



# **Student Engagement in the U.K. and Japan:**

**Engaging the student voice for quality  
enhancement and assurance**

8<sup>th</sup> June 2019

The 22nd Annual Conference of the JAHER  
Masahiro TANAKA (University of Tsukuba)  
Luke MILLARD (Birmingham City University)



# Purpose

- We aim to offer quality assurance suggestions for Japan by referring to the case of Birmingham City University (BCU) in England.
  - We clarify how students participate in quality assurance and enhancement processes at the University (Brand and Millard 2019).
    1. the nature of student engagement through formal mechanisms
    2. the types of activities undertaken by student evaluators
    3. the influence of students through staff–student partnerships on quality assurance.



# Argument

- We argue that Japanese universities should enable students to participate in internal quality assurance activities as **‘meaningful partners’** working together with faculty and staff members.
  - Students are in a unique position that enables them to evaluate and critique the quality of education from a different perspective than that of the university’s faculty and staff.



# Contents

- Problems in Japan
- A Case Study at BCU
- Conclusion



# Problems in Japan



# The Third Cycle

- The third cycle of the Quality Assurance and Accreditation System in Japan begun in 2018.
- Prior to this, on 18th March 2016, the Central Council for Education published a report entitled *Towards the Enhancement of the Quality Assurance and Accreditation System*.
  - This report states the basic thinking behind specific measures to improve the system.



# The Basic Thinking

- ‘This report is aimed at the improvement of the Quality Assurance and Accreditation System by shifting emphasis to the **qualitative improvement** of educational and research activities. Given the diverse array of activities that each university conducts in line with their own objectives, quality assurance at universities would involve independent and autonomous quality assurance activities (internal quality assurance). Based on this, the system should **focus on internal quality assurance functions** as an autonomous reform cycle at each university’ (Central Council for Education in Japan 2016: 3).



# Historical Reflection

- This highly regarded line of thinking is based on historical reflection that, until now, the Quality Assurance and Accreditation System ‘has had many external assessments for matters such as conformity to regulations. As such, it did not necessarily focus on the qualitative improvement of educational and research activities’ (Central Council for Education in Japan 2016: 2).





# Missing Point

- However, one crucial point is missing.
- There is a deeply rooted assumption that the subjects of this internal quality assurance have been the universities themselves (faculty and staff), and the idea that students might also **share the responsibility** of improving the quality of their own education has been lacking.



# Stakeholders or Partners?

- ‘Students’ are understood by the report to be the targets or beneficiaries of activities to understand and assess individual academic achievements, or they are included as one group of stakeholders.
- Rarely are they construed as ‘collaborators’ in the process of internal quality assessment (that is, partners to faculty and staff).



# Responsibility

- The notion that students have a responsibility in the implementation of internal quality assurance is certainly gaining traction across countries outside Europe (Tanaka 2019a).
- Thus, we would like to provide an overview of the pioneering attempts of student participation at BCU.
  - It also aims to suggest what Japan may learn from these initiatives.



# **A Case Study at Birmingham City University (UK)**

## OUR UNIVERSITY 2017-18:

Overall size:  
**24,500**  
STUDENTS  
[on campus]

**42%** of our students  
are recruited  
from Birmingham

**63%** of students are  
commuters

**84%**  
satisfaction  
in the NSS  
(3% above  
benchmark)

**40%**  
studied  
solely BTECs

**80%**  
of our full-time  
undergraduate  
intake comes  
from main cycle  
recruitment  
[Home/EU]

**63%**  
of our students  
are female

**20%**  
are mature  
learners

**49%**  
of students  
are BME  
[FT UG entrants]

**68%**  
of total  
population  
is Home/  
EU full-time  
undergraduate

**32%** of our students  
are from the  
lowest IDACI  
income group

We recruit students from over  
**100 DIFFERENT COUNTRIES**



**BIRMINGHAM CITY**  
University

## STRATEGIC PLAN REFRESH

2018-2020

**“WITHOUT BCU'S  
EXPERTISE AND  
ENCOURAGEMENT  
I WOULD NEVER  
HAVE REALISED  
MY POTENTIAL”**

Marianne Kipling  
Radiography graduate, 2016





# Policy overview in UK

- Office for Students = regulator
- QA v QE (England v Scotland)
- QAA guidance not regulation
- Institutional inspection for quality of provision
- Professional body accreditation

## UK Quality Code for Higher Education

Part A: Setting and Maintaining  
Academic Standards

The Frameworks for  
Higher Education Qualifications  
of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies

October 2014



PART  
A



# Teaching Excellence Framework

**Offers strategic clarity in the relationship between**

- institutional policies;
- practices and student;
- student outcomes.



