



# 17th Annual Academic Development Symposium

**Wednesday 29th April 2026**

**From Participation to Belonging:  
Exploring Student and Staff Perspectives  
on Engagement**

**POSTER SUBMISSIONS**

## INTRODUCTION

This poster e-booklet showcases pedagogical research and teaching practice from across the University. The posters align with the Symposium's theme From Participation to Belonging: Exploring Student and Staff Perspectives on Engagement and illustrate ways in which we are addressing the theme. There will be two awards this year.

The Digital Accessibility Award will be selected by a judging panel consisting of staff in the Digital Skills team and the Centre for Academic Development, who have received extensive training in digital accessibility.

The Popular Vote Award will be voted for by the Symposium delegates on the day. While judging the posters for the Popular Vote Award, you are encouraged to use the following criteria:

- Creativity, visual appeal and flair of the poster
- Legibility and clarity of the information presented
- Balance of text and diagrammatic information
- Succinctness of the information presented
- Innovative teaching and learning or research content

## VOTING INSTRUCTIONS

Voting is open only to Symposium delegates (whether attending in person, online, or a mix of both). Using the guidelines above, please cast your ONE vote by scanning the QR code below or by following this link:

<https://forms.cloud.microsoft/e/eGWxZu4QCU>

Voting opens at 8:30 and closes at 3pm on WEDNESDAY 29 APRIL. Professor Jo-Anne Murray, Vice-Principal (Education) and Samuel Seymour, Vice President Education, Students' Union will present the Digital Accessibility Award and the Popular Vote Award at 15:40-16:00.

**YOUR VOTE WILL BE ANONYMOUS.**

Poster Voting: Annual Academic  
Development Symposium 2026



## Posters

	Page
<b>01: Peer-Assisted Learning for Inclusive Medical Education</b>	
Alyaa Mostafa .....	7
<b>02: Designing Inclusive Women's Health Education for Diverse Learner Journeys</b>	
Alyaa Mostafa .....	8
<b>03: A student as partners approach to developing online interactive physiology case studies</b>	
Catriona Cunningham.....	9
<b>04: Five Barriers to Engagement in Online Settings and Some Solutions</b>	
Elaine Marie Harrison .....	10
<b>05: Delivering Tailored and Personalised Support for Medical School Interview Preparation</b>	
Hanah Abdel-Fattah.....	11
<b>06: What Drives Student Engagement, and Why Does it Matter?</b>	
O. Auld and K. Russell .....	12
<b>07: Negotiating Transition in Higher Education: Preparedness, Support and Belonging across students</b>	
E. Gilbert and R. Armstrong.....	13
<b>08: Removing the barriers to accessing statistics support.</b>	
Jacqui Hutchison .....	14
<b>09: SMEG! A double-decker study on student engagement.</b>	
Jean-baptiste Gramain .....	15

- 10: Creating opportunities for group work to foster a sense of community in undergraduate studies.**  
J. Beechey, H. Bryan, M, Blok, S. McWhinnie, J. Kim and A. MacLeod ..... 16
- 11: Bite-Size, Blended, and Effective: A Hybrid Model for AI Staff Development**  
Jennifer Birtleskelman ..... 17
- 12: Implementation of a feedback literacy intervention a**  
Katherine Burgess ..... 18
- 13: Reflections on CAD accessibility initiatives: From audits to accessibility guidance for quantitative subjects**  
Laura Forero ..... 19
- 14: Listening by design: Examining gaps in student course evaluation forms with focus group insights**  
Louisa Lawrie ..... 20
- 15: Celebrating, Connecting and Building Community: The Creation of the UOA Neurodiversity Network**  
Lucy Drysdale ..... 21
- 16: Exploring Student Learning and Ethical Views in an Isolated Tissue Practical: A Pilot Study**  
Nadine Godsman..... 22
- 17: The ABDN internship: fostering belonging and future prospects through work experience**  
Regina Jaschke ..... 23
- 18: From Play to Practice: A quartet card activity to engage pharmacy students with Sustainable Development Goals and inclusive service design**  
Sherly Meilianti..... 24

<b>19:</b>	<b>Raising the voltage: can gamification boost learning in physiology?</b>	
	Silvia Mazzotta .....	25
<b>20:</b>	<b>Who's afraid of copyright?!</b>	
	Timothy Riley .....	26
<b>21:</b>	<b>Co-creation of gamified resources for Immunology education: from taking part to creating together</b>	
	Virtu Solano .....	27

The following four posters are information posters and not included in the poster competition

<b>22:</b>	<b>Designing for Engagement, Monitoring for Success</b>	
	Centre for Academic Development.....	28
<b>23:</b>	<b>Anthology Milestone: Badges</b>	
	Centre for Academic Development.....	29
<b>24:</b>	<b>Course Review Service</b>	
	Centre for Academic Development.....	30
<b>25:</b>	<b>MyAberdeen Open Learning</b>	
	Centre for Academic Development.....	31
<b>26:</b>	<b>How Digital Accessibility Shapes the Student Experience</b>	
	Sophiia Prokhorets .....	32

**POSTER 01**



**Peer-Assisted Learning for Inclusive Medical Education**



**Why Inclusive Learning Matters**

Medical schools are increasingly diverse, requiring strategies that support different experiences and learning styles. Peer-Assisted Learning (PAL) provides opportunities for collaborative learning, confidence building, and shared understanding among students.

**Dr Alyaa Mostafa**  
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 School of Medicine,  
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**PAL in practice**

- Improved clinical skills development
- Comparable knowledge outcomes to faculty-led teaching
- Increased confidence and engagement
- Exposure to diverse perspectives and learning approaches



**Advancing Inclusive Learning in Medical Education**

- Promotes inclusive, collaborative learning
- Builds confidence and teaching skills
- Enhances participation and scalability
- Supports diverse experiences and safe learning spaces

**From Participation to Belonging**

Peer-Assisted Learning is a practical and inclusive approach that transforms student engagement from participation to belonging, while maintaining strong learning outcomes.



# POSTER 02



## Designing Inclusive Women's Health Education for Diverse Learner Journeys



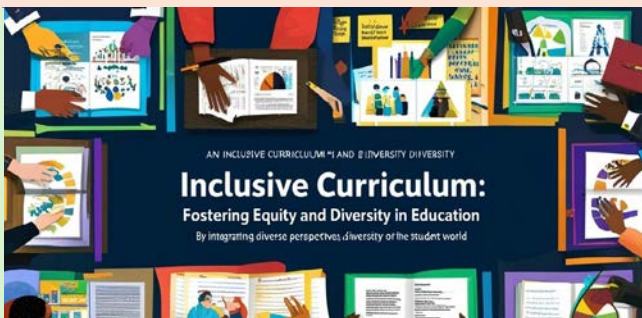
Dr Alyaa Mostafa, Clinical lecturer  
School of Medicine, Medical Sciences  
and Nutrition  
a.mostafa@abdn.ac.uk

### Expanding Women's Health Education

An inclusive postgraduate women's health course was developed at the University of Aberdeen to address gaps in women's health education, bringing together learners from diverse academic and professional backgrounds. Aligned with the University's 2040 Strategy, the course promotes global outreach, inclusivity, and accessibility while supporting the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

### Driving Impact & Innovation

- Offered in Master programs, CPD & on-demand.
- Hybrid format, 100+ students yearly.
- Adapted for Qatar campus and diverse learners.
- Innovative, interactive teaching methods.
- Regularly updated with evidence-based content.



### Learner Experience & Impact

- Learners more engaged with women's health.
- Feel included and represented.
- Enjoy global peer interactions.
- Gain confidence discussing topics.

### Global Awareness & Engagement

- Enhanced understanding of global women's health & critical thinking
- Supported learning, career growth & student participation
- Stimulated dynamic discussions with an engaging, interactive format



# POSTER 03



## A student as partners approach to developing online interactive physiology case studies

Chloe Gilfillan<sup>1</sup>, Edward Morley<sup>1</sup>, Silvia Mazzotta<sup>2</sup>, Catriona J. Cunningham<sup>1</sup>

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### Background

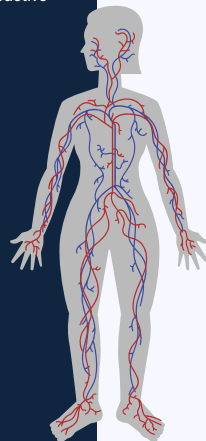
Physiology is a core subject in medical sciences and medicine. However, students often find it challenging due its conceptual nature and a reliance on passive learning methods such as rewatching lecture recordings. Case-based learning is an active learning approach that requires students to apply their knowledge to “real-world” problems.

The aim of our project was to develop a series of interactive open access online case studies to support physiology revision.

Access the case studies here:



[www.physiologycases.co.uk](http://www.physiologycases.co.uk)



### Summary of work

We developed a series of interactive case studies using H5P (HTML5 package). This is a free, mobile-friendly software that enables the creation of a wide range of interactive content without coding, including MCQs and image labelling (Figure 1). Five of the cases were created by undergraduate medical science students during a summer studentship. Anonymous feedback was collected using a short survey in Microsoft Forms.

