; charity event organisation with the Women's Institute.



**“Respecting diversity and promoting equality enriches the depth and legitimacy of knowledge.”**





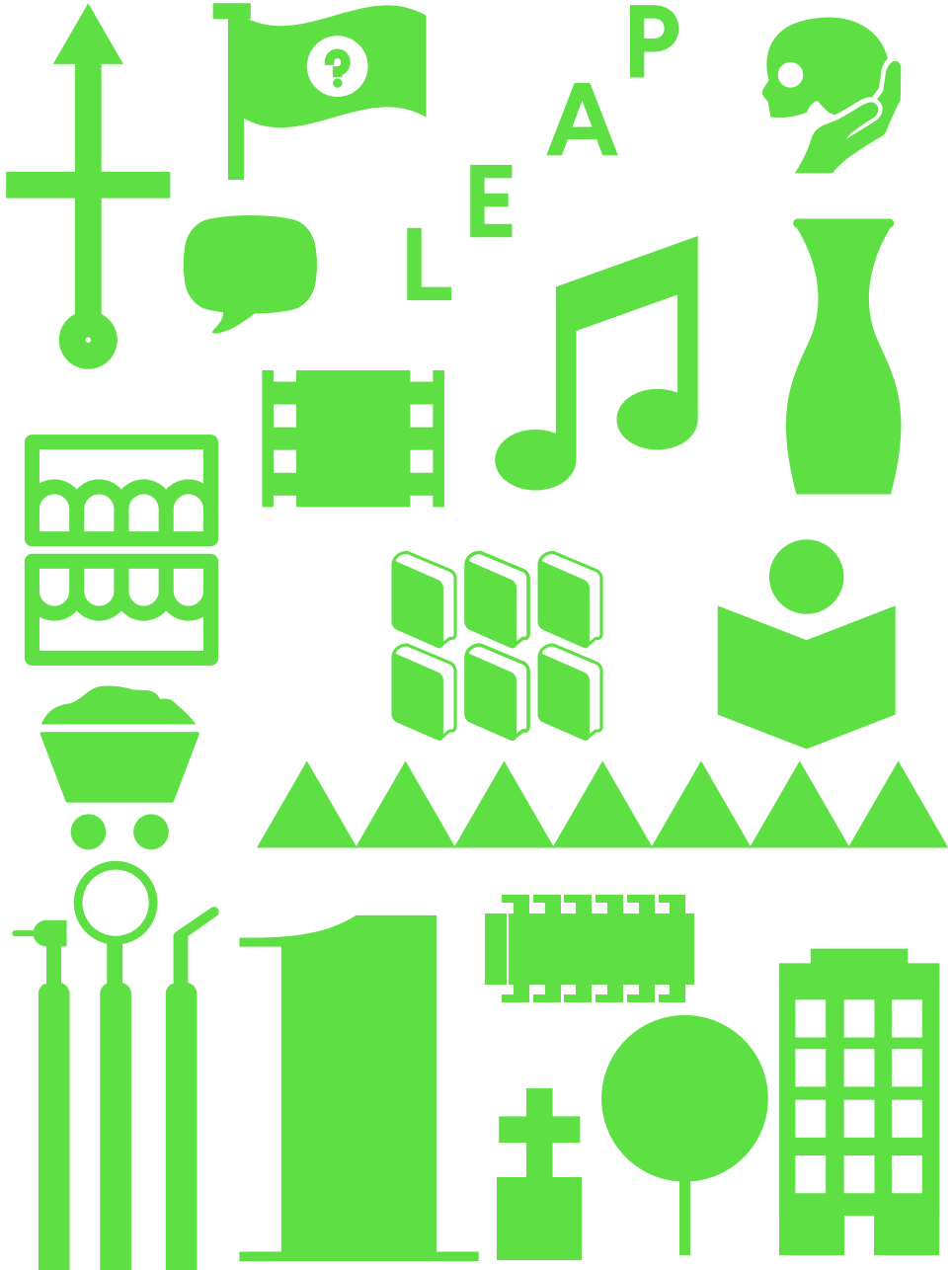
“Compassionate engagement with differences, acknowledgment of different kinds of human experiences with democratic imagination, freedom of expression.”

### **Working with Communities, Department for Lifelong Learning**

Since 2007, TUoS has run a programme to transform and empower communities through developing key individuals who work in paid and voluntary roles within their communities. The programme recognises the expertise that students bring with them, so has non-standard entry criteria and careful scaffolding of study skills to enable students to develop the language and awareness to articulate and frame that expertise.

The original curriculum was evolved through close consultation with communities but in the interim the context and climate of both community development and higher education have changed. As a consequence the programme is currently being renewed to ensure that it equips its students to have impact in their communities. There will be more about the use of technologies and social media, real life projects to build research, enterprise and organisational skills, and more emphasis on how to transfer skills to different settings and contexts because adaptability and resilience are key qualities for community development workers.

The revised curriculum (currently only available to certificate level) will be closely related to community realities through detailed case studies, field visits and coproduction of modules. Flexible programme design will mean that students will share interdisciplinary modules with students on other programmes, enhancing peer learning through mixing traditional with non-traditional students.



# New Projects

Learning from the practice of established projects, the University of Sheffield has supported a number of new initiatives in engaged learning, some of which are introduced in the following pages. While representing a diverse range of work, some commonalities run through several of the projects. These include attention to issues of social exclusion and inequality, strong connections with academic research, and an interest in educational practice as a forum for personal and professional development 

For further details please see  
[www.shef.ac.uk/als/current/engaged](http://www.shef.ac.uk/als/current/engaged)

# Archive Making: Material Stories in Refugee Communities

## **Summary**

Material Stories of Migration is a creative exploration of narratives of migration that begins with objects (real or imagined) that have a particular resonance for participants, and therefore form part of a mobile 'archive' around which stories can be made. The aim is to explore whether it is possible and valuable to create artistic 'archives' that communicate, connect and preserve the experiences of asylum seekers and refugees in Sheffield.

## **Who is involved?**

Undergraduates from English and History, artists affiliated with Arts on the Run, asylum seekers who attend Conversation Club, staff at ASSIST.

## **What motivated the project?**

The idea for the project germinated when I arrived at Sheffield to find much excitement about the new Centre for Archival Practices. I had already begun to make inquiries into asylum seeker and refugee experiences in Manchester, Leeds and Sheffield as part of a potential project run by the Northern Postcolonial Network. I combined these interests by asking how this reinvigorated interest in 'materiality' might relate to individuals who have travelled to Sheffield, leaving many things behind. I'm motivated to see what happens when objects (actual or imagined things, songs or stories that bring to mind particular places or activities) can be used to generate artistic collaborations, and to present the difficult experience of forced migration.

## **What will people get out of this work?**

All stakeholders have benefitted from the 'artslab' format of the workshops, which were deliberately exploratory: the artists, from working with groups who are sometimes considered 'hard to reach'; the students, from working alongside participants whose cultural experience is diverse and very different from their own and





from learning new skills, including film making; the asylum seekers, from being encouraged to try different art forms, to share aspects of their lives and cultures, and to see them displayed and appreciated as a part of Sheffield's cultural 'scene'.

### **What's different about engaged learning and teaching?**

In this project there was no teaching in the classroom sense of the word – the focus was on process rather than outcomes, and the students were able to choose which aspects of the project they wanted to be more involved with. Careful co-ordination and a willingness to be open to unexpected challenges and possibilities are essential in planning this kind of engaged curriculum activity.

### **What are your key principles for doing this kind of work?**

Key principles would include: an awareness of cultural sensitivity (for example our second workshop took place in Ramadan); dealing with language differences (we were lucky to have a translator in the workshop, but in future I would plan for this); actively encouraging students to participate in unfamiliar activities and to learn new skills; taking into account the preferences of participants when planning and delivering activities.

### **Is there anything else you'd like to say?**

Material Stories was conceived as a 'pilot' project either for an undergraduate module or for an ongoing series of workshops and creative enterprises involving charities, students and asylum seekers/refugees. As such we have had to be self-reflexive in our approach and ready to learn from our experiences on the project. The students found the project illuminating and the artists are keen to explore the potential of 'material stories' further.

# Better Learning Through Engagement? Evaluating Year One of Community Planning Project



## **Summary**

The Westfield Action Research Project (WARP) is an ongoing community-university engagement initiative between the Department of Urban Studies and Planning and Westfield Big Local, a group of residents from a Sheffield neighbourhood who have received £1m of Big Lottery funding to invest in making their community a better place. The project aims to develop a long-term relationship between all of those involved, providing opportunities for students, residents and university staff to learn together whilst supporting the work of Big Local in the area.

We felt that the methods conventionally used to evaluate university teaching were not wholly adequate for evaluating projects like WARP where the ethos and experience is radically different from classroom based learning. Our Engaged Curriculum project looked to explore new and different modes of evaluation that accounted for this different experience, providing a richer understanding of students' learning whilst bringing community actors into the evaluation process.

### **Who is involved?**

Lee Crookes and Andy Inch from the Department of Urban Studies and Planning established the Westfield Action Research Project and used the engaged learning funding to employ Jason Slade, a PhD student, to undertake the evaluation and write the report. This would not have been possible without the co-operation of Westfield residents and students within Town and Regional Planning, who gave freely of their time to be interviewed.