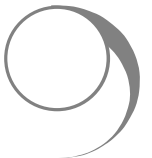
## **Metrics:**

- National Student Survey
- Continuation
- Student Outcomes (employment)

**Teaching Excellence  
and Student  
Outcomes  
Framework: subject-  
level**

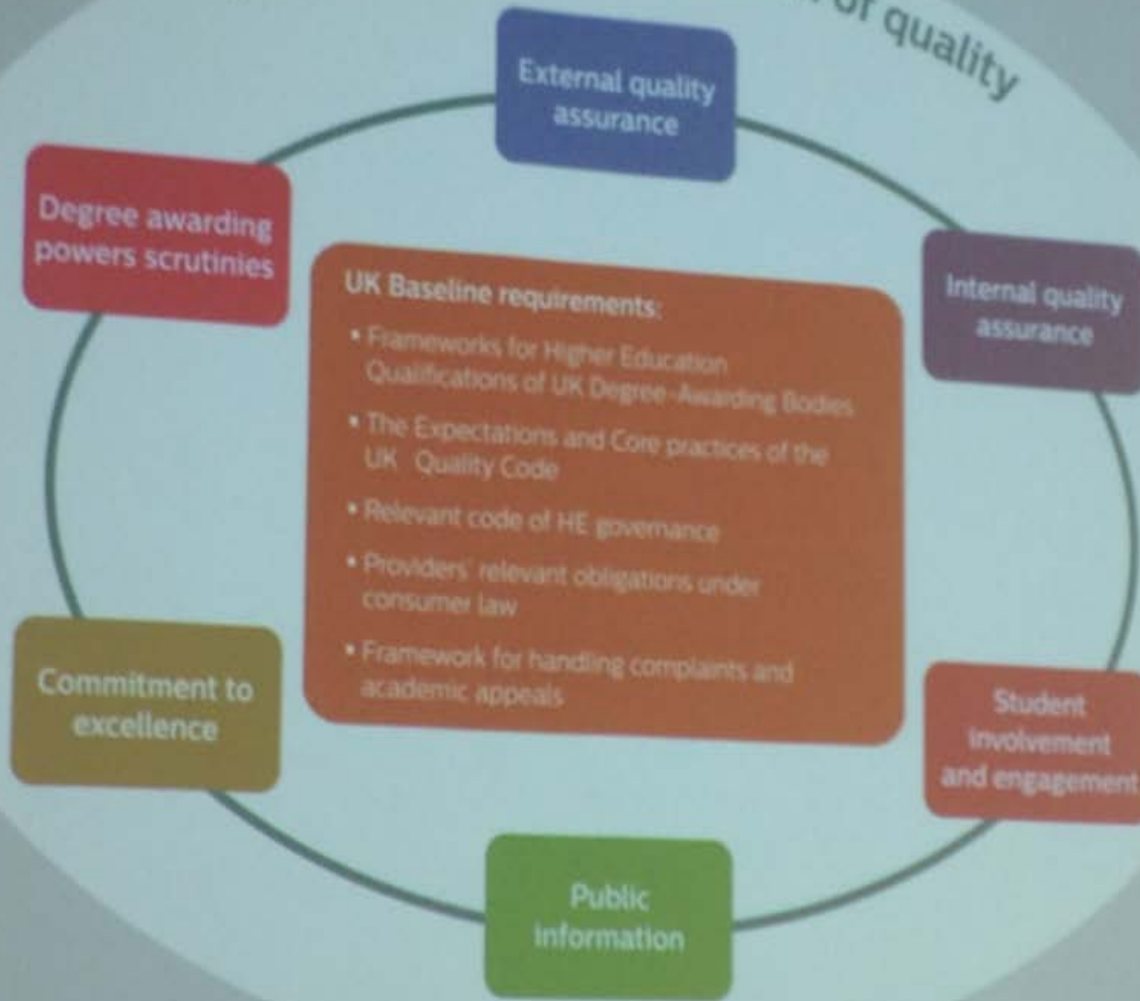
Consultation document

Launch date 12 March 2018  
Respond by 21 May 2018

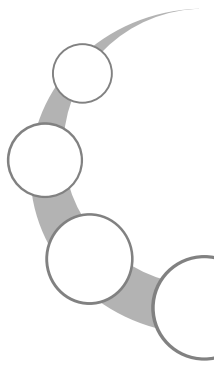




# The inter-connected system of quality







**ADMISSIONS,  
RECRUITMENT AND  
WIDENING ACCESS**



**ASSESSMENT**



**CONCERNS,  
COMPLAINTS AND  
APPEALS**



**COURSE DESIGN  
AND DEVELOPMENT**



**ENABLING  
STUDENT  
ACHIEVEMENT**



**EXTERNAL  
EXPERTISE**



**LEARNING AND  
TEACHING**



**MONITORING AND  
EVALUATION**



**PARTNERSHIPS**



**RESEARCH  
DEGREES**



**STUDENT  
ENGAGEMENT**



**WORK-BASED  
LEARNING**



## UK Quality Code for Higher Education

Advice and Guidance  
Student Engagement



# Expectations and practices

This Theme describes the **meaningful participation of students** in quality assurance and enhancement processes, which results in the improvement of their educational experience as well as benefiting the wider student body, institution and sector. For student engagement to **contribute effectively to quality assurance and enhancement processes**, it needs to capture the voices of all students, irrespective of location, mode of delivery, level of study, or discipline.

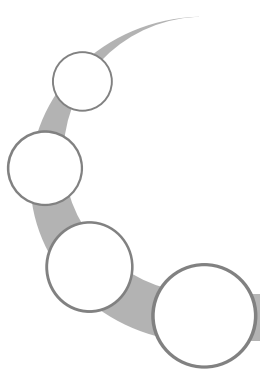


## Expectation for quality

Courses are well-designed, provide a high-quality academic experience for all students and enable a student's achievement to be reliably assessed.

*Learning is a partnership; the effort and engagement of students is an essential aspect of their achievement. Students provide an invaluable perspective on the conditions needed for a high-quality academic experience and how this can be continuously improved.*