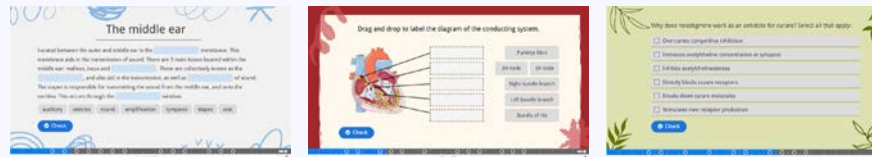


Figure 1: Examples of interactive elements included in case studies. By selecting “Check”, learners can access automated feedback.

### Feedback

Feedback has been very positive, with 96% agreeing the case studies increased their understanding (Figure 2). There were positive free-text comments about the case studies being interactive (n=10) and allowing learners to apply their knowledge (n=5).

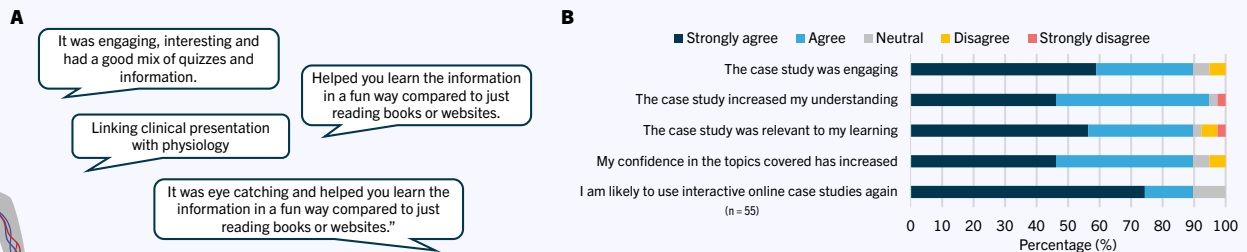


Figure 2: Representative free-text comments (A) and Likert score feedback (B) on all published case studies.

### Take home messages

- Online interactive case studies are an engaging and accessible resource that supports learners' understanding of complex, content-heavy subjects
- H5P is intuitive, enabling students to create content independently in a relatively short period of time
- The students as partners approach was integral to the success of this project

### Acknowledgements

Funded by The Physiological Society (grant ID TPSET05).



# POSTER 04

## Five Barriers to Engagement in Online Settings and Some Solutions



### 1. Technology not working correctly

How many times have you heard "You're on mute!" or "I can't access the link"?

While occasional glitches are inevitable, a bit of digital skills development and advance planning will help you avoid technological annoyances.

- ❖ Set aside time to familiarise yourself with any software or hardware, especially if it's not something you use regularly. You can access self-help material on our Digital Skills Hub, [Toolkit](#) and [YouTube](#). Or attend one of our training sessions.
- ❖ Do a practice run whenever possible. Keep the conditions as close as you can to what they will be during the live session.

### 2. Uncertainty about how to use required platforms

When people aren't comfortable with tools, they often hold back or avoid taking part.

- ❖ Setting expectations in advance and offering clear, practical guidance can ease this.
- ❖ Simple demonstrations, opportunities to try things out without pressure, and support that's easy to find all help build familiarity.

When technology feels manageable, people can focus on the session rather than the mechanics of getting involved.

### 3. Lack of opportunities for interactivity

Digital activities can help you increase engagement and achieve your session outcomes. Try using:

- ❖ Reactions
- ❖ Polls
- ❖ Quizzes
- ❖ Breakout rooms
- ❖ Q&A
- ❖ Whiteboards
- ❖ Meeting chat
- ❖ Interactive videos and games

We mainly use Teams and Vevox at the University of Aberdeen, but you could experiment with other tools such as Padlet and Mentimeter.

### 4. Participants distracted in home or office environments

Online classrooms offer more distractions, from interruptions in the home or office to digital distractions, like social media and multitasking (Wang, 2022).

- ❖ Avoid extended didactic content: use active learning to keep students engaged.
- ❖ Build rapport: a simple icebreaker activity can get students happier with active engagement.
- ❖ Informally assess students periodically to check their engagement and understanding.
- ❖ Short breaks in longer sessions help students refocus.



Image by Wilson Afonso from Sydney, Australia, [CC BY 2.0](#)

### 5. Information and/or work overload

Digitalisation increases the volume and pace of information, pushing beyond our processing limits and making relevance harder to filter (Arnold *et al.*, 2023).

- ❖ Reduce cognitive load by simplifying instructions, improving layout, and removing unnecessary complexity.
- ❖ Chunk information into smaller, meaningful units to support working-memory limits.
- ❖ Use structured time-management techniques like Pomodoro to maintain focus.
- ❖ Limit multitasking and context switching to reduce errors and overload.

#### References

- ARNOLD, M., GOLDSCHMITT, M., AND RIGOTTI, T., (2023). Dealing with information overload: a comprehensive review. *Frontiers in psychology*, 14. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1122200>
- WANG, C., (2022). Comprehensively Summarizing What Distracts Students from Online Learning: A Literature Review. *Human behavior and emerging technologies*, 1. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1155/2022/1483331>

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**POSTER 05**



**Delivering Tailored and Personalised Support for Medical School Interview Preparation**



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**Background:**

Students from lower SIMD backgrounds often have limited access to tailored medical interview preparation.

**Aims:**

This project aimed to improve confidence, preparedness, and understanding through personalised support.



**Results/Feedback:**

Students reported increased confidence, improved answer structure, and greater familiarity with interview formats. Personalised feedback and practice were highly valued. Teachers also observed students were more confident and better prepared.

**Methods**

Intervention	Description
Lunchtime Sessions	School-based delivery for S4-S6 students
Mock Interviews	One-to-one MMIs tailored to medical schools
Workshops	Small-group sessions on key interview skills
Feedback	Structured, individualised feedback provided
Resources	Signposting to free materials (e.g. Good Medical Practice)
Approach	Adapted to individual needs and learning styles



**References:**  
 1. Confidential Medical GMC UK: Regulation: Steps, Hearings, Revalidation & Legal Role [in terms]. Confidential Medical; [cited 2020 Mar 20]. Available from: <http://www.gmc-uk.org/registrationandrevalidation/step-by-step-revalidation-process.aspx>  
 2. The Medical Royal College: The Four Pillars Explained [in terms]. The Medical Royal College; [cited 2020 Mar 20]. Available from: [http://www.rcplondon.ac.uk/education/medical-ethics/medical-ethics/](http://www.rcplondon.ac.uk/education/medical-ethics/medical-ethics)

*...the feedback helped improvement quickly...*

*...now know what to expect and how to answer...*

**Conclusion:**

Personalised interview preparation can reduce barriers, build confidence, and support widening access to medicine.

# POSTER 06

## What Drives Student Engagement, and Why Does It Matter?

A combined analysis of resilience, student engagement, mental well-being, and academic performance in University of Aberdeen students

By Olivia Auld & Kirsty Russell



UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

Supervisor: Dr Heather Brannigan



**Affective (emotional)**

- Emotional interest
- Connection
- Enjoyment

**Cognitive Engagement**

- Self regulated strategies
- Deep processing

**Social Engagement**

- Relationships
- Sense of purpose & belonging

**Student Engagement**

**Behavioral Engagement**

- Participation
- Attendance
- Effort
- Persistence

### Study 1

**Rationale:** University is a major life transition with academic, social, and psychological pressures, and there is limited university-based work examining resilience as a predictor of engagement.

**Core focus:** Resilience as a predictor of student engagement.

**Method:** Participants completed an online survey via Microsoft Forms with scales measuring resilience (RUS) and Student Engagement (USEI)

**RQ:** To what extent does resilience predict overall levels of student engagement among university students?

**Main finding:** Resilience significantly and positively predicted overall student engagement (See Fig 1.) Resilience predicted emotional engagement the strongest (See Fig 2.)