### **What motivated the project?**

WARP comes from a strong belief that both the University and the discipline of planning should be underpinned by a strong commitment to social justice and that we should try and practice what we preach. Our project came from a realisation that standard evaluation questionnaires frequently fail to account for nuance, depth and richness; as such they would miss much of students' and community partners' experiences, whilst not allowing us to effectively evaluate the extent to which WARP was doing what we hoped it would. The motivation driving our interest is our belief in engaged learning and in democratising education, and the related desire to faithfully assess and endeavour to strengthen our own work in Westfield.

### **What will people get out of this work?**

Hopefully this work can improve our practise as educators and researchers, and help to create the kind of transformational learning we hope to facilitate for students engaging with WARP. Most importantly, however, we hope that it will allow our community partners in Westfield to feed into and influence our engagement, helping to realise the mutual benefits that are central to our understanding of engaged learning.

### **What's different about engaged learning and teaching?**

Engaged learning and teaching is less predictable than traditional, classroom teaching, as such it is harder to manage, labour intensive, and involves more risk, not least in taking students, community partners and staff out of their comfort zones. When it works, however, the benefits of this risk and hard-work far outweigh the difficulties. All learners have the opportunity to do their learning in real contexts, engaging with real people and place and doing work that can have a real positive impact, both for communities and for them personally, as they are forced to rethink their assumptions and put themselves into the shoes of others. In addition to enhancing their learning this experience of the complexity of the world outside the university is great preparation for students' lives after their studies.

### **What are your key principles for doing this kind of work?**

We're not experts, but in our experience, patience, preparation and perseverance are key, as is clear and regular communication between stakeholders. It is also vital that all stakeholders are prepared for the commitments of time, energy and good faith required to make engaged learning work, as well as for the possibility that things will not necessarily go wholly to plan. It is clear that the benefits of engaged learning are now widely acknowledged within universities and that the encouragement is there to embolden staff to initiate engaged learning, but we also feel that university processes and procedures are still catching up. Universities need to become better at allowing staff the time and flexibility to make engagement work, and more accommodating to learning outcomes that can be very hard to quantify or define in advance.

# Black Firsts in Criminal History

## Summary

The Black Firsts in Criminal Justice project has involved students in interviews with 'firsts' in policing, prosecution, prisons and other criminal justice professions—the first Black chief constable, first Black chief crown court prosecutor, first Black prison governor, etc. The project ran from June 2014 to July 2015.

## Who is involved?

The project ran parallel with the Black Firsts in British Law project funded by the Legal Education Research Network (LERN). We also had a student funded through the SURE scheme. The Black Firsts in British Law project involved interviews with Black lawyers at the top of the profession, including those working in the judiciary, financial sector, and city legal services.

## What motivated the project?

The project was inspired by study I conducted 10 years ago in the USA: 'Breaking Barriers: North Carolina's African-American Firsts and Their Strategies for Success'. Focusing on Britons of African and Caribbean background enabled a comparative study; we are now expanding the project to include Asian firsts, women's firsts.

**"We are not merely offering students an outlook or perspective for analysing the world, but enabling students to gain the confidence and commitment to change it."**

## What will people get out of this work?

The project aims to (1) understand the barriers to career advancement for ethnic minorities and the strategies for overcoming them; and (2) document the achievements of Black Britons to provide a better understanding British legal history. The interviews are being used to enhance the curriculum on WINS (Without It No Success) skills and values training to be completed by all undergraduate students in the Law School. This research has served as a model for the 'LawLab', a module that provides students with an opportunity to conduct socio-legal research in the 'real world'. We are also hosting an event in London in October 2015 to link those we interviewed with Sheffield staff to develop a network to support Law & Diversity as a cross-cutting theme.

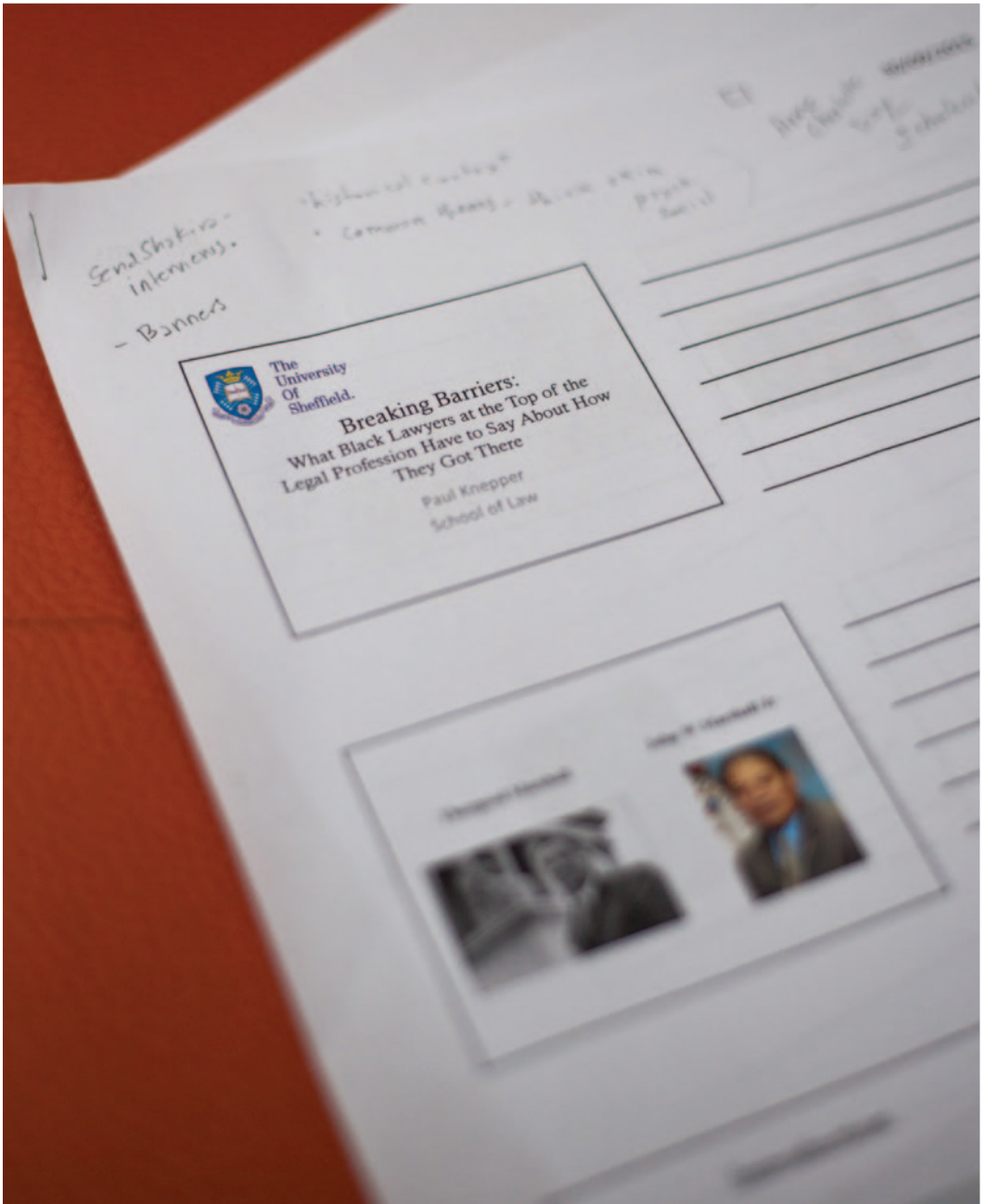
## What's different about engaged learning and teaching?

Engaged learning and teaching is, quite simply, the difference between telling students how it is and providing the means to experience how it is. This is important, because we are not merely offering students an outlook or perspective for analysing the world, but enabling students to gain the confidence and commitment to change it.

## What are your key principles for doing this kind of work?

Although the project concerns Black firsts, it's not exclusively about Black Britons in the sense that we can all understand the barriers that remain in place, and appreciate the achievements of those who overcome them. The opportunity to work on the project has been open, and the group of student researchers has been diverse (women and men, British Asian and White British).





# Computer Science

## Ambassadors Programme

### Summary

The idea is to provide a credit-bearing module for 3rd year undergraduates to design and prepare (in semester 1) and then deliver (in semester 2) a one-term course in computer science to school children, initially at secondary school level. The objectives are to expose students to a potential career in teaching, and to engage local schools in developing a computer science curriculum in line with national plans.

### Who is involved?

From the Department of Computer Science: Guy Brown, Tony Simons, and Fabio Ciravegna. The School of Education is also involved in the delivery through Bryony Black. Using engaged learning funding, we are also buying in the skills of a former secondary school teacher, Mike Jones, who now runs a software development company specialising in e-learning applications. Between them, Mike and Bryony will deliver a whole-day crash-course in secondary school teaching to our students. We have placed students in two schools for the 2015-2016 session, Firth Park Academy and King Ecgbert School.