*Students can provide feedback, work collaboratively with staff and other stakeholders as they consider feedback and other quality indicators and work as co-creators of the curriculum. These activities will contribute to effective course design and approval, periodic review and the recognition of high-quality teaching.*



## Core practice

- **The provider actively engages students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience.**

*In practice, this means that effective, meaningful and inclusive student engagement requires continuous effort to ensure the development of new and innovative approaches.*

*Students can engage individually in their learning and in quality processes, which might involve working in partnership with individual staff, or groups of staff and other students. However, individual student feedback is not a substitute for formal structures of collective student representation.*

*Collective student engagement involves students considering, deliberating and developing informed views, independent from the provider, which are representative of the wider student body. Collective engagement will happen primarily through the student representative structures such as course/class/faculty representatives, and where they exist through the students' representative body (such as the students' union, association or guild).*



# Guiding principles on SE (QAA Code)

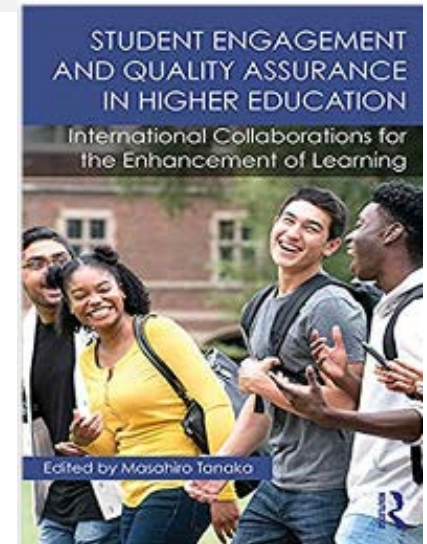
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- It is strategic but widely owned;
- Students and staff can define, own and promote the full range of opportunities for student engagement in quality assurance and enhancement processes;
- Effective student engagement supports enhancements, innovation and transformation in the community within and outside the provider, driving improvements to the experience of students;
- Arrangements exist for effective representation of the collective student voice at all organisational levels including decision-making bodies;
- Providers recognise and respond to the diversity of their student body in the design and delivery of student engagement, partnership working and representation processes.