Figure 1

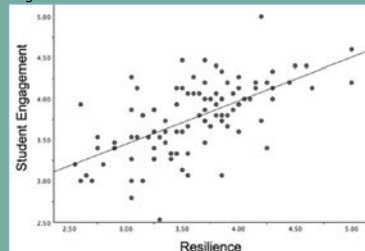
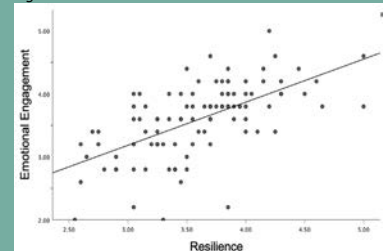


Figure 2



### Study 2

Figure 3

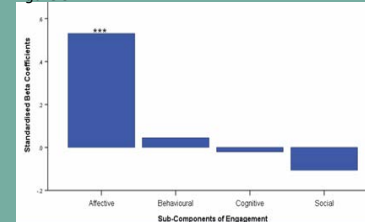
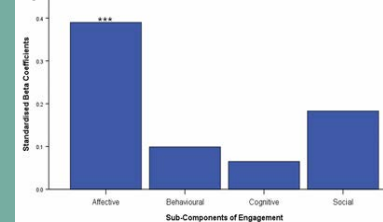


Figure 4



"...when [lecturers] themselves are actually enthusiastic and enjoy the subject, they're speaking about"

"I felt very engaged when I was working on coursework that I was genuinely interested in"

### Key Terms

#### Resilience:

- Dynamic & context dependent
- Adapt to situations
- Use personal strengths & environmental supports
- Sustaining wellbeing

#### Academic Performance:

- Academic achievement
- Knowledge acquisition
- Skill development



#### Mental Wellbeing (MWB):

- Emotional → positive emotions and life satisfaction
- Psychological → sense of purpose, competence, and personal growth
- Social → feeling connected and supported in a community

### Study 2

**Rationale:** student dropout is rising, student MWB declines at university, and research has found that engagement is a predictor of both academic performance and MWB.

**Core focus:** student engagement (sub-components) as a predictor of academic performance and MWB.

#### Research Questions

- RQ1.** Which engagement dimensions best predict mental wellbeing and academic performance?
- RQ2.** How do students describe their experiences of engagement?

**Method:** Participants completed the same engagement questionnaire alongside the MSEHE (incorporating social engagement), MWB (SWEMWBS), and academic performance (self-reported GPA) Included two open-ended questions, allowing students to describe their experiences of engagement

#### Main Quantitative findings (See Fig 3. and 4.):

Affective engagement significantly predicted both academic performance and MWB; other dimensions were not significant  
**Main Qualitative finding (See Quotes):** Students repeatedly described engagement in terms of personal relevance/interest and lecturer enthusiasm/delivery

# POSTER 07

**What are the views of Mature Students regarding the social dimension within the context of institutional support?**

**Participants**

Semi-structured interviews  
12 participants (Aged 22-41) (*SD* = 6.28, *M* = 29.25)

**Example Questions**

- What do you think are the particular advantages that you have, and some of the challenges you have faced, being a mature student?
- Do you think these things are unique to being a mature student?

**Example theme and associated quotes**

Belonging at the University of Aberdeen – Sub-Theme A: the community helps Mature Students to belong and acts as support, Sub-Theme B: Mature Students are unable to/do not want to be a part of the community

"The encouragement and interaction in classes and tutorials,...you were strongly rewarded,... through attention and support"



"I like having my fate in my own hands. Like if I listened to someone and I fail an essay because of them, I'd be really annoyed..."

**What do these Themes tell us?**

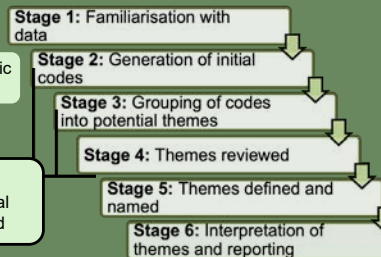
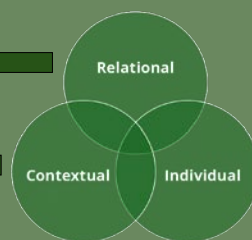
- Mature students manage university transitions by relying on themselves, choosing how they engage, and favouring informal support over institutional provision that doesn't fit their needs.
- **Tinto (1975)** emphasizes academic and social integration
  - However, this research shows that this may not be wanted by Mature Students and shows that lack of engagement from mature students may not be disengagement, rather a deliberate choice
- **Schlossberg's theory of transition** is supported by this theory as there is strong senses of self used for support.
  - This research also brings critique to the theory as support is not always accepted and may not be perceived as relevant or useful
- **Mature Students may not want to engage** or may be in a situation where **engagement is not possible** for them wherein support should be made more widely available for them

## Negotiating Transition in Higher Education: Preparedness, Support and Belonging across students

Erika Gilbert and Rein Armstrong

**Background**

- Transition theory: Any event or non-event inducing individual, behavioural or relational change on domains shown below and an ongoing change
- Reportedly, 40% of students have been found to feel 'ill-prepared'
- Necessitates investigation into facilitation of successful transitions
- Poor preparation or support increases likelihood of negative experiences such as, psychological distress or increased dropout risk (1 in 4 UK students)
- Current support for Mature Students does not consider their unique needs due to the wide use of the "whole university approach" especially in terms of their socialising



Process of Thematic Analysis

During these stages, a critical friend was used

**How do Undergraduate Students at the University of Aberdeen Experience Preparedness and Support in the Context of Individual Dimensions During the Transition from Secondary to Higher Education?**

**Participants**

Semi-structured interviews  
12 participants (aged 18-25) (*SD* = 2.05, *M* = 20.25)

**Example Questions**

- How do you think your level of preparedness affected your personal experience of the university transition?
- Is there anything about you yourself (for example your personality, skills or other commitments) that you think might have influenced your transition to university?

**Example theme and associated quotes**

Students' changing personal identities and skill developments associated with the transition are an ongoing process, occurring before, during, and after starting university, rather than a singular point of change

"An advantage is definitely going to a less privileged school in an area that's not deemed as like a good area ... A disadvantage I'd say is maybe just obviously being a person of colour"



When discussing money handling skills viewed as beneficial for transition, participant 10 said: "I mean this isn't first year, but I'm sort of still counting this as my transition to university in second year"

**What do these Themes tell us?**

- Students do not view individual dimension in isolation, drawing upon **relational and contextual factors** (e.g., the importance of social support) even when asked about transitions in specific context of individual dimension.
  - Individual dimension relationally/contextually constructed whereby, sense of self is shaped through things like interaction or environment.
- Conceptually grounded in **Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory** whereby, human development is shaped by interactions between individuals and interconnected environmental systems.
- Students require further transition related skill preparation than currently offered, **feeling underprepared** in aspects of all domains, causing them to learn necessary skills unassisted. The jump in provision of support from secondary to HE must also be addressed.
- The transition to university is **not a single point of change**, rather a **gradual adjustment**, extending to before tangible changes when beginning university.



# POSTER 08

## Removing the barriers to accessing statistics support

Jacqui Hutchison, Eleanor Matheson, Ewan Bottomley, Morgiane Richard

### BACKGROUND

- It has been observed that many Psychology students appear to lack confidence in their ability to learn statistics. To help address this, a statistics support service was introduced to support student learning. However, engagement with the service has been worrying low.
- Lawson et al. (2020) report many students who would benefit from maths support do not access it. They identify two broad reasons to explain this low engagement: shallow reasons e.g., lack of awareness and how to access support and deep reasons e.g., feeling overwhelmed and demoralised by challenges.
- To address the deep reasons Lawson and colleagues suggest that embedding support within a course may help to address the deep reasons for non-engagement.

### PROJECT AIMS

- Explore whether embedding stats support within a second year Psychology course would increase engagement with statistics support.
- Better understand the reasons for non-engagement.

### METHODS

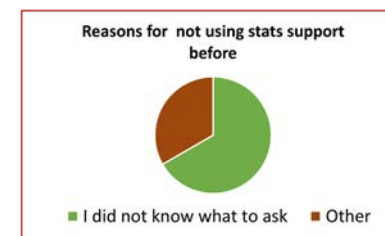
Pre and post session survey designed to explore attitudes to, and knowledge of statistics support. Support session timetabled.

Survey and session advertised across second year Psychology course.

Support session designed around areas of low confidence identified in survey.

Session conducted. Post session survey sent out.

### PRELIMINARY FINDINGS



Pre support session survey suggests students struggle to understand/articulate what help they need.

Key points to consider:

- Providing structured sessions to encourage initial engagement.