**“This kind of module feels like a completely new venture for us; it is both extremely risky and also potentially extremely rewarding.”**

### What motivated the project?

Initially, statements by David Willetts and Michael Gove on the inadequacy of school ICT, and the announcement of a national curriculum in computer science to be delivered across key stages 1-4, motivated us to consider the potential impact of offering undergraduate help in developing a computer science curriculum for schools. Guy's positive experience in delivering a series of Sheffield master-classes helped to push the project along; for the past 18 months we've had 45 pupils from three Sheffield schools regularly visiting the Department to study topics such as games programming, computer security, machine learning, and internet technology. The schools involved in that programme (Westfield, Handsworth Grange and All Saints) confirmed that there was high demand in schools for teaching assistants who could help to deliver computer science classes at GCSE and A level. The previous experience of the School of Mathematics and Statistics in delivering something similar proved to be invaluable, when covering all the preparation and legal aspects.

### What will people get out of this work?

Participating schools will get some undergraduate help in developing a computer science curriculum for a particular key stage group. Undergraduates taking this module will gain an insight into school teaching and may consider this as one of their future career options. Staff managing the module will gain year-on-year feedback about what works in a school context, which will help to refine the structure and delivery of the module. The Computer Science department will benefit from the local exposure and this may possibly attract future undergraduate applications.

**What's different about engaged learning and teaching?**

No battle plan survives contact with the enemy! We expect students to have to refine their ideas about levels of understanding, how to pitch material for different age groups, and how to deliver material in an engaging way. You don't know something thoroughly until you have been able to teach it.

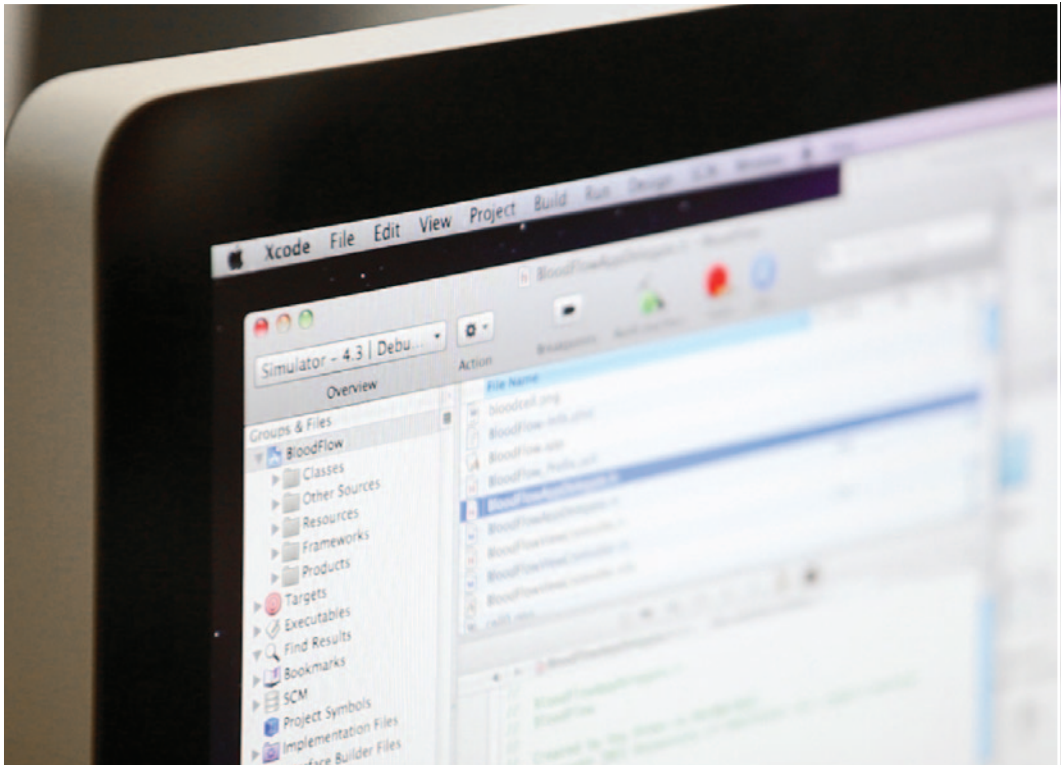
**What are your key principles for doing this kind of work?**

Careful construction of the preparation programme, with an exit-route for trainees who don't make the initial course. High levels

of communication between the participating schools and the university, governed by agreements expressing what each partner expects from the other party at each stage. The availability of professional pedagogical help from the School of Education and an external advisor; the ability to run DBS checks for candidates through the university.

**Is there anything else you'd like to say?**

This kind of module feels like a completely new venture for us; it is both extremely risky and also potentially extremely rewarding.



# Deep-Mapping the Seven Hills Of Sheffield

## Summary

This project has involved undergraduates from different modules at Level 2 and Level 3 in the School of English, and from Level 2 in the Department of Archaeology working to produce a multi-layered reading of the city of Sheffield, exploring issues of cohesion, culture, identity, and history.

The Archaeology Matters core module for undergraduate students has been designed to enable students to learn about the research process in archaeology, while also appreciating the active role that archaeology, and heritage more broadly, plays within society today. Working in small teams, the students have undertaken live research 'micro-projects' in Sheffield in collaboration with local community organisations. In the School of English, students taking the Storying Sheffield course, and the Hearing Community Stories modules, have undertaken narrative research with a wide variety of individuals and organisations from across the city.

**“For the students, we hope they gain confidence and skills in undertaking research, and develop a deeper appreciation of communities and the city.”**

## Who is involved?

Students have worked with Growtheatre; Creative Arts Support Team; SHSC NHS Trust; Heeley City Farm; Hand Of; Friends of Ecclesall Woods; Friends of Wincobank Hill; Portland Works; Nether Edge Neighbourhood Group; St. Mary's Church; Sheffield City Council, and many other groups.

## What motivated the project?

We developed the project with various principles in mind: the curriculum should focus on process (the process of undertaking research in a community) and not just on delivering content (a body of knowledge); students should engage in 'real' or 'live' research (in 2015, one team of Archaeology students undertook an excavation of a mortuary chapel in Wardsend Cemetery); students need opportunities to learn from the 'texts' of real lives and communities who may be outside their existing frames of reference.

A particular influence in an early stage of developing the project was the idea of 'deep mapping'. It is a phrase coined by William Least-Moon, a North American writer and researcher, to describe his multi-faceted and close-grained study of a region and the people, places, communities and histories that constitute it.

## What will people get out of this work?

We hope that the partners we work with gain new knowledge about the places where they live or that interest them. For the students, we hope they gain confidence and skills in undertaking research, and develop a deeper appreciation of communities and the city they study in, and of the role that the past plays in contemporary society.

Bob Johnston, Al Oswald, Colin Merrony,  
Department of Archaeology; David Forrest,  
Brendan Stone, School of English.



### **What's different about engaged learning and teaching?**

Engaged learning acknowledges that the boundaries between universities and the wider world are fragile, illusory or contrived. It creates open and unpredictable spaces for learning, which can be difficult and uncomfortable to inhabit but offer fundamentally different (though not necessarily better) experiences to most other forms of learning and teaching.

### **What are your key principles for doing this kind of work?**

Plan the work thoroughly and involve both students and community partners in the planning. Ensure that everyone involved has a clear understanding of each others' expectations and the limitations as well as the potential benefits of the work. Communicate frequently and openly throughout the project. Respect and acknowledge the contributions that everyone has made to the project.

### **Is there anything else you'd like to say?**

There have been several exciting outcomes from the project. The students' work in collaboration with Growtheatre, who are a youth theatre group partly based in Ecclesall Woods, inspired a project to present their research to the public in an engaging and accessible way. We were delighted when a family Audio Adventure, featuring one of the students, was publically released in July 2015: [www.growtheatre.org.uk/the-mystery-of-the-factory-in-the-woods](http://www.growtheatre.org.uk/the-mystery-of-the-factory-in-the-woods). In addition, students co-produced a film with Hand Of productions which was screened at Bloc Projects, and a book which students helped to produce will be sold in aid of the Creative Arts Support Team ([www.castsheffield.org](http://www.castsheffield.org)).

# Developing Effective Partnerships With People-With-Dementia in Dementia Education

## **Summary**

The project is exploring best practice for (a) the involvement of people with dementia in face-to-face teaching and (b) learning and teaching governance.

## **Who is involved?**

The Alzheimer's Society, Sheffield; Darnall Dementia Group; AgeUK Sheffield; University of Sheffield students and staff; and Mr Colin Ward

## **What motivated the project?**

Both projects extend from previous work. I established and ran a biannual CPD course, Foundations in Relationship Centred Dementia Care, for 5 years between 2009-2014. This course was designed in consultation with local people with dementia, family caregivers, and prominent dementia care practitioners. With partners in the voluntary sector I offered opportunities for people with dementia and family caregivers to speak with students on the course to share their lived experiences of dementia. Thus, project A seeks to draw upon the experiences of local stakeholders involved in dementia education to develop a model of best practice. Project B is an extension of the principle of involving those with expertise in dementia in education by working alongside Mr Colin Ward, a man diagnosed with dementia, to examine whether existing governance processes are welcoming and supportive of someone with dementia. For both projects I am motivated by the success of previous initiatives, a commitment to develop opportunities for those with lay expertise to augment academic and practice expertise in dementia education and to share lessons with colleagues within The University of Sheffield.