# Internal University quality measures

## Assurance

- Student voice through representation;
  - Module evaluation
  - Validation and re-approval of courses
  - Course health checks (by exception)
- 
- Consistency and coherence (academic appointments)
- 
- Enhancement projects – learning community



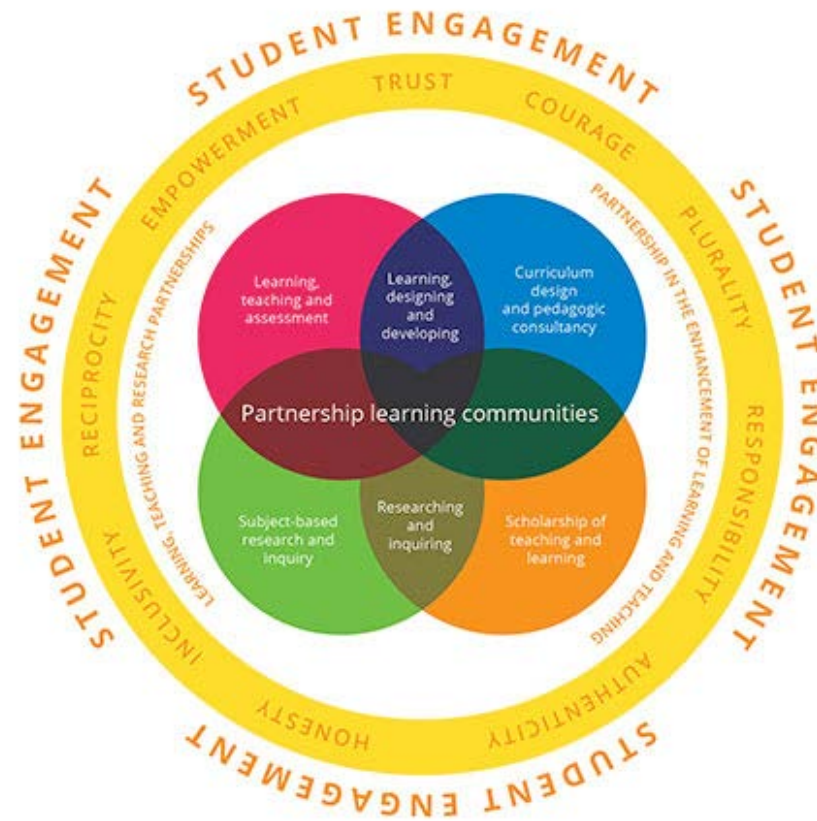
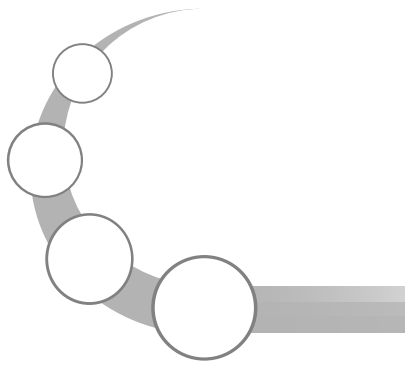


## Blog – Peter Bryant

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*“There is so much telling and not enough listening in terms of student engagement. We assume so much through distorted and blurry filter of our own experiences as students. **We need to find ways to hear the stories of students, understand them and incorporate them into any change we initiate. This is more than representation, surveys and feedback loops. We need to know what the students ‘want’.**”*