Next steps:

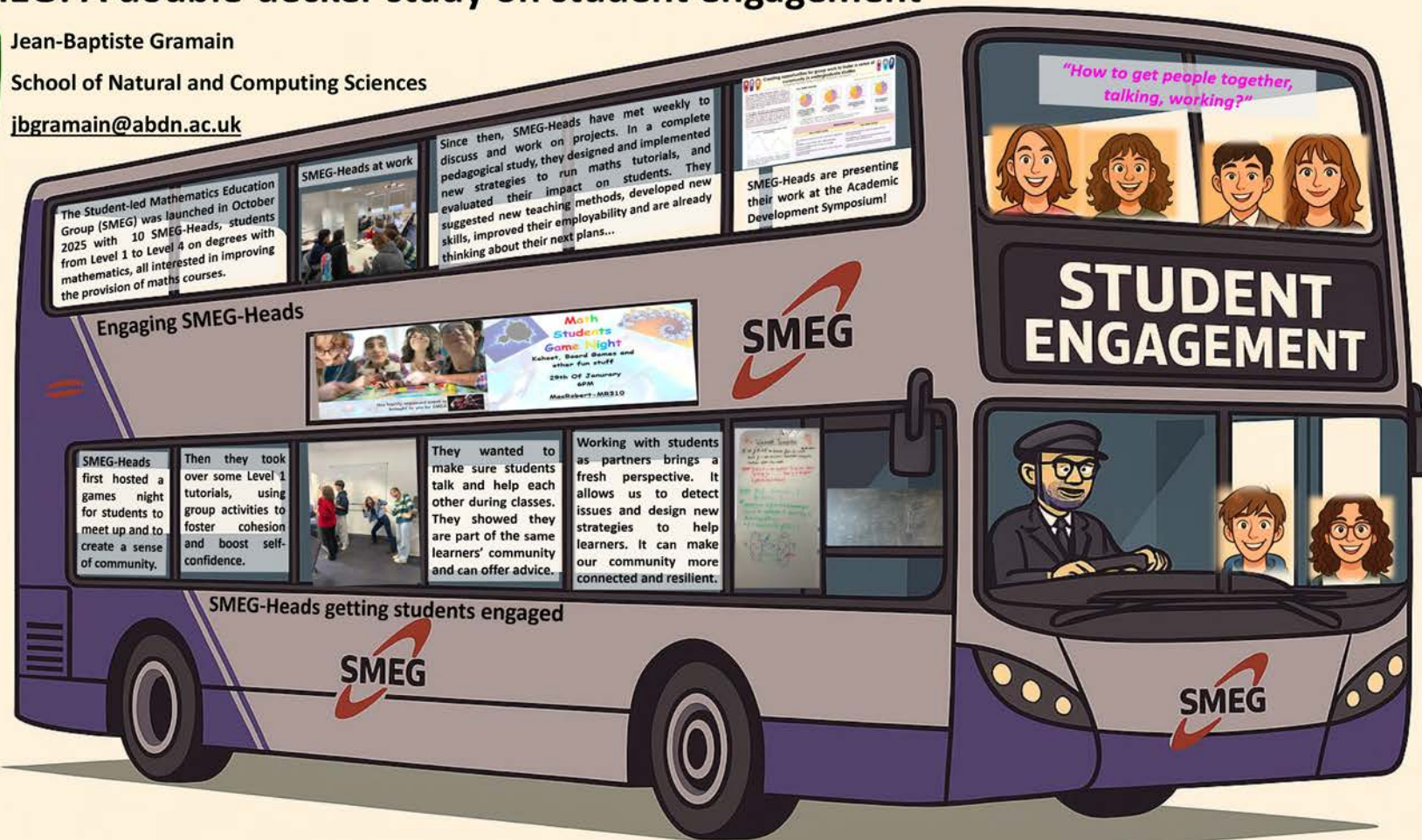
- Await post session survey results to measure any change in attitude to support/confidence with stats.
- Run another session prior to exams.

POSTER 09

# SMEG! A double-decker study on student engagement



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# POSTER 10



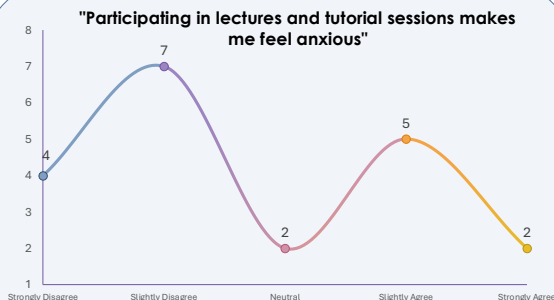
## Creating opportunities for group work to foster a sense of community in undergraduate studies

Jack Beechey, Holly Bryan, Mairi Blok, Samuel McWhinnie, Jihoon Kim, Ailsa MacLeod



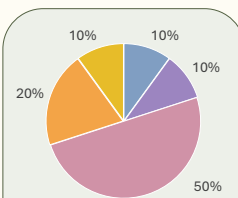
The **Student-led Maths Education Group (SMEG)** is a student-run initiative within the University of Aberdeen's Department of Mathematics dedicated to enhancing the learning experience in our undergraduate courses. Our work centres on tackling mathematical anxiety, promoting collaborative learning, and creating spaces where students can engage with course material, and with each other, in a supportive environment.

In the session 2025/2026 we received funding through the **Learning & Teaching Enhancement Programme (LTEP)** to develop and deliver two weeks' worth of student-run 'SMEG Tutorials' for the Level 1 Set Theory course. Through this project, we sought to foster a stronger sense of community within the mathematics cohort and to provide structured opportunities for students to connect and develop their mathematical thinking together.

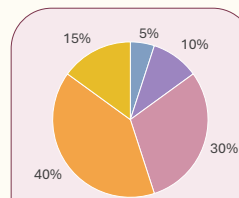


Although many students reported feeling comfortable participating in lectures and tutorials, a significant minority expressed anxiety. This highlights the need for supportive, low-pressure learning spaces.

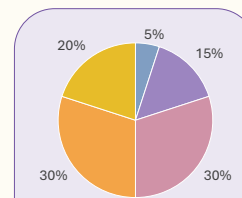
### Our SMEG Tutorials



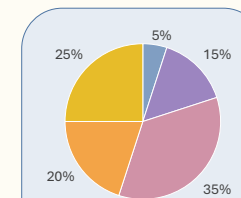
"I felt more comfortable asking questions in SMEG tutorials compared to my regular tutorials."



"The emphasis on methodology for solving Set Theory questions was valuable."



"It felt easier to interact with classmates in SMEG tutorials."



"SMEG tutorials felt more engaging."

- Tables grouped together to promote easier discussion
- Emphasis on a small number of questions, exploring each in greater depth
- Printed questions to encourage rough work first, formal proofs later



### Student Responses

Before SMEG Tutorials	After SMEG Tutorials
<p>I could talk to anyone, but I'm not sure if they would talk to me</p> <p>It feels like no one wants to talk or discuss anything</p> <p>A lot of my classmates are very shy, so I struggle to approach them</p> <p>I'm vaguely friendly with two people, but I don't much like talking to people</p>	<p>SMEG Tutorials definitely made me dread coming to tutorials a lot less</p> <p>The table layout increased our opportunities to speak to classmates which was really nice</p> <p>It was so much better having opportunities to talk to peers. Sitting at table of four automatically prompts conversation</p>

# POSTER 11

## AI Learning Labs

Bite-Size, Blended, and Effective:  A Hybrid Model for AI Staff Development



### The Aim

Providing clear guidance, curated resources, and hands-on training to support responsible, ethical generative AI adoption across education, research, and professional services.

### The Goal

- Building digital confidence and a culture of curiosity and experimentation.
- Encourage a community of practice where staff share experiences, explore new technologies, and develop sustainable AI skills.
- Create a hub for guidance through the AI Learning Lab SharePoint, housing University of Aberdeen's AI Principles and Framework.

### Engagement Highlights

- Strong cross-institution participation
- Most popular sessions explore real-world AI automation and practical, contextual examples.
- Staff value the ability to experiment safely, learn from peers, and engage both online and in person.



“One of the biggest issues we have is protecting the time to advance our skills and AI based projects ...Having hands on, practical help to work out next steps in our Power Automate workflows was brilliant”



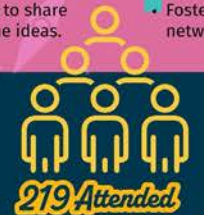
## How Learning Labs

2 hour in person sessions creating a community of practice:

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <b>Experiment</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practical hands on exploration of generative AI tools.</li> <li>• Safe, supportive environment</li> </ul> | <b>Explore</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deeper dives into practical applications</li> <li>• Use cases &amp; examples</li> <li>• Breakout discussions to share experiences and refine ideas.</li> </ul> | <b>Embed</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protected time to embed Gen AI tools into practice</li> <li>• Support from technical experts</li> <li>• Fostering collaboration and networking</li> </ul> |
|--|--|---|



79% Booked Attended



## Lab Notes

Designed to cater for busy staff for "just in time" learning:

- 15-minute, focused training
- Delivered live, recorded for on demand viewing
- Catering for a range of levels and interests.



1. Get Time Back: An Intro to Power Automate
2. The Generative Leap: How We Got from Traditional to Generative AI
3. Creative Intelligence: Generating content with AI



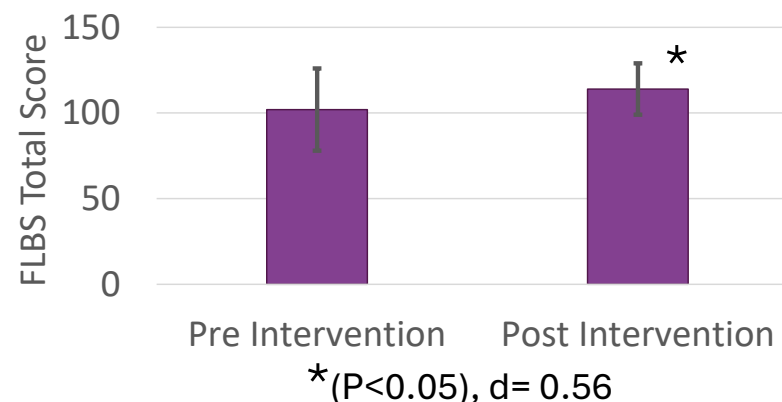
## POSTER 12

# Implementation of a Feedback Literacy Intervention

A feedback literacy intervention was embedded within undergraduate sport programmes at Robert Gordon University. The intervention included dialogue with students regarding feedback literacy and engagement in analysing exemplars and peer feedback.