## **What will people get out of this work?**

I hope that people with dementia, family caregivers and voluntary sector partners will

again see the University of Sheffield valuing their efforts and taking further steps forwards in improving the quality of our work, with them as authentic partners in that endeavour. In addition, I hope that colleagues who also offer opportunities for people with dementia and their caregivers to become involved in teaching will feel ownership of these initiatives. Finally, I hope that colleagues across the University of Sheffield, regardless of discipline or department, will find the final reports and presentations interesting and promote further opportunities for people with dementia and their caregivers to have their expertise affirmed.

## **What's different about engaged learning and teaching?**

To me, engaged learning and teaching encourages teaching staff and students to develop an "epistemology of humility" (Post 2001) in their chosen subjects and careers. Shifting the focus from objects to subjects, in the human sciences at least, asks us and our students to critique our own teaching and research 'projects', to make us more honest and accountable, perhaps.

## **What are your key principles for doing this kind of work?**

It's more of a cluster of principles: 1) respect diversity: "If you've met one person with dementia, you've met one person with dementia." 2) promote equality in knowledge-production: why not ask people with dementia? 3) Respecting diversity and promoting equality enriches the depth and legitimacy of knowledge.

## **Is there anything else you'd like to say?**

Engagement is a two way process and I'm convinced that when done well in education there are only winners.

David Reid,  
The School of Nursing and Midwifery

# Engaging People with Communication Impairments

## Summary

The project enables speech and language therapy students to learn about the professional values and behaviours they need to develop. The students have devised a video-based learning resource where speech and language therapists and people with communication impairments and their families discuss their perspectives of what these values and behaviours should be. The resource will be used in the speech and language therapy programme curricula.

## Who is involved?

Students and staff from the department of Human Communication Sciences, children and adults with communication impairments and their families, and speech and language therapists from the NHS.

## What motivated the project?

The Francis Inquiry and the subsequent recommendations to ensure all NHS professional have appropriate professional values and behaviours. The project explores different perceptions about the appropriate professional values and behaviours that student speech and language therapists need to develop to be compassionate and effective practitioners.

## What will people get out of this work?

An understanding of the crucial role patients have in informing professionals' values and behaviours, and that children and adults who have difficulties in communicating can be engaged to give their perspectives.

## What's different about engaged learning and teaching?

Students lead on the development and execution of a learning resource with our local NHS partners and people with communication impairments and their families from our local community.

## What are your key principles for doing this kind of work?

- Listening to and understanding the perspectives of our students, partners and stakeholders to generate true engagement.
- Facilitating our students, partners and stakeholders to take the lead in learning and teaching

## Is there anything else you'd like to say?

It was very positive to watch the students develop their skills and confidence in engaging with people with communication impairments and learning to be more critical thinkers. Enabling people with communication impairments and their families to share their experiences and contribute directly to the professional development of the speech and language therapy workforce is extremely important.

Judy Clegg,  
Department of Human Communication Sciences



# Epics and Myths from the Ancient World



## **Summary**

In this module undergraduates examine great texts from the ancient world under three themes: creation and order; epic journeys; suffering and meaning. Together, we investigate issues in each text and explore their relationship to religion, politics, ethics, and economics in the ancient world. We also consider why themes from these texts continue to be adopted by contemporary artists, filmmakers, and musicians, among others. Students explore this 'afterlife' by creating their own artefacts: an image, a series of photos, or even a piece of music that adopts and adapts images from ancient texts to engage with contemporary issues. The module culminates with a public exhibition of the students' work.

## **Who is involved?**

Emilie Taylor, Artist and Art Therapist based at Yorkshire Artspace; Ruth Levene, Artist based at Yorkshire Artspace; Fay Hield, Folk Musician and University of Sheffield Lecturer; Bill McDonnell, Drama Performer, Writer, Facilitator, and University of Sheffield Lecturer; Carolyn Butterworth, Architect and University of Sheffield Lecturer; Amy Ryall, University of Sheffield; Wickersley School (17 students and 2 teachers; see more: [www.wickersley.net/wickersley/?p=10236](http://www.wickersley.net/wickersley/?p=10236))



### What motivated the project?

It arose from my own work to better understand how the ways that ancient texts shaped the structures of their societies parallels the way art forms comment on our society. I also wanted to know more about how the format of non-verbal communication drives us back to existing images and themes in order to connect with our audiences. Culminating this module with a public exhibition follows from a wish to make my modules a laboratory for learning about the challenges of the workplace. It introduces students to the difficulty of working with other people under a tight deadline with limited financial resources in order to deliver a successful outcome. Whatever one does after University—finance, law, art, information technology, barista—you must deal with this set of challenges again and again.

### What will people get out of this work?

Students learn about the ancient world, and come to see that these texts and myths were extremely relevant to politics, economics, and ethics, as well as religion, and grasp something of the power of non-verbal communication to engage and persuade an audience. Those who see the exhibition learn about the texts, are reminded of just how relevant they remain to our society, and are provoked to consider what they themselves think about creation and order, journeys, and suffering and meaning. I hope the arts practitioners are challenged to think about how they use historical sources in their own work, such that they might better articulate to me, the students, and a wider public the potential power of doing so.

### What's different about engaged learning and teaching?

The biggest difference is what counts as 'learning' and what you do to assess students. This changes drastically, and does so for the better. While I still required students to write

a 2000 word essay, there were also group contributions, a much less formal learning journal, and the creation of an artefact that examined students' capabilities in a very different way. It took more creativity and time on my part to develop these assessments, but I was left with a much more robust sense of what my students learned and what they are capable of doing.

### What are your key principles for doing this kind of work?

- Learn while teaching. I learned an immense amount from my guest speakers. I led the sessions, but because my role was essentially 'first among a group of equally interested students' I think they took on a much more engaging tone.
- The classroom has no limits. My students spent time recording water drips, walking the route of a flood, creating their own language, and photographing dilapidated buildings. Their classroom was as large as their world. In a sense, their assignment was to give me and everyone else involved a glimpse of how they see their world. This inverts things to some degree—I don't teach them about their world, they teach me about theirs—but it means that what they learn has no danger of appearing to relate only to what happens in classrooms at universities.
- Knowledge isn't just in libraries. Perhaps the most important principle for me is that knowledge is not just found in books and journals that one can put in a library. Indeed, not even the Internet contains it all (shocking, I know). Much knowledge is embodied; it comes from becoming aware of the way we move in and through the world or from asking others how they move in and through the world.
- Avoid boring at all costs.

# Filmmaking and the Engaged Curriculum

## **Summary**

I supervised Ryan Bramley, at the time a second year English Language and Literature student, who made a film about the legacy of the miners' strike entitled 'Born of Coal'. Ryan's film worked with various groups and individuals within Barnsley to explore the question of community in light of the events of the 84/85 conflict, and captured a set of wonderfully rich narratives around themes of friendship, loss, solidarity and pride. More broadly, we asked Ryan to reflect on the ways in which such an exercise might be integrated in the curriculum in the form of filmmaking dissertations, which offer an alternative to the semester 2, level 3 option in the School of English.

## **Who is involved?**

Ryan Bramley, David Forrest, Brendan Stone, and a range of community partners and interviewees including: Francis Brankin, John Higgs, John Keating, Frank Lane, Gary Lane, Adele Murray, Fred Owen, Max Senior, Keith Kellett.

## **What motivated the project?**

My own work centres around film and, in particular the relationship between film and issues of social class and region, so when Ryan approached me with an idea to make a film about the strike, I was very interested. Here was an opportunity for Ryan to utilise his developing skills as an English scholar in the context of a much documented and contested narrative with direct relevance to the contemporary political and economic situation. I was also excited about facilitating the conditions for Ryan to learn in the context of his own experience (he grew up in Barnsley) and to enable Ryan to pursue a project which he was clearly very passionate about, while producing an artefact which might stand as an illustration of the kind of powerful, engaged scholarship that our undergraduates are capable of.

## **What will people get out of this work?**

The benefits for academic staff and students are obvious - this is a powerful opportunity to learn from and exchange our knowledges and skills with new partners in dynamic ways, and to affect change within our own learning teaching practices. For the communities involved, there's an opportunity to tell a different story to that which is commonly shared about the strike. Ryan's film does not subscribe to a simplistic reading of events and does not reduce the strike into a totalising good vs evil narrative - instead he focuses on individual testimony with a particular interest in the universal themes of everyday life, moving the emphasis on to the contemporary moment and away from a purely retrospective account of the strike.

## **What's different about engaged learning and teaching?**

Engaged learning and teaching is about recognising that learning from and with communities outside of our own enables a deeper more mutually enriching understanding to emerge. It's about more than education, actually - it's about the way we work together and develop as a society

## **What are your key principles for doing this kind of work?**

It's important to share our objectives and aims with our community partners, and to meet in the middle. What is our motive for doing this work? What do we get out of it and what do our partners get from the experience? We've got to aim for equality of benefit.

**Is there anything else you'd like to say?**

Comment from Max Senior on the film:

“Hiya Ryan, Watched the film, and I have to say you made a damned good job!

You have captured the essence of the real impact of the aftermath of the 1984 strike.