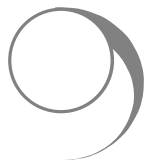
<http://www.peterbryant.org/?p=750>



© Higher Education Academy, 2015

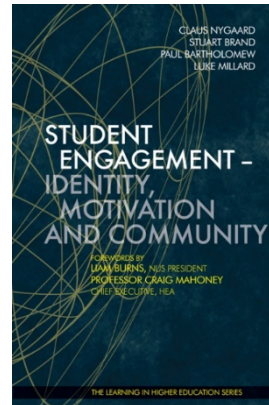
# HEA Framework for Student Engagement through Partnership

<https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/institutions/consultancy/frameworks/student-engagement>



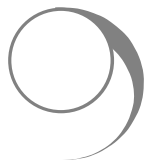


# BCU Student Engagement focus



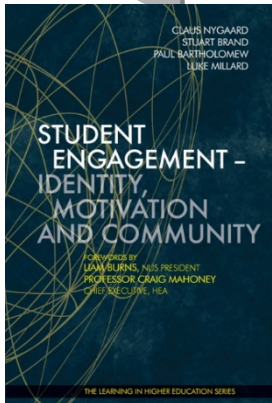
## Developing the learning community at BCU

Pascarella & Terenzini (2005:647) stated that *“the greatest impact (on success) appears to stem from students’ total level of campus engagement, particularly when academic, interpersonal, and extracurricular involvements are mutually reinforcing”*.



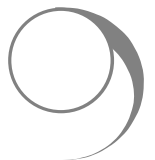
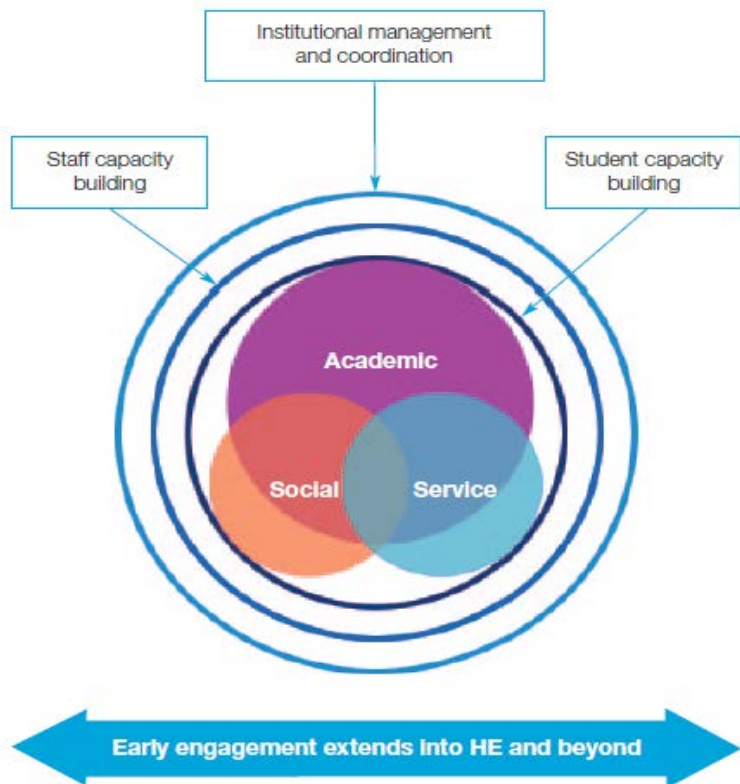
# ◦ Partnership Ethos

- Generating the Learning Community across campuses from consistent NSS/PTES/ Piloting Engagement Survey
- Co-creation of the learning experience
  - Recipient / Consumer / Participant / Collaborator
- Activities are student led and delivered at the interface
- Partnership with the Students' Union
- Student recognition (payment and awards)

