

# **Closing Plenary**

## **Interdisciplinary Learning and Teaching Conference 2025**

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Dr Jenny Scoles (Academic Developer, Institute for Academic Development)

# Edinburgh Futures Institute

**“A new futures-focused space for learning, research, and innovation at the University of Edinburgh.”**

MA (Hons) Interdisciplinary Futures-

<https://efi.ed.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/>

“A new interdisciplinary programme, designed to develop key employability skills and collaborative experiences, focused on global and local challenges, and linked to cutting-edge research and the big future issues facing our planet and societies.”

36 UG students starting Sept '23 and 40 starting Sept '24



**Crossing the Line** was a research project that ran from 2022-24 at the University of Edinburgh, directed by David Overend. Team members included Seongsook Choi, Andy Cross, Clare Cullen, David Jay (Anglia Ruskin University), Jenny Scoles and M Winter. The research was funded by the Principal's Teaching Award Scheme at the University of Edinburgh.

The project observed, documented and critically reflected on the inaugural delivery of a new undergraduate programme at Edinburgh Futures Institute (EFI). The MA (Hons) Interdisciplinary Futures launched in September 2023, preceded by a suite of pre-honours elective courses. A mixed method approach was employed to understand the holistic experience of learners and educators on a wide range of courses, as they came together to develop skills in interdisciplinary collaboration.

The project resulted in the [Toolkit for Interdisciplinary Learning and Teaching](#), along with the following presentations, workshops and publications:

## **Publications:**

Cullen, C., Jay, D., Overend, D. and Winter, M. (2024) Creating Edinburgh: Diffracting Interdisciplinary Learning and Teaching in the Contemporary City. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications* 11. 1151.

Overend, D., Ewing, S. and Swanton, D. (2024). 'Loose Ends and Missing Links': Learning Journeys in the Postdigital City. In: *Postdigital Learning Spaces: Towards Convivial, Equitable, and Sustainable Spaces for Learning* (eds. Lamb, J. and Carvalho, L.). Springer pp. 99-118.

Winter, M. and Overend, D. (2024). Troubling Leadership in the Interdisciplinary Challenge-Based Classroom. *Issues in Interdisciplinary Studies*, 41(2), pp. 77-100.

Overend, D., Choi, S., Cross, A. & Winter, M. (in press). Future change agents: Emotional interactions in the challenge-based classroom. In: *Interdisciplinary Learning and Teaching: Practice and Pedagogies*. eds. Kemp, I. & Scott, S. Ethics Press.

## **Blogs:**

Teaching Matters is the University of Edinburgh's website, blog and podcast for debate about learning and teaching, for sharing ideas and approaches to teaching, and for showcasing successes. Teaching Matters includes a wide range of blogs exploring Interdisciplinarity.

<https://blogs.ed.ac.uk/teaching-matters/tag/interdisciplinarity/>

# TILT: A co-creative process

TILT offers a collection of ideas, methods and resources to support anyone interested in the possibilities of working across, and beyond, disciplines.

➤ EFI students, EFI staff, external interdisciplinary experts

- What is interdisciplinarity?
- Working with challenges
- Collaboration
- Interdisciplinary methods
- Assessment strategies
- Ethical practice



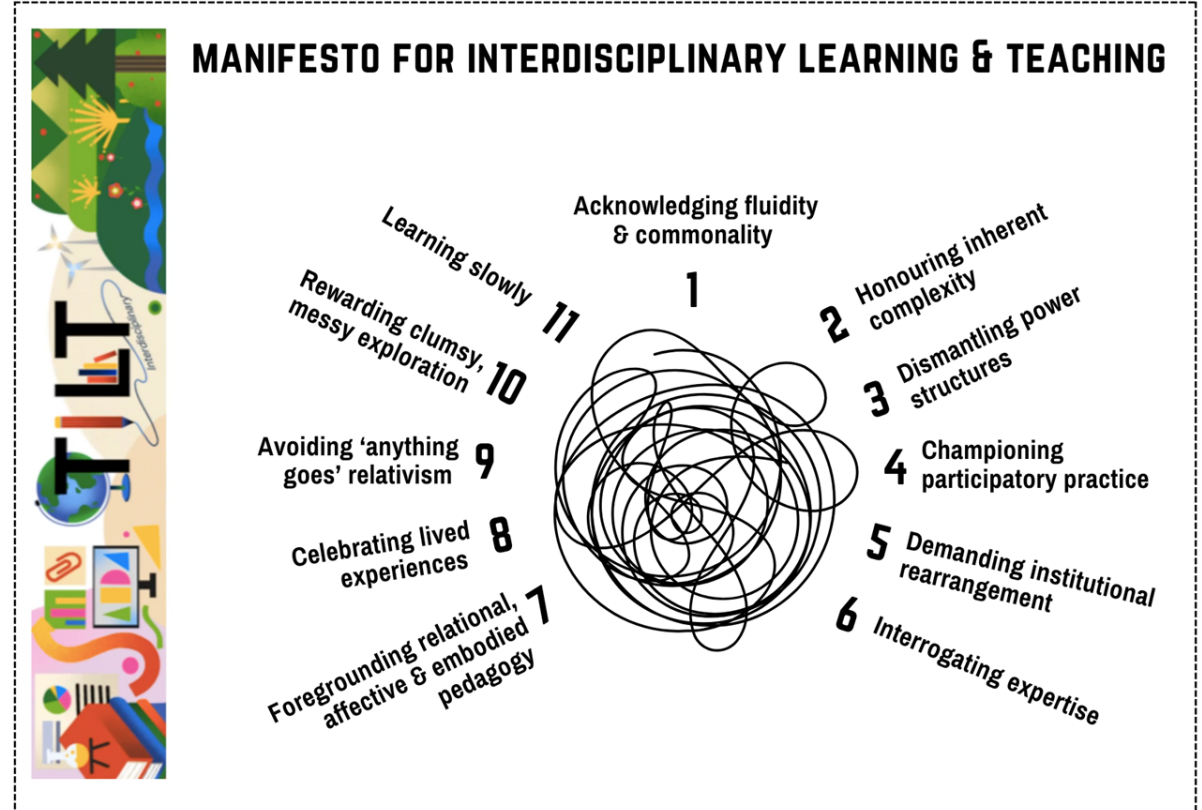
[blogs.ed.ac.uk/tilt](https://blogs.ed.ac.uk/tilt)

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# 1. What is interdisciplinarity?