I intend to put it onto Barnsley Local TV website for streaming, but only if you give your consent. It will be viewed around the globe!!”

“This is a powerful opportunity to learn from and exchange our knowledges and skills with new partners in dynamic ways, and to effect change within our own learning teaching practices.”



# Improving Knowledge of Dementia Research Across Disciplines

## **Summary**

My project involved developing a short film which highlighted some of the dementia research that researchers are involved with at the University of Sheffield, the idea of this was to enable students involved in dementia research, particularly those undertaking the MSc in Dementia Studies, to gain a broader understanding of the diverse range of research undertaken at the University of Sheffield.

I have also been involved with work within looking primary schools, running a workshop on 'Our amazing brains'. This formed part of the British Science Week series of events.

## **Who is involved?**

The researchers who have been featured as part of the film are Dr Paul Sharp from the Department of Psychology, Laura Ratcliffe and Caroline Carta from the Sheffield Institute for Translational Neuroscience and Dr Sarah Smith from the School and Health and Related Research. As part of the project we also visited and filmed at the Darnall Dementia Group as this group was involved with Dr Smith's research project.

## **What motivated the project?**

The reason I felt the project was needed and timely was because despite there being a lot of researchers involved in dementia research at the University it was apparent that as researchers we have limited knowledge of what others are doing, which also means that students involved in dementia research are likely to have a limited knowledge of the breadth of research in this area at the university. I hope that in developing these films students, and potentially other researchers, involved in dementia research will gain a much broader understanding of what dementia research entails and also develop a more joined up approach especially given the need for research in this area.

## **What will people get out of this work?**

In developing and carrying out the project I myself have developed a much broader understanding of the vast range of valuable research being undertaken within our university, as well as developing new links with researchers within the university and I hope it inspires other researchers to do so.

**“The idea is to enable students involved in dementia research gain a broader understanding of the diverse range of research undertaken at the University of Sheffield.”**



# Listening Voices and Telling Stories

## Summary

'Listening Voices and Telling Stories' is a project which runs in St Mary's Community Centre, exploring the possibility of running an undergraduate module. It investigated an imaginative (poetic) engagement with the narratives of displaced identities - unacknowledged 'communities' of women from different ethnic backgrounds in Sheffield who fall into a grey area between settled communities and the main culture. The project explored the way such narratives could be expressed poetically and discursively in a dialogical relationship with the School of English.

**“Engaged learning and teaching can bridge the gap between academic thinker and the excluded storyteller”**



### Who is involved?

Dr Shirin Teifouri (School of English); Professor Kate Pahl (School of Education); St Mary's Community Centre, Sharrow; Women from different ethnic backgrounds (Iraq, Romania, Syria, Hong Kong, Kurdistan, Ireland, Iran and Pakistan)

### What motivated the project?

This project was inspired by a collaborative research project funded by the ESRC as part of the ARHC-led Connected Communities programme in Rotherham. For more information about the initial phase of this project please visit the Storying Sheffield website: [www.storyingsheffield.com/stories/rotherham-and-its-imagined-communities](http://www.storyingsheffield.com/stories/rotherham-and-its-imagined-communities)

### What will people get out of this work?

1. A transformative relationship between women from different ethnic backgrounds in community contexts and students with a shared interest in literary texts, resilience and empowerment.
2. A teaching pack for the School of English which could defy borders between English as a 'white middle-class subject' and the knowledge and political discourses involved in the narratives of migration and displacement. Such an inclusive engagement could enable students to rethink the transformative power of literature and critical theories through dialogical encounters with concrete 'others' in non-academic everyday settings.
3. A sense of imagined 'community' and 'home' for displaced identities (those with no affiliation to any actual community) in their invisible daily struggle to belong.

### What's different about engaged learning and teaching?

Engaged learning and teaching can bridge the gap between academic thinker and the excluded storyteller. It can help to hybridize academic discourses with authentic personal narratives of migration and exile that weave the fabric of the same cloth in the city.

### What are your key principles for doing this kind of work?

As an art-based engagement with 'hard-to-reach' communities, the project's key principles are:

1. Compassionate engagement with differences, acknowledgment of different kinds of human experiences with democratic imagination, freedom of expression.
2. Rather than rush out a pre-constructed methodology, this project follows a hybrid pedagogy which starts from the acknowledgment of personal accounts of loss, invisible vulnerabilities, displacement, interruption and resilience.
3. Transcending the boundaries of superior and rational academic 'truth'. For example, acknowledging the way individuals' self-perception of 'displacement', 'community', 'vulnerability', and 'safe space' might be in conflict with the current infantilizing definitions implied by conventional ethical regulations.

# Living Library Legacy Project

## **Summary**

The Living Library is a metaphoric remodelling of a conventional library so there are a few differences. “Books” in a Living Library are people who are the authors of their book and provide specialist knowledge for social work that is based on the author’s area of experience and expertise.

## **Who is involved?**

Service users and carers; Kay Allinson (AgeUK Sheffield); Fiona Addison (Sheffield City Council); Laura Selby (Sheffield Young Carers); the Social Work team at the Department of Sociological Studies; undergraduate students.

## **What motivated the project?**

The original Living Library (the Human Library) was designed in Denmark to examine and challenge the stereotypes and prejudices that undermine people’s capacity to connect with fellow human-beings. Our decision to use this model came out of a discussion with a person who has experience of using social work services about developing different ways in which service users and carers might be involved in teaching in our programme.





### What will people get out of this work?

Communities: service users sense that their experiences of social work services are being heard and taken seriously; a sense of fulfilment in helping develop the next generation of social workers; an engagement with the university, traditionally an environment many service users would have seen as exclusionary in the past

Students: engagement with service user perspectives that goes beyond the superficial/surface which will have a lasting impact on their approach to practice

Partner organisations: building relationships with the university helps their own organisational aims and can help particularly for voluntary sector agencies in terms of supporting evidence for impact when seeking funding renewal. The sense that service users who work with them have been treated with respect and their voices heard.

Staff: fulfilment of taking part in an innovative piece of teaching that bridges 'university-practice' divide

### What's different about engaged learning and teaching?

We want our social work students to be curious and to develop a range of skills for communication and for critical thinking. The Living Library provides them with an opportunity through a "reading" encounter with a Living book to talk with service users and carers about the shared and also different stories of social work as experienced and told by service users, carers, and workers.

The Living Library model changes the nature of service user and carer involvement with students. Students are not passive listeners to the stories told by service users and carers about their experiences of social work: In the Living Library, students become more engaged

through their "reading" in a critically reflective process of learning, in which they explore their understanding of and their experiences in social work with service users and carers. Thus, the stories of the Living Books become the basis for students to begin to share their stories. By engaging with the different perspectives (users/carers/social work students) students have an opportunity to consider how differences may lead to conflict between the students' and service users' or carers' perspectives on social work roles and responsibilities, and how conflicts might be negotiated and resolved. The Living Library provides a safe space for students to explore their future professional roles as a shared activity with service users and carers who provide them with an essential critique of social work practice that in their professional role they will need to engage with.

### What are your key principles for doing this kind of work?

Our aim is to enable students to develop their understanding of the complexities of social work practices, and to develop their understanding of, and skills for, developing partnerships with people who use social work services in different ways.

**"Engagement with service user perspectives that goes beyond the superficial and will have a lasting impact on students' approach to practice."**

# Musical Engagement in Population Groups with Special Needs

## Summary

Students studying for an MA in Psychology of Music visited a dementia care ward to collect data as part of their courses on Qualitative and Quantitative Research Techniques. Music is used at the dementia care ward at a regular basis as part of the occupational and physical therapy that is provided. At the first visit, students interviewed staff about their uses of music and patients' responses to music. At the second visit, students performed music to patients, relatives and carers, and documented the responses of the patients. Patients sang and moved along with the music, several of them even danced. Generally, the music seemed to encourage positive social interaction.

## Who is involved?

The Dementia Care Ward at Grenoside Grange, and our contact there: Claire Jepson; Dr Renee Timmers & Prof. Stephanie Pitts; undergraduate students: William Chew, Caroline Curwen, Alex Keegan, Martha Nye, Landon Peck, Rosie Pollock, David Quiroga, Dimitra Trouka, Harriet Wells.

## What motivated the project?

There is a growing interest in music therapy among students, and staff expertise is also growing in this direction. Dementia is a growing health issue that touches many people in one way or another and music seems to be a powerful means to improve wellbeing of dementia patients. This project gave us the opportunity for students to experience those effects of music first hand, and to critique and investigate them using their developing skills as researchers.

## What will people get out of this work?

We saw it as an important opportunity for students to gain expertise in real-life research. It was also a great opportunity for staff to pilot research in this direction. The care ward was grateful for the musical performances we gave, which is something that will be continued. Patients responded very positively to the music. It has opened possibilities for future projects.

## What's different about engaged learning and teaching?

The real-life commitments, constraints and practicalities were a major difference. Students were very motivated and engaged, but they were also a bit disappointed by the ethical and practical limitations that were an inevitable part of conducting research in this setting. The students were understandably anxious about how these limitations would affect their assessed work, though in the end they produced some excellent portfolio assignments that connected their practical experiences of the project with the limited existing research in this area.