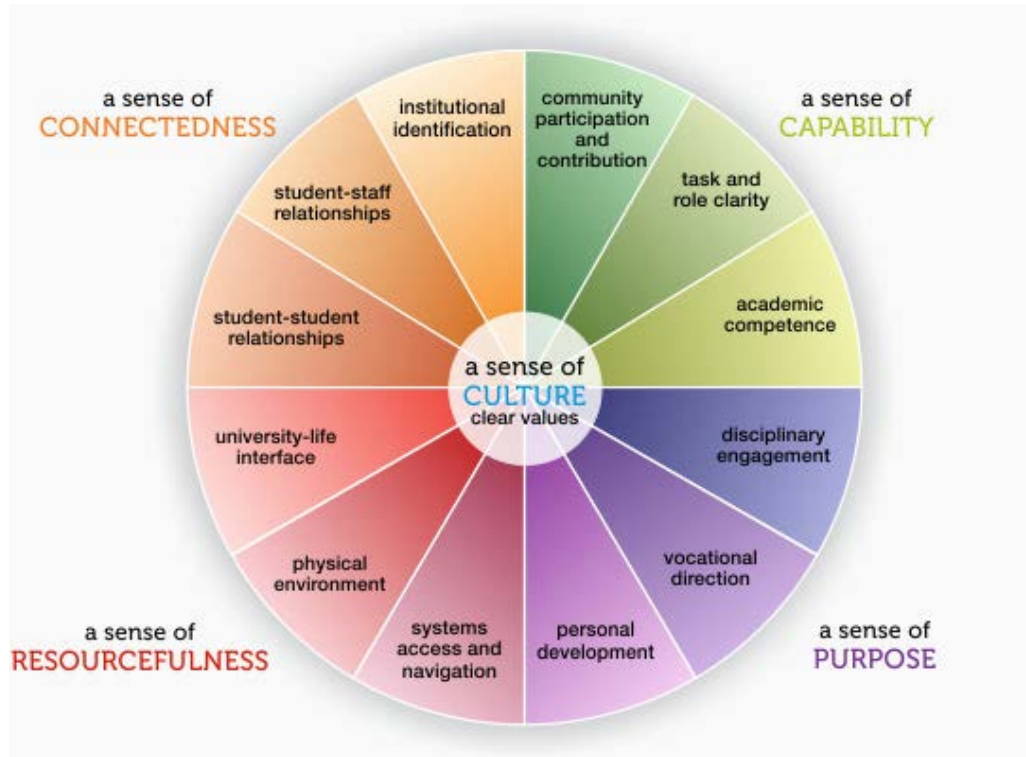


# Partnerships and integration

## What Works? Student retention and success

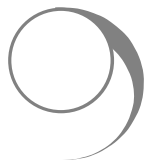


# ◦ Coherence and beyond engagement



## ◦ DESIGNING AN ORIENTATION AND TRANSITION STRATEGY FOR COMMENCING STUDENTS

- A conceptual summary of research and practice
- Alf Lizzio (2006)



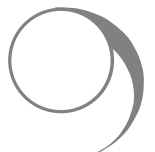
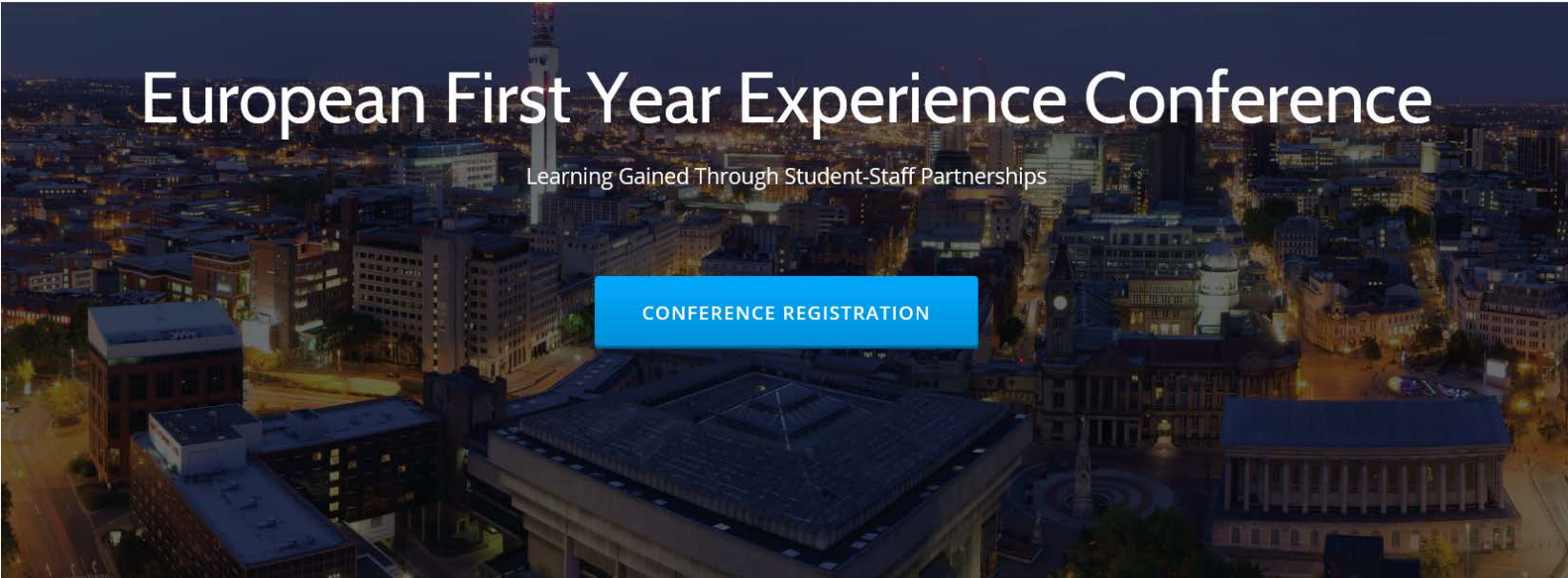
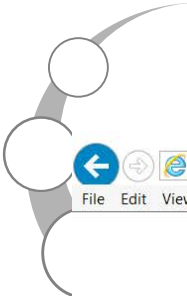