**Results** showed a significant increase in students' feedback literacy measured via their total score on the previously validated Feedback Literacy Behaviour Scale (FLBS).



Dr Katherine Burgess  
k.burgess@rgu.ac.uk

# POSTER 13



## Reflections on CAD Accessibility Initiatives: From Audits to Accessibility Guidance for Quantitative Subjects

Laura Maria Forero Rincon  
Maija Koukkari  
Dr Morgiane Richard

**1. Introduction** As a public institution, the University of Aberdeen is legally required to meet the [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\)](#) standards and support equal access under the [Equality Act \(2010\)](#) and the [Public Sector Bodies Accessibility Regulations \(PSBAR 2018\)](#) regulations. These, in addition to the [Aberdeen 2040](#) commitment to inclusive digital infrastructure, have informed the work the Centre of Academic Development (CAD) has focused on in the past 5 years. This poster outlines the progress of these initiatives and invites academics to share feedback to shape future institutional guidance.

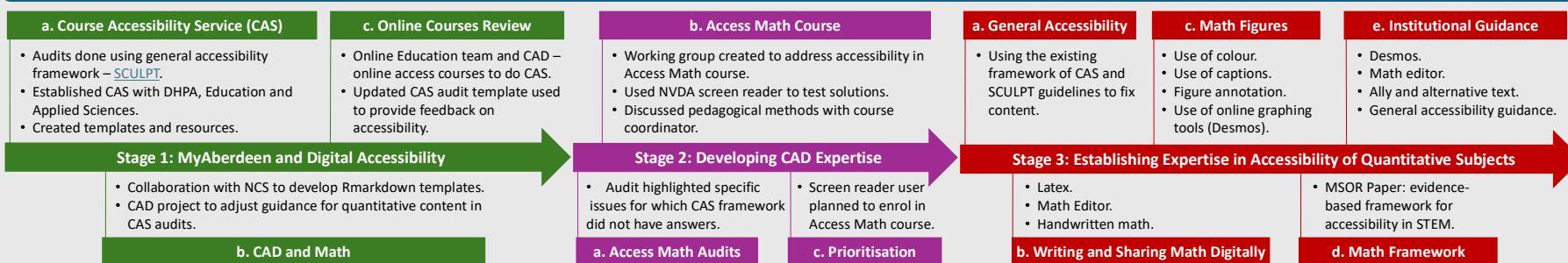


Figure 1: Timeline showing how CAD's accessibility work progressed from audits and service building to understanding STEM-specific challenges, leading to the current approaches to support quantitative subjects.

### 2. Reflections

- Early work on MyAberdeen showed where general guidance was sufficient and where it failed to address the needs of quantitative subjects.
- A joint working group between CAD and the course coordinator was created to focus on the Access Math course, a testing ground for:
  - Applying the CAS framework to address general accessibility;
  - Developing screen reader accessible methods for sharing equations and figures digitally.
- The remediation project allowed to identify what practices to apply:
  - Depending on the type of math content;
  - More broadly for quantitative subjects.
- The results of this research underpin the MSOR paper and has informed the development of institutional guidance for quantitative subjects.

### 3. What Now? Disseminating solutions for UoA staff

Desmos is an online tool to share images that are interactive, screen reader friendly and can be used to create both geometric figures (Figure 2) and graphs (Figure 3). We are creating some templates for sharing quantitative content online and are looking for academics' feedback. Scan the QR code to look at our bank of examples and contribute to our survey.

[Link to Desmos bank of examples and Desmos feedback Survey](#)



Figure 2: Desmos Geometry Tool, showing how points, polygons, and line segments can be added from the left panel to build accessible, interactive math diagrams.

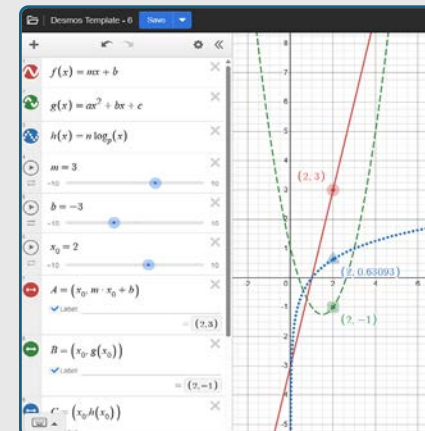


Figure 3: Desmos Graphing Tool, showing editable functions and sliders ( $m$ ,  $b$ , and  $x_0$ ) allowing dynamic exploration of function graphs.

# POSTER 14

## LISTENING BY DESIGN: EXAMINING GAPS IN STUDENT COURSE EVALUATION FORMS WITH FOCUS GROUP INSIGHTS

### Authors

Rida Mir, Samuel Bennett, Dr Louisa Lawrie  
u14m23@abdn.ac.uk, samuel.bennett@abdn.ac.uk, louisa.lawrie1@abdn.ac.uk



### Affiliations

Institute of Applied Health Sciences  
University of Aberdeen

### Introduction

Course evaluation and feedback processes are central to teaching practice in Higher Education, informing course design, delivery, and programme development (Schmitt, Hu, & Bachrach, 2008; Wright & Jenkins-Guarnieri, 2012). They also contribute to key institutional metrics such as student satisfaction, which influence university reputation and recruitment. Examining how student feedback is collected helps ensure that evaluation questions are clear, relevant, and capable of generating meaningful insights.

### Objective

To explore current course feedback approaches by analysing questions and student responses from course evaluation forms, reflections from an interactive feedback activity on Miro, and insights from a student focus group. This aimed to examine how feedback questions are framed, how students respond across different feedback modes, and how effectively these methods generate meaningful, actionable insights for course improvement to inform 'Top Tips' for course leads.

### Methods/Analysis

Focus group insights from 5 students

Focus group questions centred on students' perceptions and motivations around giving course feedback, particularly focusing on engagement with course evaluation forms and perceived impact of feedback.

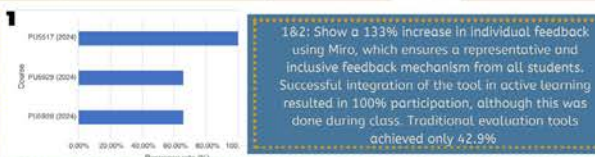
The Miro activity was an in-class, interactive exercise conducted with students from courses PU5517, PU5929, and PU5928, designed to encourage active participation and generate rich feedback. Responses were collected and analysed directly from the Miro platform, alongside reflections from course leads on the quality and actionability of the feedback produced.

Qualitative thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was conducted on course evaluation forms from 7 courses to identify common themes in the questions asked and assess the richness of student responses, as well as the extent to which they generated actionable feedback for course leads.

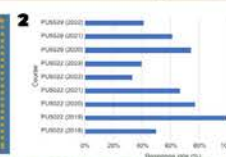
The qualitative data from seven course evaluations and one Miro session were analysed using thematic coding for six different pedagogical themes. The metrics for participation were also collected from institutional VLE reports and real-time logs to compare the completion rate for different tools.

The data from the courses were mapped to thematic frequency and participation metrics to create a representation of the information gap between traditional evaluation tools and interactive feedback mechanisms.

Findings were synthesised to develop 'Top Tips' for course leads on optimising course feedback and evaluation processes.



1&2: Show a 133% increase in individual feedback using Miro, which ensures a representative and inclusive feedback mechanism from all students. Successful integration of the tool in active learning resulted in 100% participation, although this was done during class. Traditional evaluation tools achieved only 42.9%.



### Top Tips

- 1 Provide guided prompts for specific feedback questions tailored to aspects like flipped classroom content delivery yielded valuable insights for refining course design and delivery
- 2 Incorporate questions on employability and skill development helpful to include questions about students' confidence in applying skills developed in professional settings.
- 3 Strike a balance between open and closed-ended questions For example, after asking about the effectiveness of teaching, allow space for students to elaborate on which aspects they thought were most/least effective.
- 4 Include open-ended queries on assessment practices Integrate prompts specifically inviting feedback on assessment methods, especially for new assessments, to inform future design and adjustments.
- 5 Make feedback visible: show students how their input leads to change Start the course with "You said, we did" slides showing changes from last year's cohort. Mention feedback during lectures: "Last year students suggested X, so we changed Y." and provide short updates during the semester about what feedback can and cannot change. Discuss feedback in class before asking students to complete evaluations.