**“Patients responded very positively to the music, It has opened possibilities for future projects.”**

**What are your key principles for doing this kind of work?**

We needed a 100% commitment of students and staff, although it was possible for the people involved to divide tasks to make running the project more manageable. Clearly, we had to be flexible and forthcoming to the community partner and act sensitively towards the patients and staff. The care staff encouraged us to interact with the patients rather than to remain at a distance, and performing for them was a great way to facilitate contact.

**Is there anything else you'd like to say?**

The engaged learning funding was helpful to organise and pay for training sessions for students and staff related to running music sessions in care homes, and improving our understanding of dementia. Looking back, we would have benefited from having a longer time to set up and pilot the project in the care home - though we all learnt a lot by doing it intensively for the first time, and now have a greater awareness of what is involved in combining the complexities of a real world setting with the conventions of academic coursework.



## Oral Histories in Dentistry Outreach



### **Summary**

In this project dental students are collecting the oral histories of residents in Sheffield. They then reflect with each other and tutors to tease out diversity in people's lives, alongside historically situated understandings around health. This may create new understandings around the mouth and about service delivery.

Jan Owens has done engaged work with students previously in health promotion. Groups of students from different cultural backgrounds explored an area of their choice in depth. They had to negotiate their own cultural assumptions of the area, alongside those of other students, synthesise the literature and reach a mutual agreement before producing a collaborative document. The work developed students' confidence orally and in writing, supported skills development, and fostered a deeper level of reflection and critical engagement. Michelle Winslow works extensively with

community volunteers collecting oral histories of people receiving palliative care and archiving them, creating a legacy for families, carers and communities throughout the UK.

### **Who is involved?**

The communities of Sheffield are our main contributors. Outreach placements help students by identifying people who may want to take part. Dr Michelle Winslow trains the students on oral history. Dr Owens, Gibson and Dr Jowett work alongside students to enable further development of their reflective, advanced empathic and critical thinking skills.

### **What motivated the project?**

The project emerged from the yearly struggles with the outreach project. Students are adept with clinical aspects, but find it challenging gaining deeper insight about diversity in people's lives, how they may have little control

over their situations and how this may then affect their health. There can be a limited amount of insight and creative thinking or questioning, and this can lead to reductionist approaches in how people are treated and thought of. The oral history approach links in with students becoming more socially responsible by raising awareness of their future patients.

### **What will people get out of this work?**

In raising awareness and developing skills, students can improve their practice of dentistry by making it more person-centred and increasing their communication skills and level of social responsibility. In contributing, the community gains an opportunity to educate its future practitioners who can then challenge and create further health policy. Staff can engage with more reflective learners and learn from these interactions in order to re-engage this knowledge with future students. There is the potential for marginalised groups to become involved with the work, raising awareness of their position in society, increasing inclusion, reducing social barriers and enhancing the delivery of services. There is also potential for the project to illustrate how much of dentistry is based within a medical model of care which is often dissociated from how people access dental services. Gaining greater insight into the variability of people's lives and access may also enable us to reorient services and extend their reach thereby improving the impact of prevention.

### **What's different about engaged learning and teaching?**

Engaged learning and teaching has the potential for students to learn from one another and develop greater insight into their roles and positions within communities. The level of participation and exchange between students and the community can foster a sense of

inclusion on both sides which is important for more cohesive relationships. This has an impact on knowledge production because different forms of knowledge are presented from a variety of perspectives. Students have opportunities to learn from interactive relationships where learning is more meaningful and reciprocal.

### **What are your key principles for doing this kind of work?**

Key principles are;

- Enabling students to feed in at all stages to help develop the format of what they are doing; participation and ownership
- Engaging communities so they have a voice in working collaboratively with students and the university
- Creating an atmosphere of support where all views and opinions are valued and heard, and power imbalances are reduced as much as possible
- Creating a space that is different from the existing learning environment to develop social relations to the maximum
- Knowing the area before embarking on a project
- Having the capacity to develop and mediate community relationships to enable smooth passage
- Working with people who are able to engage with a more fluid learning environment, are adaptable to change and unafraid of risk
- Ensuring that everyone is supported throughout the process

# Shakespeare in Schools Module Planning Project

## Summary

Undergraduate students are helping to plan a project on the teaching of Shakespeare in schools that will run on a third-year module in 2016. At an event to which pupils from a Sheffield school have been invited, the undergraduates will explain what it's like to study Shakespeare at university, and also solicit the views of teachers and pupils about how next year's project could support the teaching of Shakespeare at secondary school. They will then collaborate on a report on their findings for the module leader.

## Who is involved?

High Storrs school. I've been working with the deputy head of English, Julian Fisher.

## What motivated the project?

I wanted to do something in 2016 to mark the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death, and decided on a collaborative project with a local school. When I heard about the Engaged Learning initiative I thought it sounded like a great opportunity to get students involved in the planning of this project from an early stage.

## What will people get out of this work?

I hope that students will gain experience of giving presentations in a semi-formal setting, of interacting in a professional way with school teachers and pupils, and of participating in module design. I hope that pupils will gain a sense of what to expect from studying English at university. And more generally, I think that the University and High Storrs will gain from this opportunity to forge links between the School of English and the local community.

## What's different about engaged learning and teaching?

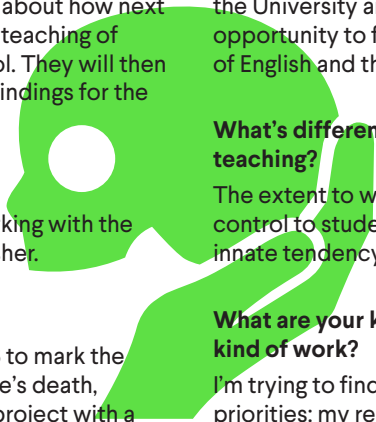
The extent to which I'm going to be delegating control to students, which conflicts with my innate tendency to worry about things.

## What are your key principles for doing this kind of work?

I'm trying to find a way of balancing everyone's priorities: my requirements as the leader of a module next year, the students' need to be trusted with challenging and potentially rewarding tasks, the expectations of High Storrs staff and students.

## Is there anything else you'd like to say?

Come back next year and ask me how the module went!



**“Students will gain experience of giving presentations in a semi-formal setting, of interacting in a professional way with school teachers and pupils, and of participating in module design.”**



# Social Accountability in the Faculty Of Medicine Dentistry and Health

## **Summary**

The Social Accountability Project is a major change initiative to involve students and staff in embedding social accountability as a long-term, sustainable faculty-wide commitment and aspiration.

Social accountability means taking specific actions to make the greatest possible impact on people's health and well-being within our communities, including taking steps to produce graduate health professionals capable of acting as change agents within local and other health systems, nationally and internationally.

This project initially seeks to determine how learning and teaching (although not excluding research and other innovation and knowledge transfer) activities across the Faculty might be appropriately aligned to redress health inequalities and meet priority health needs in the Sheffield City Region and is designed to support the Faculty's departments to review and improve their existing engaged learning and teaching activities as well as create opportunities and provide resources for them to develop new innovations.

## **Who is involved?**

The project is supported by a very wide range of community partners across the Sheffield City Region. We want to ensure that all activities are underpinned by a clear and sensitive asset-based approach. The Faculty are working together with local partners to improve the health and well-being of communities.

In one example, the project is supporting the Medical School to run a community placement scheme for third year medical students to get them to think more broadly about medicine and health and better understand the social determinants of health, health inequalities and the realities of community vulnerabilities. This strand has engaged approximately 150

different statutory and non-statutory voluntary, community, and faith sector organisations covering communities in North East Derbyshire, Rotherham, Doncaster, the Derbyshire Dales, Chesterfield, Bolsover, Bassetlaw, Barnsley and Sheffield itself.

## **What motivated the project?**

It's been conceived in response to a growing academic interest in the social accountability of medical schools and is seeking to better meet the needs of our local communities. It's also driven by global calls to think about what type of health professionals are needed to tackle current and future health needs, and to address inequities in the distribution of the health workforce that impede long term improvements in health outcomes.

Beyond that, we're motivated by efforts across the University of Sheffield to enhance our whole institution's public value contribution to the City Region and to promote mutually beneficial partnerships and positive collaborations with our local communities.

## **What will people get out of this work?**

We hope to inspire students to think about what it means to be a socially accountable health professional and to apply that understanding in their future, post-qualification clinical practice. This means cultivating a commitment to serve in a spirit of social justice, and also encouraging them to settle and work in under-served areas where they might have the greatest possible impact on health determinants and services.

For staff, we want to encourage them to see value and merit in developing and evaluating engaged learning and teaching activities against the key indicators of social accountability. In addition, the project also aims to inspire staff to recognise the benefits of this kind of learning and teaching as an entry point and facilitator of



socially accountable partnerships for research and other innovation and knowledge transfer activities. Indeed, on a practical note, we aim to facilitate long-term research partnerships and collaborations between staff and community partners that can similarly demonstrate a positive impact on the health and well-being of the people and communities surrounding the University of Sheffield.

Likewise, the project aims to afford opportunities for a wide variety of different community partners to influence and shape the mind-set and career trajectories of the next generation of health professionals and work in partnership with staff at the University of Sheffield to co-produce training and research activities that can support their own efforts to improve people's health and well-being across the Sheffield City Region.