◦ **Students' success at university depends on their sense of academic culture**

- Successful students need to know the value of learning 'how things are done' and what is important or valued in new culture. A student's sense of cultural competence depends on their appreciation of the core values and ethical principles of the university and how these will inform their approaches to study and working relationships with fellow students (and staff)  
**(Lizzio 2006)**









# McMillan and Chavis (1986)

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**Membership:** Membership is the feeling of belonging or of sharing a sense of personal relatedness.

**Influence:** a sense of mattering, of making a difference to a group and of the group mattering to its members.

**integration and fulfillment of needs.** This is the feeling that members' needs will be met by the resources received through their membership in the group.

**Shared emotional connection,** the commitment and belief that members have shared and will share history, common places, time together, and similar experiences.





## Top Ten Tips: BSc (Hons) Radiography

Current Radiography students worked to reduce anxiety for new starters by creating three online videos and a supporting community. The videos provide tips under three categories: Academic Studies, Clinical Practice and Social Activity.

## When Your First Year is Also Your Last Year: BA (Hons) Early Childhood Studies Top-up degree

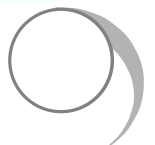
This project recruited three Student Curriculum Design Consultants to work with staff and the current cohort of Early Childhood Studies Top-up degree students to identify ways in which the transition into University-life and top-up degrees could be enhanced. The consultants worked with the course team to develop support materials and amendments to course design in response to these consultation findings.

## Student Life Hacks – Video Series: Faculty of Computing, Engineering and the Built Environment (CEBE)

Staff and students produced a series of short, informative YouTube videos for the faculty, acting as 'how to guides' for a number of academic and technical skills e.g. Harvard Referencing, academic writing. They were designed to provide student friendly explanations and give more lecture time to course content.

## Preparing to Moot – A Step-by-Step Guide: BA (Hons) Law

This project supported three second year Law students to research and draft a book around Mooting. The book, 'Preparing to Moot,' is being published by Routledge and aims to provide a step-by-step guide for students new to mooting on how to analyse problems and research relevant laws.