"If feedback was integrated into class and/or mandatory that would greatly increase the likelihood of responses" -Participant 3

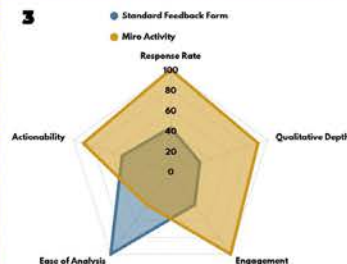
"I am yet to see evidence of a meaningful change" -Participant 1

"When feedback is anonymous, I can speak with no judgement" -Participant 5

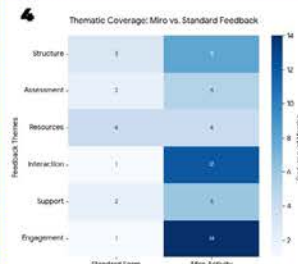
"Its rare that when we join a course we are told changes have been made based on previous feedback" -Participant 2

### Conclusion

Student engagement with course feedback depends on perceived impact and clarity of questions. Focus group insights revealed that traditional evaluation forms were often seen as a "chore" or "black hole", whereas interactive activities like the Miro session generated richer, more actionable feedback and encouraged proactive class discussions amongst peers. Demonstrating how feedback leads to course changes and framing questions clearly on course evaluation forms can improve both participation and the quality of responses. Integrating multiple feedback modes and promoting transparency offers practical strategies for course leads to enhance evaluation processes and support continuous course improvement.



3. Efficacy gap between Standard Feedback Form and Miro Activity. Traditional evaluation tools excel in Ease of Analysis, but Miro activity results in significantly higher Qualitative Depth, Engagement, and Actionability. Thematic Intensity Heatmap. Measures the breadth of student concerns. Common points from all feedback were tagged, and frequency of mention corresponds to darker colours. High intensity in the Miro column, particularly for Interaction and Engagement, highlights critical student perspectives that are normally invisible in traditional evaluation tools.



### Key Sources & Acknowledgements

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative research in psychology*, 3(2), 77-101.  
Schmitt, E. M., Hu, A. T., & Bachrach, P. A. (2008). *Course evaluation and assessment: Examples of a learner-centered approach*. *Contemporary & Collaborative Assessment*, 1(1), 70-100.  
Wright, S. L., & Jenkins-Guarnieri, M. A. (2012). Student evaluation of teaching: Combining the retrospective and demonstrating further evidence for effective use. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 37(6), 683-699. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0898/0136.0111.02179>

We thank Dr Charalad Dini Dinos for helping to conceptualise the study during the initial phases of the design.

POSTER 15

<p><b>MYTH</b> </p> <p>Dysgraphia is just messy handwriting</p>	<p><b>MYTH</b> </p> <p>People with Dyspraxia are just "clumsy"</p>	<p>TOGETHER WE CAN CELEBRATE</p>  <p>EDUCATE AND INSPIRE</p>	<p><b>MYTH</b> </p> <p>Autism only affects males</p>	<p><b>MYTH</b> </p> <p>People with ADHD just need to concentrate harder</p>
<p><b>FACT</b> </p> <p>It is a condition involving difficulties with spatial awareness, physical writing and organising thoughts on paper</p>	<p><b>FACT</b> </p> <p>Dyspraxia is a neurological condition with motor planning, spatial and coordination challenges</p>		<p><b>FACT</b> </p> <p>Females often mask or hide their autistic behaviours more than males</p>	<p><b>FACT</b> </p> <p>They can concentrate and even hyperfocus; they experience difficulties with regulating attention</p>

*Celebrating, Connecting and Building Community:  
The Creation of the UoA Neurodiversity Network*

**The Future:** Creation of new societies, a safe space at AUSA, accessible parking and lots of new resources

*Poster by Lucy Drysdale, Co-Chair, UoA Neurodiversity Network*

November 2023: Idea for the network first discussed

January-August 2024: Research and proposal paper put together. Accepted by UoA.

August 2024: Launch of new network

September 2024-January 2025: Establishing links and hosting events. Very popular with new members

January-May 2025: Preparing for and hosting Neurodiversity Week 2025, part of Symposium 2025.

May-December 2025: Established network, part of the University's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Agenda.

January-March 2026: Advocacy, Events and Resources.

The Future: Find out more online:  
[Neurodiversity Network](#)

**Connection:** Neurodiversity Natters, linking with all other EDI Networks, providing support & resources

**Community Building:** Mounting our Myth-Busting campaign, inviting external partners to work with us, consistently sharing information, taking part in university-wide initiatives

**Celebration:** Members taking part in and leading research, speaking at conferences, asking questions and sharing information & research projects.

POSTER 16

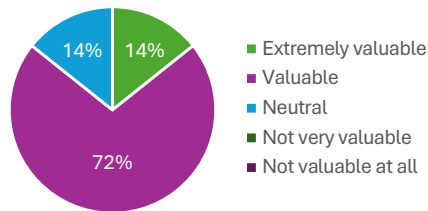
# Exploring Student Learning and Ethical Views in an Isolated Tissue Practical: A Pilot Study



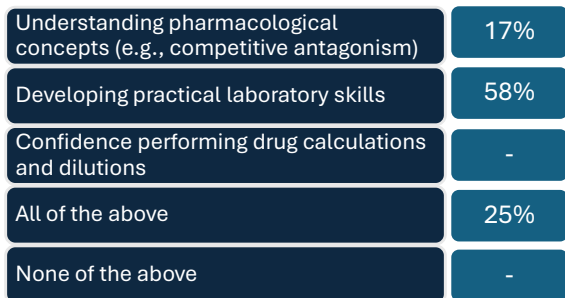
Dr Nadine Godzman (nadine.godzman1@abdn.ac.uk) & Professor Derek Scott (d.scott@abdn.ac.uk), School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition

**Aim:** To assess the balance between educational value and ethical acceptability in the use of *ex vivo* tissue for pharmacology teaching.

How valuable did you find the practical for your overall learning experience?



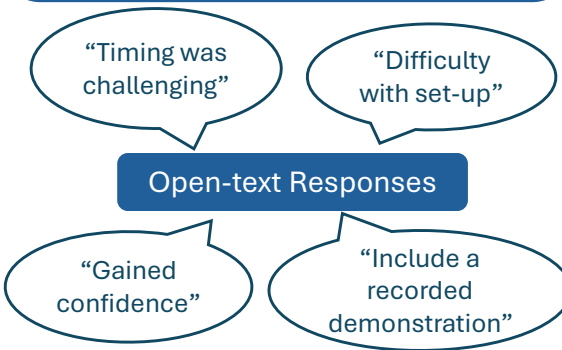
Which aspect of your learning did this practical contribute to most?



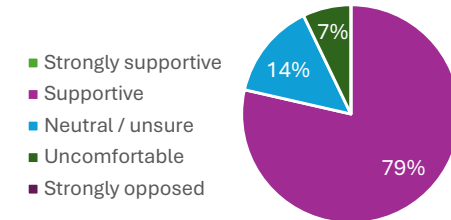
Educational Value      Ethical Acceptability



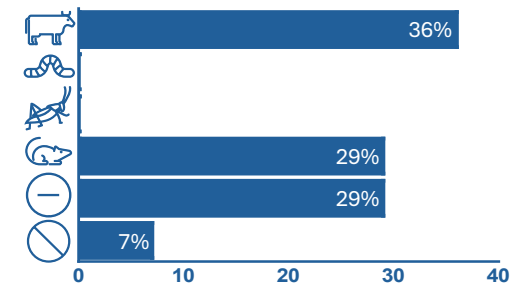
**Methods:** A survey (MS Forms) was distributed to students who had completed the rat ileum organ bath practical. Responses (n=14) were anonymous.



How do you feel about the ethical aspects of using *ex vivo* tissue in teaching?



If alternatives to rat ileum tissue were offered, which option would you prefer?



**Conclusion:** Students do consider the ethics of using *ex vivo* tissue, yet most feel the educational value outweighs their concerns.

# POSTER 17

## ABDN INTERNSHIPS

PAID INTERNSHIPS EXCLUSIVE TO UOA STUDENTS

### The ABDN internships: fostering belonging and future prospects through work experience

*Regina Jaschke, Alisdair McKibben, Ellen Minshull, Gayle Thomson – Careers and Employability Service*

The ABDN Internships are a programme of part-time paid internships exclusively available to University of Aberdeen students sourced both from University Schools/Professional Services and from local employers in key target sectors. Internships are financed through income generated from careers fairs, external funders and central University budgets. The internships aim to offer students opportunities for meaningful work experience which allows them to apply their skills and knowledge beyond the classroom, gaining confidence and building professional relationships. An extensive programme of support at every stage of the internship journey – from application to interview and throughout their internship experience – also allows us to engage with a large number of students from all years and Schools, equipping them with employability skills to set them up for success in competitive graduate labour markets.