### **What's different about engaged learning and teaching?**

Simple: It requires far more time and resourcing than you ever think it will!

More than that though, engaged learning and teaching involves moving away from thinking about learning and teaching as a solely student-centred activity and re-imagining it as much more of a community-centred activity. Yes, we need to ensure that students and their education are a priority but this can never be at the expense of patient care or unintended damage/debris in our communities. Moreover, it fundamentally means aligning students' educational needs with current and future community need and continually reviewing their mutual interdependence.

### **What Are Your Key Principles For Doing This Kind Of Work?**

Patience, humility, and really sensitive, flexible, invested long-term partnership working would be the most immediate things that spring to mind because they inform the relationships you need to make your efforts stick and become sustainable throughout repeat academic cycles. Furthermore, without really open, proactive and sometimes very honest communication (that starts months and months before you want to implement anything) with key delivery partners, efforts to engage communities and local stakeholders will stall, fall flat, or worse still, deteriorate irreparably! An appreciation of the risks and costs to all those involved is also necessary and should underpin the conceptualisation and resourcing of any engaged learning and teaching activity. Beyond that, managing expectations is vital. It's becoming something of a cliché, but making sure all involved really understand what they're signing up to participate in is crucial and should inform every step of the process.

Finally, engaging with local communities should be undertaken in the spirit of working in a way that is not only responsive to community need, but is also meaningfully accountable to the partnerships that those engagements actually generate.

# Supporting Isolated Adults via the Six Book Challenge

## **Summary**

This project recruited Masters students from the Information School to work as volunteers for SAVTE (the Sheffield Association for the Voluntary Teaching of English), providing support for English language learners across Sheffield in their classrooms, conversation classes and in local public libraries. Between October 2014 and July 2015, students helped SAVTE to deliver the national Six-Book (fiction reading) Challenge with their non-English speaking learners.

N.B. The 6-Book Challenge aims to 'improve the chances in life for people who find reading difficult by building their reading confidence and motivation' (<http://readingagency.org.uk/adults/quick-guides/six-book-challenge/>).

## **Who is involved?**

The main project partner was SAVTE, and the initial contact was made by Jess Elmore, a former MA Librarianship student who was then working as a Learning Champion for SAVTE. The volunteers worked with classes at four different locations: Ashiana Sheffield, Edward Street Flats Community Room, Firs Hill Conversation Club, Darnall Primary Care Centre. SAVTE provided the DBS checks, Jess provided an information session for the students, and I coordinated the project and (with input from Jess) delivered cultural awareness training for each of the volunteers.

## **What motivated the project?**

Jess contacted me with an initial suggestion about working together and involving students in helping SAVTE to deliver the Six Book Challenge. The details of the project grew from this initial conversation, from previous research and practical experience working with non-English speaking adult literacy learners, and from a teaching and research interest in working with different communities in a sensitive and empathic way. As I was putting the application

together I came across Dave Calder's poem 'Citizen of the World', and it really shaped my thinking on the subject, with the idea that so many people 'grow up both and neither, and belong everywhere and nowhere much the same'.

## **What will people get out of this work?**

For the students, the project is a valuable addition to their CV, via a volunteering role with an English teaching (third sector) organisation; curricular impact and outputs include reflective pieces for an online professional development journal, coursework and dissertation options relating to their experience and the role of public libraries in adult literacy education; in terms of extra-curricular impact the project has helped the volunteers to develop skills in cultural awareness and civic engagement.

For us, this has been an effective way of engaging with the local community, in particular with some of the most vulnerable people living in Sheffield. Working with a new partner, we now have some clear ways forward for developing this kind of initiative in the future. Linking elements of our curriculum to the local community we have added value to our Masters programmes. The volunteers have been engaged and enthusiastic throughout the project, and there has been a noticeable increased awareness in class of third sector issues and the 'wider role' of public libraries in society. In short, it was a great pilot project for future work, and an effective test-bed for further cultural awareness work.

Feedback from the class tutors clearly shows how they feel that the classes have benefited from the input of the volunteers. 'It was great having [name] come along to help the learners with their reading. I know that all the learners really appreciated her time and efforts.' 'It was very helpful that [name] and [name] could take responsibility for the practicalities...also their

more personal input as friendly and informative visitors was greatly appreciated by all of us.' Towards the end of the project, we were also able to use some of the project funding to buy a small collection of books for one of the project locations, a women's refuge in Sheffield without any books of its own, and both learners and tutors sat down with us and chose the books they would like to read.

### **What's different about engaged learning and teaching?**

Having an engaged curriculum is about helping students to look beyond the classroom and into the town or city they're studying in, and to recognise that not everyone is living such a privileged life. For this project the cultural awareness strand is particularly important, and I think the effectiveness of this comes across in some of the following student comments: 'It has been enlightening for me to meet new people and to have the opportunity to gain a greater understanding of how challenging life in Britain can be for those who are new to the country or have a limited knowledge of English.' 'The experience has given me a greater appreciation of the variety of needs and challenges facing members of my community. This will be beneficial in future jobs within libraries as I will now more aware of attempting to ensure their needs are met and they feel welcome and valued in their local libraries.' 'I would certainly recommend participating in this project, as it provides you with a wonderful opportunity to support and help others with their reading. It is an incredibly rewarding experience and highlights some of the barriers adults have when learning how to read and accessing books and information. Living in a digital world it is easy to forget that a proportion of the adult society find it difficult to read.'

### **What are your key principles for doing this kind of work?**

It's so important to the success of a community-based project to ensure that any student volunteers are given sufficient training before going out into the community; some will already have highly developed empathy and cultural sensitivity, but others may not and all parties will benefit if such issues are addressed from the start.

### **Is there anything else you'd like to say?**

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to do this project! It was very hard work on top of everything else in my diary, but I will be continuing the work in future, adapting this year's version to suit both project partners and the new groups of incoming students.



# The Literacy Exchange and Achievement Project (LEAP)

## Summary

LEAP is a collaborative and partnership-based project involving local schools, pupils, teachers, local authority staff, literacy advisors and researchers and also academic and professional services staff at the University. Undergraduates are trained in research-based techniques to help struggling pupils develop literacy skills. In turn, the undergraduates gain academic credits but also further insight into schools, teaching and learning development. They also learn about organisations and model professional behaviours in a way which enhances their employability.

## Who is involved?

Matt Colbeck and Brendan Stone, School of English; Alison McKenzie, Strategic Educational Partnership Coordinator, University of Sheffield; Rachael Levy, School of Education; Sarah Spencer, Department of Human Communication Science; Helen Fidler and colleagues, Sheffield City Council ESCAL; Elaine Cropper, Literacy consultant; teachers from various local schools including Emily Martin of Ecclesfield School.

## What motivated the project?

It was a coming together of various factors, not least of which was a desire by all the LEAP team to do something to address literacy (and social) inequalities in the city. Initially, the local authority approached the University for support to build the literacy skills of local young people. Sheffield schools were being challenged by the DfE to raise literacy standards in comparison with other parts of the country. University students were keen to acquire work experience in professional fields, especially in schools. It presented an opportunity to do a project which was mutually beneficial - ideal engaged curriculum material!

## What will people get out of this work?

For undergraduates, an insight into the lives of educational professionals and an opportunity to try out aspects of that role. Also, better understanding of literacy practice and its link to theory. For pupils, benefits we hoped would include: improved literacy, improved engagement with school work, and also exposure to undergraduate students and the “idea” of a university. For staff in schools we hoped for a positive profile of current undergraduates and a fresh perspective upon school practice.

## What's different about engaged learning and teaching?

It is academic work with meaning and context. If done well, it has built-in satisfaction for students who can see the impact of their work very directly. It is crucial for building a strong civic reputation for the university in that the institution can be seen to provide research-informed but practical support for local communities. It models a new kind of learning which is progressive, agile and suited to 21st century lives.

## What are your key principles for doing this kind of work?

Integrity and careful appraisal of, and planning around, project opportunities. As we know from experience, this work often happens in challenging circumstances. This is precisely what stretches students and provides good reflective learning but it needs diligent planning and adequate resourcing.

Alison McKenzie, Student Recruitment and Admissions, Rachael Levy,  
School of Education, Sarah Spencer, Department of Human Communication  
Sciences, Matthew Colbeck, School of English.



# The Rothwell Charnel Chapel Project Online

## Summary

This project is creating an interactive portal for dissemination of research on the medieval charnel chapel and ossuary at Rothwell, Northants. Designed to host diverse, interactive and open access materials created by staff and students, the website will promote and disseminate ongoing work at the chapel. Following initial setup, the site will be

continuously populated and edited by staff and students, documenting the project and forming an archive of the process of community engaged research.

The subterranean charnel chapel of Holy Trinity Church in Rothwell, Northamptonshire houses one of only two remaining in-situ medieval ossuaries in England. The chapel was constructed



during the 13th century, at a time when similar buildings were being built throughout Europe for the purpose of housing disinterred human skeletal remains. It is likely that many more charnel chapels were once in existence in England but that, during the Reformation in the 16th century, doctrinal changes resulted in the clearance and repurposing of many chapels. Thus the locations or original functions of

many medieval ossuaries were forgotten. In consequence, the survival of Rothwell charnel chapel and ossuary creates a unique opportunity to further understand the of charneling practices in the medieval period, gain insight into the role of human remains in medieval Christian religious practice and explore the relationship of Rothwell's current community with this unique and compelling part of their heritage.