**Sophie Grace Rowe**  
@Sophie\_PhD

Follow

It was a pleasure to present at #BCUFutures2018. For those that missed it, check out our short film from The Blind Truth project - exposing some of the barriers to learning with sight loss [youtu.be/Tu7QhgYmadw](https://youtu.be/Tu7QhgYmadw)

@MyBCU @BCUVC @Millluca  
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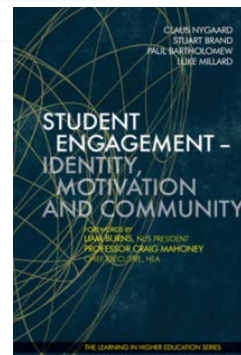
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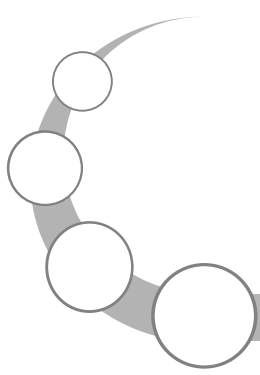
# BCU LEARNING AND TEACHING FUTURES 2018

CURZON BUILDING  
17 JULY 2018

## Student Academic Partners (SAP)

SAP provides an opportunity to integrate students into the academic community of the University. It generates a sense of ownership and pride in the institution and its programmes through a scheme that provides students and staff with a direct opportunity to work collaboratively to strengthen learning and teaching at the University for the benefit of all. Over the past ten years SAPs have delivered over 500 projects and have seen the employment of over 1500 students. These projects have substantially impacted upon the learning experience for our students and outcomes have become embedded across many schools and programmes.





# Conclusion



# The Three Elements (1)

- We conclude that Japanese universities should embody the three elements explained in our findings.
  - The first element suggests that Japanese universities should **implement a formal mechanism to integrate student voices** into all aspects of the university quality and governance process.
    - Student feedback should be collected both individually and collectively.



## The Three Elements (2)

- The second element recommends that Japanese universities should **directly involve student representatives** in various activities concerning internal quality assurance.
  - These activities would include monitoring, periodic review, and participate in the approval process of new programmes.
- The third element encourages Japanese universities to regard students as **‘meaningful partners’** to faculty and staff members.
  - The word ‘meaningful’ in this case suggests that students can collaborate with university staff in addressing shared goals for quality enhancement and assurance.



# Partnership Culture

- In order to embody these three elements, Japanese universities need to **create a culture of partnership** with students.
  - This may not be easy, in part based on lingering ill-will fuelled by historical conflicts between students and universities in the late 1960s (Tanaka 2019b).
- We believe that past differences are not insurmountable as the benefits clearly favour all stakeholders, with students and their educational experiences being most prominent among them.
  - Indeed, the British have done this successfully in multiple institutions.

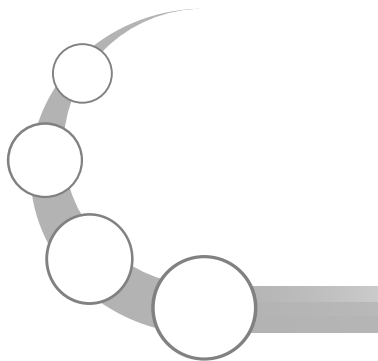


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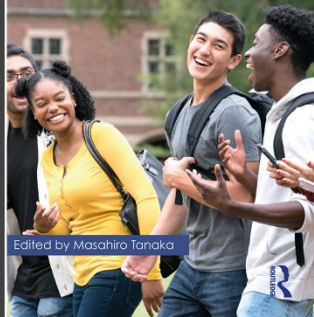
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## STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND QUALITY ASSURANCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

International Collaborations for  
the Enhancement of Learning



Edited by Masahiro Tanaka

January 2019; 234x156; 172pp  
13 illustrations

Hb: 978-0-367-13282-8 | £105.00 £84.00

Pb: 978-0-367-13283-5 | £29.99 £23.99

eBook: 978-0-429-02564-8

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## Student Engagement and Quality Assurance in Higher Education

International Collaborations for the  
Enhancement of Learning

Edited by **Masahiro Tanaka**

Using a range of international examples to compare the reality, purpose and effect of student engagement in universities across the globe, this book argues that teachers and students need to collaborate to improve the quality of university education and student learning. With case studies from ten countries covering a variety of cultural and environmental settings, it focusses on ways of working with students to produce applicable, implementable strategies for universities the world over. This book is essential reading for educational researchers, institutional leaders and all concerned with the implementation and progression of student engagement and quality assurance in higher education.

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