**121 external employer partnerships**

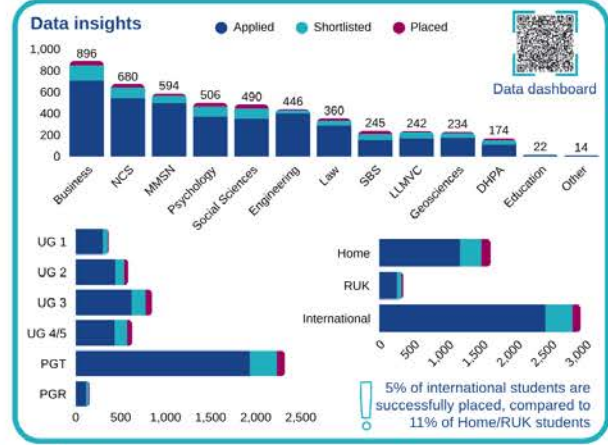
**Employer Engagement:**  
We collaborate with regional employers and University departments to create internship opportunities. This strengthens University-industry connections and reputation while contributing to regional economic growth and local talent pipelines. Internally, internships support institutional projects and plug skills gaps for departments.

**Key targets:** opportunities in Nature, Health and Wellbeing, Creative and Cultural, and with Charities and SME – aligned to the regional development plan and where limited paid opportunities exist for students.

**Inclusive by design:** roles are capped at 20 hours to align with visa requirements.

**Application stage:**  
Through a series of workshops, tailored online resources and one-to-one support, students are encouraged to create targeted CVs and covering letters. These are then shortlisted by the Careers and Employability Service, based primarily on the quality of the application. Further feedback is offered to unsuccessful candidates, ensuring maximum learning.

**4,903 applications submitted**



**100% of interns recommend the programme**

**281 interns placed**

**Internship experience:**  
Students' learning is supported through a structured programme of reflection through prompts, meetings with staff and their peer group, enabling interns to articulate the skills, knowledge and career insights gained from their experience.

"This internship has had a significant impact on my professional growth and career aspirations. The experience has increased my confidence in working with diverse stakeholders and delivering insights that can shape organisational decision-making—skills that I know will be invaluable in my future career." (PGT student)

**Future enhancements:**

- Sector review and expansion based on local labour market need and student preference.
- Collaboration with Language Centre for further support of international students.
- Enhanced interview training for external partners.

**Career Readiness survey 2025**

- 58% of students are looking for part-time work
- 53% of students would like an internship or placement

**Interview stage:**  
Shortlisted students are invited to further workshops and mini practice interviews to help them prepare before employer/host department interviews.

**1,052 interviews conducted**

**Case Study - Our Union Street**

Both Oliver, now a final year Geography and International Relations student, and Milly, now a graduate of English and Film, completed funded ABDN Internships with OUS and have been retained on a part-time basis for over a year.

"Having an ABDN Intern was a big help to our storytelling project. They brought fresh ideas, strong research and digital skills, and a creative approach to our local stories. Their support helped us progress our project and it was a great learning experience for them too."

**Listen to Milly share her experience of her ABDN Internship.**

# POSTER 18

## From Play to Practice

### A quartet card activity to engage pharmacy students with Sustainable Development Goals and inclusive service design

Dr Betty Dube, Dr Silvia Mazzotta, Dr Sherly Meilanti (s.meilanti@rgu.ac.uk)  
 School of Pharmacy, Applied Sciences and Public Health, Robert Gordon University



Scan to find out more about the game



#### Background

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) can feel abstract in pharmacy education.

We adapted the DANS Data Game into SDG “Quartet Challenges” to support discussion of SDGs and pharmacy-led service design.



#### Methods

##### In-class gameplay



Stage 3 MPharm students (n=49) played by requesting cards from peers to complete sets of four (“quartets”) linked to an SDG.

#### Discussion & Feedback

Completion of quartets prompted group discussion.



Feedback was collected after the game.

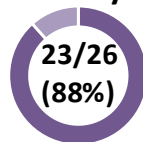
#### Results

26/49 (53%)

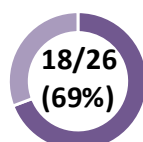


Response rate

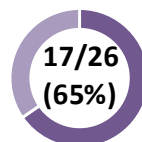
Enjoyed the activity



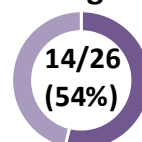
Recommend similar activities



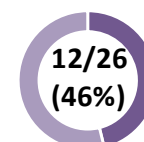
Improved SDG understanding



Confidence in service design



Equality, diversity and inclusivity consideration



#### Conclusion

Collaborative discussion was valuable; clearer scaffolding and debriefing would strengthen relevance.

# POSTER 19



## ⚡ Raising the voltage ⚡

### Can gamification boost learning in physiology?

Dr Silvia Mazzotta (s.mazzotta@rgu.ac.uk)

School of Pharmacy, Applied Sciences and Public Health, Robert Gordon University

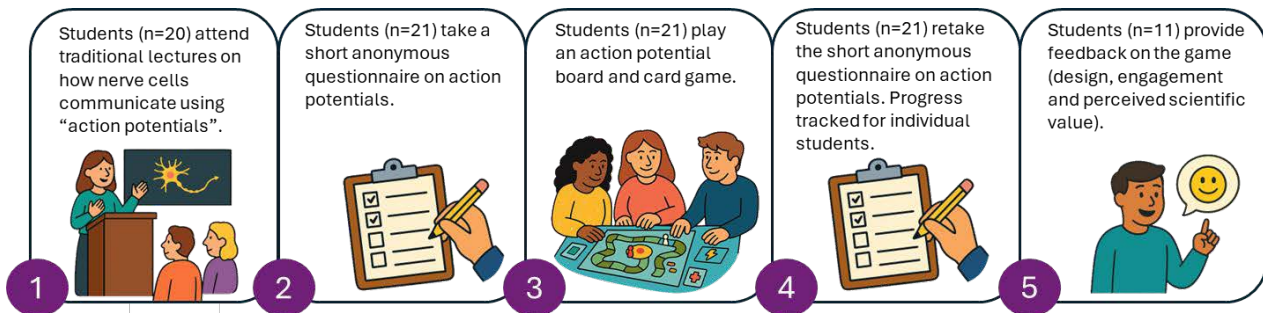


Scan to find out more about the game

#### 1. 📄 Background and 🎯 aims

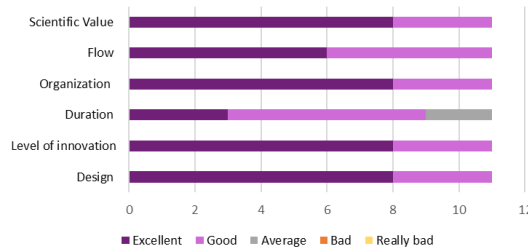
Gamification is widely recognised for enhancing student engagement and is becoming increasingly prominent in higher education. But an important question remains: does engagement come at the expense of attainment?

#### 2. ⚙️ Methods



#### 3. 📊 Results

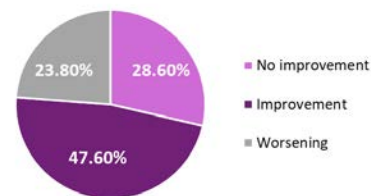
Student Feedback (n=11)



“ It was super fun and a good way to revise the topic ”

“ Very creative game that helped get a deeper understanding of the topic, had lots of fun! :) ”

Student attainment (n=21)



#### 4. 📌 Conclusions

- High levels of engagement and recognised educational value of the game.
- Game may support improved academic attainment within the cohort.
- Study limitations: small sample size and absence of a true control group.

POSTER 20

# Who's afraid of copyright?!

Game-based learning engages diverse students beyond the classroom



Tim Riley (DDIS) | timothy.riley@abdn.ac.uk  
 Jenna Storey (DDIS) | jennifer.storey@abdn.ac.uk



**Context** Copyright: important but boring?  
 The University of Aberdeen has a Copyright Literacy Strategy, but our optional copyright workshops have low engagement. How can we reach more students?

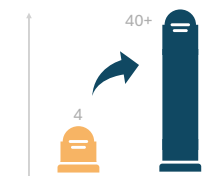
**Method** Engaging students via a playful<sup>1</sup> copyright haunted house!

- Visually engaging pop-up Halloween-themed stall in the Sir Duncan Rice Library
- Positive message to reduce anxiety<sup>2</sup> – 'Copyright doesn't need to be scary!'
- Active learning 'trick-or-treat' quiz focusing on key learning outcomes<sup>3</sup>



- Prizes, sweets and other giveaways to encourage interaction and promote copyright resources

**Results** Our creative playful learning activity engaged significantly more students than formal classroom teaching



c.10x more students reached compared to classroom workshops



Wider diversity of students engaged, especially UGs



Quiz very popular, often sparking questions and deeper discussion



Stall became a model for other engagement initiatives within DDIS

1. SECKER, J. and MORRISON, C., 2022. Playing with copyright: Transforming copyright education through games. *Journal of Play in Adulthood*, 4(2), pp. 106-125.  
 2. WAKARUK, A., GAREAU-BRENNAN, C. and PIETROSANU, M., 2021. Introducing the Copyright Anxiety Scale. *Journal of Copyright in Education & Librarianship*, 5(1).  
 3. NØRGÅRD, R.T., TOFT-NIELSEN, C. and WHITTON, N., 2017. Playful learning in higher education: developing a signature pedagogy. *International Journal of Play*, 6(3), pp. 272-282.