- **Defining Interdisciplinarity:** Exploring various perspectives, benefits, and the distinction between multi-, inter-, and transdisciplinary approaches.
- **Practical Approaches and Models:** Presenting challenged learning, interdisciplinary environments, and diffractive methodologies as frameworks for interdisciplinary education.



## 2. Working with challenges



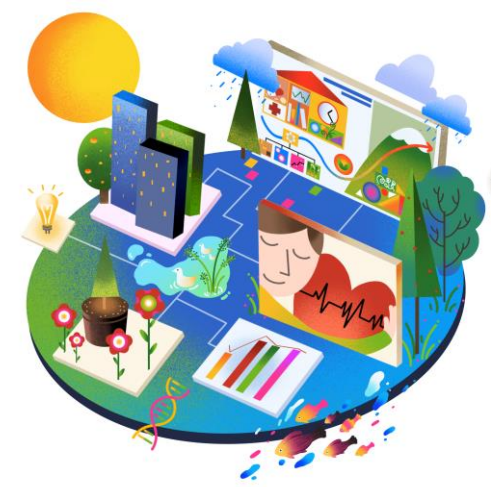
Inequality



Sustainability



Conflict



Global health

# 3. Collaboration

- **Facilitating Effective Teamwork:** Addressing group dynamics, leadership approaches, and strategies for successful collaboration among students.
- **Engaging with External Partners:** Highlighting the benefits and challenges of working with external organisations in interdisciplinary education.
- **Interdisciplinary Collaboration in Practice:** Exploring collaboration across academic disciplines and the concept of "radical collegiality."



# 4. Interdisciplinary methods

- Researching Global Challenges
  - Data Collection
  - Data Analysis
  - Cultural Analysis
  - Creative Practice



# 5. Assessment strategies

- Group assessment
- Ungrading
- Reflection
- Programme-level assessment
- Assessment types



# 6. Ethical practice

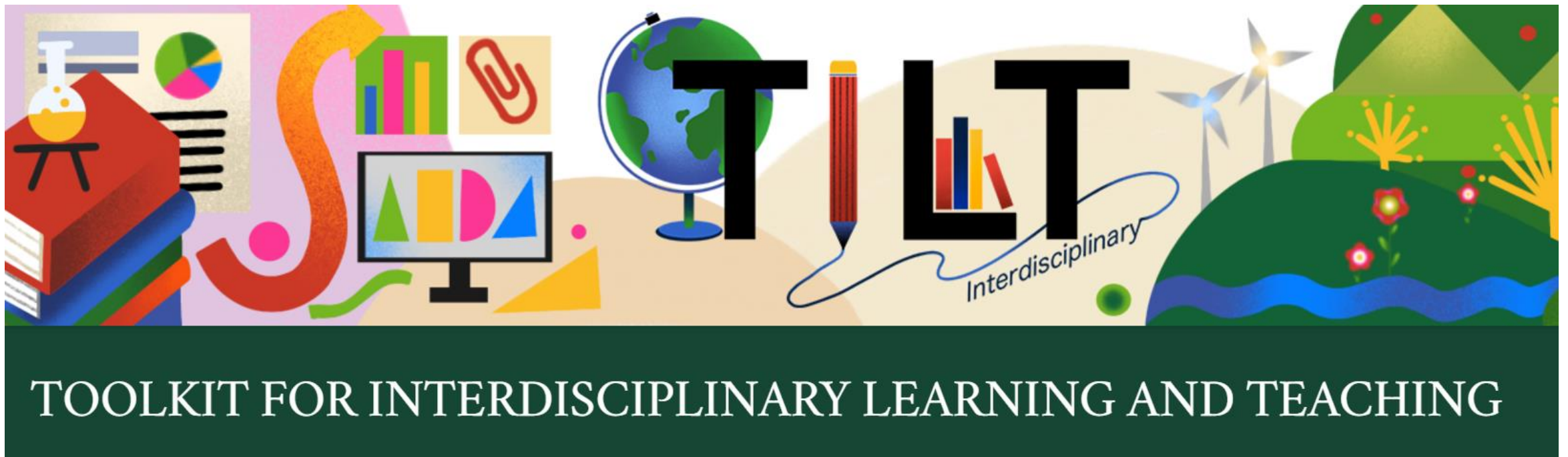
- Inclusivity
  - Redistribution of power
  - Reconceptualising notions of leadership and expertise
  - Co-creation and radical collegiality
  - Whole self and lived curriculum
  - Decolonisation of knowing, teaching and learning
- Reflection, Critical Reflection, Reflexivity and Diffraction
  - <https://reflection.ed.ac.uk>
- Emotionality

# Other references for TILT

<https://blogs.ed.ac.uk/teaching-matters/introducing-the-toolkit-for-interdisciplinary-learning-and-teaching-tilt/>

<https://blogs.ed.ac.uk/teaching-matters/an-interdisciplinary-learning-and-teaching-manifesto/>

<https://open.ed.ac.uk/tilt-toolkit-for-interdisciplinary-learning-and-teaching/>



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