The Rothwell project began two years ago with academic research by current doctoral and masters students in concert with community engagement activities such as open days and ossuary tours led by students themselves. We have received a huge amount of community support, alongside small pots of academic funding, but we have yet to embed the project fully into teaching or developed a sustainable link between students, the local community and the project. We are keen to embed the project more firmly in the curriculum and produce a means of dissemination of our activities further beyond the walls of academia.



**“Designed to host diverse, interactive and open access materials created by staff and students, the website will promote and disseminate ongoing work at the chapel.”**

# Urban Design Methodologies and Tools for the Engaged Practitioner

## **Summary**

This project built on work around tools and methods for creative engagement within urban design and transformations developed within the context of our MA in Urban Design (MAUD). We've worked with students, partners and participants to co-produce ways of sharing and representing our understanding about the processes of changes within Sheffield. We also produced an accessible web resource and a booklet summarising the theoretical ideas underpinning this approach to engaging with the city.

## **Who is involved?**

The primary beneficiary of the project are current and future MAUD students. The tools produced help in shaping a new breed of engaged urban design practitioners. At the core of the course is using the city of Sheffield as a laboratory and working with local communities to understand and propose changes in the city. We seek to create frameworks for meaningful engagement and cooperation with partners and interested parties. This year we worked with stakeholders in the Wicker/Riverside area (residents, businesses, local authority) and MAUD students run a public event (Design Charrette) during Sheffield Urban Design Week, with support from Aukett Swanke, the Academy of Urbanism, and Sheffield City Council.

## **What motivated the project?**

For a number of years we have developed innovative ways of working collaboratively in the city as part of MAUD design modules and, yet, every year, as we start to work with a new cohort of students, we experience the need for an accessible systematic and analytic collection of tools, methods, experiences and reflections on those experiences.

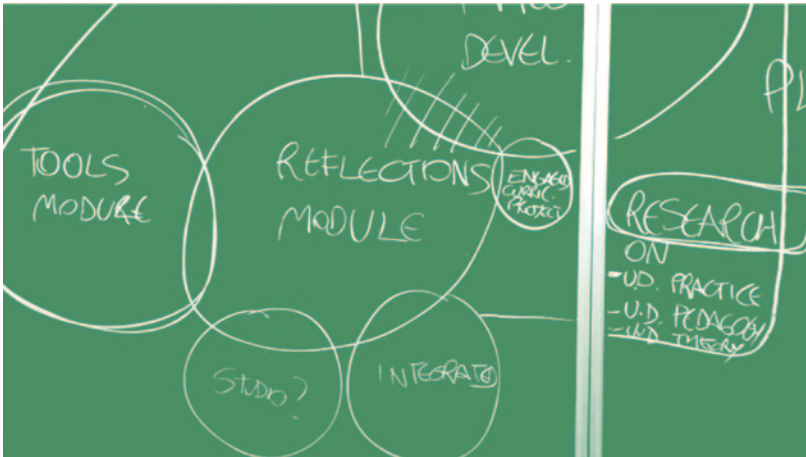
## **What will people get out of this work?**

Current MAUD students get the opportunity to be involved in a research project about how to learn/teach and communicate engaged projects in the city, strengthening the reflective aspects of their learning. Future MAUD students will benefit from an accessible and comprehensive resource to inspire them to do more engaged projects whilst giving practical pointers about how to do it. The local community benefited from the work carried out this year and will have access to documentation about it. The wider Higher Education community will also benefit from the shared resources we've produced.

## **What's different about engaged learning and teaching?**

The overall approach of the MAUD course is underpinned by a strong desire to address inequalities and to forge a new breed of practitioners who are equipped with skills and tools to tackle inequalities at all levels. The skills are developed within the course first, working with local communities in Sheffield, but are also deployed later in whichever context students work in after completing the course.





### What are your key principles for doing this kind of work?

Doing anything that genuinely engages with others is intrinsically more complicated and demanding, but also more rewarding. A clear ethical stance is paramount with any engagement activity. Sustained engagement is a commitment not to be underestimated. With our project we focussed on the development of engaged practitioners through short engagement projects, supported by resources on the theory and practice of engaged approaches to urban design. In practical terms this type of learning and teaching might require additional resources or could be compromised by efficiency measures, so it is particularly important that the value of this approach is understood by managers.

### Is there anything else you'd like to say?

We presented our project at the Biennial of Public Space in Rome (May 2015) within a session run by UN-Habitat in which they launched their 'Global Toolkit for Public Space'. Participants commented that our approach of focussing on the pedagogy of engagement within cities and on creating a new breed of engaged practitioners was complementary to that of the UN-Habitat Global Toolkit for Public Space, targeted at local authorities, and was an important piece of the jigsaw.

# Voices of the Bottle Ovens: Oral History In Stoke-on-Trent

## Summary

The project was a collaboration between second year English Language and Linguistics undergraduate students and Stoke-on-Trent museums. Its aim was for students to use an existing oral history archive and create excerpts for use in revamped exhibitions in the Gladstone Pottery museum, a working museum in Stoke-on-Trent.

## Who is involved?

Students from the School of English, and Stoke-on-Trent museums.

## What motivated the project?

The project came about as the result of the (re) discovery of a large oral history resource that had been collected in the early 2000s. The archive was in storage and not being used. Along with other researchers in linguistics, we're using the archive to perform research into the dialect of Stoke-on-Trent, and there is a PhD student working on the material. I wanted to find a way for undergraduate students to work on the data as well, and the museum was keen for the archive to have as much use as possible.

## What will people get out of this work?

By using the recordings to edit excerpts for the public to listen to, the students are using key skills developed over the course of their degree, exploring an under-used resource, and ensuring that thousands of members of the public get to hear the voices from the archive again.





### **What's different about engaged learning and teaching?**

Engaged teaching and learning means that students get to appreciate how they will use the skills learned over the course of their degree in the 'real world', and to understand the applications of their subject. The students clearly enjoy and appreciate this type of project, as evidenced by some examples of module feedback:

"The project was something completely different to what I've done before and I feel like I will have achieved something as well as just writing essays."

"I liked that this module was very different to any other module in the sense that we were able to go on a trip to a museum and that we actually get to see how the ELL course can contribute to a real life project."

### **What are your key principles for doing this kind of work?**

My key principles for this sort of work are to develop a strong and meaningful partnership with those you wish to work with, and to then design a project that allows students to apply some of the skills they've learned elsewhere in their degree to a meaningful problem.

**"The project was something completely different to what I've done before and I feel like I will have achieved something as well as just writing essays."**

# Experiencing Britain Through the Education System: Local and Global Voices

## Summary

This project links together Masters students in the School of Education, who are predominantly international, with a number of migrant communities in Sheffield (the Afro-Caribbean, Pakistani, Roma-Slovak, and asylum seeker communities). The students work with individuals or community groups to develop a digital artefact that speaks to their different experiences of Britishness and education. These resources are showcased at the end of the project, with the addition of a further artefact by the students themselves, reflecting on their experiences during the project.

## Who is involved?

City of Sanctuary; Individuals from a local secondary school; a local supplementary school concerned with Islamic education; and a graduate of this university working with Afro-Caribbean families who are experiencing social exclusion.

**“Empowerment is one key principle, both of members of the local communities, and of the students.”**

## What motivated the project?

The work grew out of existing links within the School of Education with the different communities involved, and an ongoing concern to problematise both notions of national identity, and formal education, with students whose international or cross-cultural experiences may be limited. The project is also a way to continue addressing the School of Education’s aspiration to develop both research and educational practice that inform each other, and work towards a more just and inclusive society.



### What will people get out of this work?

We hope that the community partners will take from the work closer engagement with the University, greater clarity about their own educational experiences and beliefs, and a better understanding of the experiences of international students. The students should develop a more nuanced understanding of concepts of education, and of national and personal identity. Staff should see the benefits of this approach in future students' work, and develop their own links with communities who make up essential parts of the fabric of the city.



### What's different about engaged learning and teaching?

Ambition. It seeks to do more than impart information to students, or develop a certain set of skills, as important as these are. It seeks to make a positive difference in the world, and to place the intellectual, cultural, and material resources of the University in the service of local communities. It also aims to be more about doing, than talking about doing.

### What are your key principles for doing this kind of work?

Empowerment is one key principle, both of members of the local communities, and of the students. This empowerment is intended to enhance social justice, providing a space for groups and individuals who may be marginalised within society to understand their circumstances more effectively, and identify ways in which they can be changed. It is also intended to raise aspirations, especially amongst groups, such as Afro-Caribbean boys, who are currently significantly under-represented in higher education.

### Is there anything else you'd like to say?

Being ambitious and seeking social justice take time - and while you can get a long way on the goodwill of individuals involved, ways of freeing up their time to facilitate the work is always going to be desirable.

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[www.shef.ac.uk/als/current/engaged](http://www.shef.ac.uk/als/current/engaged)

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