# POSTER 21

## Co-creation of gamified resources for Immunology education: from taking part to creating together



Rachel Bonner, Zoe Rennie and Virtu Solano-Collado  
School of Medicine Medical Sciences and Nutrition



### Background

Immunology is a fundamental subject in medical sciences, yet its complexity can make it feel abstract and difficult to teach and learn. Case-based learning, enhanced through immersive gamified scenarios, helps connect concepts to real-world contexts and boosts engagement. In this project, students became co-creators shifting from participation to a sense of belonging. They have developed engaging narratives actively contributing to shaping how Immunology is taught.

#### Dr Herschel: a case of an enemy within

Author: Rachel Bonner

- Gamified case study designed for the third year IM3501 (Fundamentals of Immunology) course - activities align with Learning Outcomes of tolerance and autoimmunity.
- Feedback was obtained via in-person delivery of the activity by Rachel.

#### A Pathogens Journey Through the Immune System

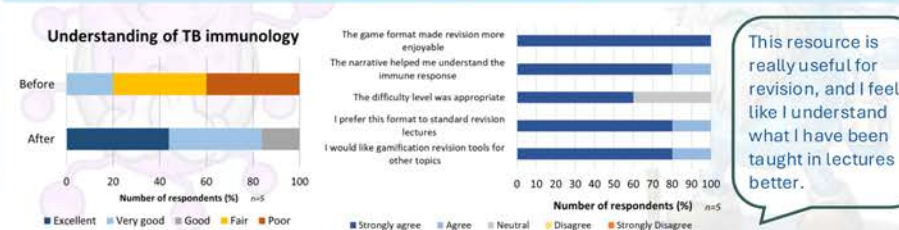
Author: Zoe Rennie

- Game designed for mid-term revision tool for the IM3501 (Fundamentals of Immunology) course where student become *M. tuberculosis* and have to evade the immune system.
- Feedback was obtained via in-person delivery of the activity by Zoe or online.

#### Students feedback



#### Students feedback



### Points of discussion

- Both resources, created by students, increased student engagement and supported better understanding of different topics. Future work will focus on developing resources for topics described as challenging by students.
- Limitations: small number of participants and the absence of pre- and post-session test to measure learning outcomes.

# INFORMATION POSTER 22

## Designing for Engagement, Monitoring for Success



There are many different ways and methods on MyAberdeen by which you can encourage engagement and interaction from your students. Using a variety of methods can then enable you to watch over your students to help ensure they are actively participating with their learning.



### Designing

Engagement must be structured and not assumed.

- **Communication & Presence** - Announcements (scheduled, targeted, personalised), regular course updates, embedded video messages (Panopto)
- **Active Participation** - Discussion Boards (structured prompts) and Q&A Forums, reflective journals, formative assessment, polls, low-stakes quizzes & self-tests, embedded questions in Panopto videos
- **Synchronous Engagement** - Microsoft Teams meetings, live seminars, breakout activities, attendance tracking

### Data, Action & Ethics

Monitoring is not surveillance — it's support.

- **Data can inform** - Early intervention emails, targeted support, adaptive teaching adjustments
- **Ethical & Pedagogical Considerations** - Transparency with students, data interpretation caution, avoiding "click-based" assumptions of engagement, balancing quantitative and qualitative insight

### Monitoring

Blackboard Ultra analytics tools provide multiple data points — but interpretation matters.

- **Engagement Indicators** - Discussion participation & post frequency, question analytics (quiz statistics), assignment submission patterns, student progress tracking
- **Activity Analytics** - Last login, course access frequency, time spent in course
- **Performance & Risk Monitoring** - Gradebook trends, missed deadlines, low assessment engagement, early warning signals

Engagement ≠ Just activity  
Monitoring ≠ Just metrics



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# INFORMATION POSTER 23

## Anthology Milestone: Badges



The University of Aberdeen is currently piloting badging and micro-credentials. The badges can be offered as a stand-alone option for achievements or can be embedded within our virtual learning environment, MyAberdeen.

### The Steps



Note: all proposed badges should be aligned with MySkills framework and Aberdeen 2040 themes.

### Our Checklist

#### The Basics

- ✓ Badge name
- ✓ Description
- ✓ Link to further information
- ✓ Intended audience
- ✓ Assessment or evidence
- ✓ Duration

#### Alignment with MySkills

- ✓ Teamwork
- ✓ Communication
- ✓ Leadership
- ✓ Time management
- ✓ Self motivation
- ✓ Resilience
- ✓ Digital fluency
- ✓ Information literacy
- ✓ Critical thinking
- ✓ Global citizens
- ✓ Global citizens
- ✓ Sustainability
- ✓ Inclusivity
- ✓ Creativity
- ✓ Independence
- ✓ Entrepreneurship
- ✓ Opportunity awareness
- ✓ Career planning
- ✓ Presenting yourself

### Examples

#### ABDN Internship



#### Career Readiness



#### UKRIO Research Ethics



#### Class Rep



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# INFORMATION POSTER 24

## Course Review Service



The course review service offered by the eLearning team in the Centre for Academic Development provides a peer review of your course area on MyAberdeen. Such a review not only encompasses the accessibility of your course area but also considers the full student experience of accessing your course materials and resources online.

### The Steps



Note: the eLearning Adviser suggests and recommends changes and updates to the course co-ordinator. The aim is to encourage and facilitate good practice whilst giving a sense of ownership to the course area.



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### Our Checklist

#### Structure Learning

- ✓ Institutional template
- ✓ Reading List
- ✓ Materials: accessible & varied
- ✓ Engaging activities

#### Assessment & Feedback

- ✓ Linked to ILOs
- ✓ Varied with alternatives
- ✓ Clear guidelines
- ✓ Assessment policies
- ✓ Use of rubrics

#### Learning Community

- ✓ Welcoming
- ✓ Communication guidance
- ✓ Expectations
- ✓ Activities
- ✓ Announcements
- ✓ Motivation
- ✓ Peer to peer learning

### Exemplary?

#### Course Design

- Goals and objectives
- Composition and structure
- Learner engagement
- Technology & accessibility

#### Interaction and Collaboration

- Collaboration strategies
- Learning community
- Interaction logistics

#### Assessment Design

- Learner expectations
- Assessment design
- Learner self-assessment

#### Learner support

- Orientation to course
- Instructor contact & comms
- Course/institutional policies
- Accessibility
- Feedback

#### Stand Out Practices



# INFORMATION POSTER 25

## MyAberdeen Open Learning



MyAberdeen Open Learning is based upon Blackboard's Course Catalog (formerly known as Training and Development Manager). The system allows external users to log in to the MyAberdeen environment without the requirement of having a University of Aberdeen account. This has proved to be popular for open access courses, international prospective students, taster courses and offer

### The Steps



### Our Checklist

Based on Gilly Salmon's 5 Stage Model

#### Access & Motivation

- ✓ Welcoming structure
- ✓ Clear expectations
- ✓ Transparent ILOs
- ✓ Help and support

#### Online Socialisation

- ✓ Peer to Peer; Peer to Tutor
- ✓ Sense of community
- ✓ Tutor presence

#### Information Exchange

- ✓ Accessible resources
- ✓ Variety of resources
- ✓ Interactive & engaging

#### Knowledge Construction

- ✓ Build upon knowledge
- ✓ Develop understanding

#### Development

- ✓ Sense of achievement
- ✓ Authentic assessment

### Examples

#### Continuing Professional Development Services

- Offshore Decommissioning
- Renewable Energy
- Sustainable Transitions
- Religious Studies

#### Language Centre

- Offshore Decommissioning
- Renewable Energy
- Sustainable Transitions
- Religious Studies

#### Offer Holders

- Professional Graduate Diploma in Education (Secondary)
- Biological Sciences Transition Hub

#### Taster Courses

- Introduction to Online Learning
- Organisational Psychology

#### Projects

- GCBC Crossroads Training
- Making it Work



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# INFORMATION POSTER 26

## HOW DIGITAL ACCESSIBILITY SHAPES THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE



244  
RESPONSES



23 PARTICIPANTS  
IN FOCUS GROUPS

# 1

### CONSISTENCY

Students would like more consistency in courses/programmes such as layout and structure of learning materials including where to find assessment information, provision of clear rubrics and personalised feedback.

# 2

### ACCESSIBLE LECTURE CAPTURE

Ensure that courses have lecture capture available, which is widely used for revising, improving understanding and inclusion. Staff should use microphones provided, check captions for errors and make corrections.

# 3

### OFF-LINE ASSIGNMENTS

Consider adding due dates for assessments not submitted via MyAberdeen so that students have one place to check for all upcoming deadlines.



Scan the QR code for more information.

The research was carried out from November 2025 to April 2026 by Sofiia Prokhorets, a Student Intern from the Centre for Academic Development.

1495



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