
Dr Emma Skippings
Professor Esra Kurul
Dr Laura Novo de
Azevedo
Lucy Turner

Enabling
Interdisciplinary
Learning *within*
Discipline-Based
Curricula

Aim

Develop & evaluate a skills 'toolkit' designed to foster effective interdisciplinary collaboration *within* discipline-based curricula to support the Sustainability Mindset dimension of our inclusive curriculum framework.

- **(i) Experience: students engaging
staff creating opportunities**
 - **(ii) Perceived Usefulness and Impact**
 - **(iii) Development of Interdisciplinary Competencies**
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Healthy Cities Project

Semester 2 2024-25

Wk			
1	Healthy Cities Briefing		Bruce Mau Keynote Discussion
2	Interdisciplinary collaboration		Skills Workshop 1
3	Interdisciplinary collaboration		Skills Workshop 2
4		GDES4005 content	PLAN5007 content
5		GDES4005 content	PLAN5007 content
6	Healthy Cities: joint workshop		Client presentation Oxford City Council
7		GDES4005 content	PLAN5007 content
8		Healthy Cities	joint workshop
9		GDES4005 content	PLAN5007 content
10		GDES4005 content	PLAN5007 content
11	Presentations to the Client: Oxford City Council		
12		GDES4005 content	PLAN5007 content
13+	Showcasing the student outputs: Urban Design Shown and Bruce Mau Presentation		

59 students

BA in Urban Design,
Planning and
Development
(PLAN5007)

BA in Graphic Design
(GDES 4005)

The Skills Toolkit



Skills Workshop 1

- Interactive exercises to enhance students' understanding of themselves and others, and team dynamics
- Equip students with practical tools for effective teamwork.

Skills Workshop 2

- Concept mapping to collaboratively explore a complex, real-world challenge from multiple disciplinary perspectives
- Develop a common understanding of the challenge and a common language.



MASSIVE CHANGE SPARKED
MEANINGFUL DIALOGUE NOT
ONLY ABOUT THE WORLD OF
DESIGN, BUT THE DESIGN OF
THE WORLD.

Staff views on creating opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration

An authentic rich learning experience for students

But learning for staff too ...

'Embracing uncertainty and openness to experimentation'

'Managing discomfort of unfamiliar ways of working'

Most significant challenge ...

Timetabling !

**Student views on their
experience of being engaged in
an interdisciplinary project**

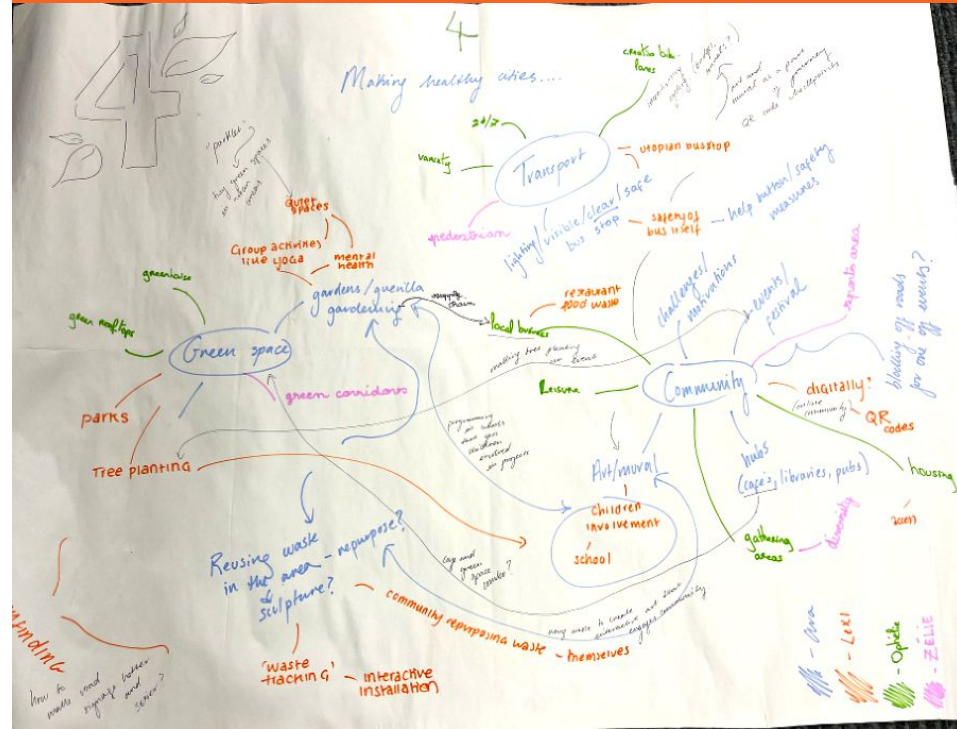
Majority appreciate tools that help gain an understanding of 'self' and 'others'

Leading to appreciation of different styles of dealing with disagreements & conflict

Concept mapping: a valuable method for generating and structuring ideas & a key source of reference for the team.

Minority perceive that skills workshops 'eat into' time to learn content

How do we know if students developed **interdisciplinary competencies** as a result?



Outputs assessed for evidence of common ground and integration of perspectives (Blom, Scager & Wiegant (2020)

Conclusions

- **L**earning across the curriculum that **embeds** interdisciplinary collaboration skills from the start needs to be progressive & stacked
 - **E**mpowered staff with **interdisciplinary mindsets** can and will make it work, **students** should be **empowered** to think beyond disciplinary content
 - **A**lignment: timetables, shared or neutral spaces, transdisciplinary learning outcomes in programmes.
 - **P**latforms: institutions should provide the **platforms & empowerment** to develop **interdisciplinary mindsets**, be ready for possible dips in student satisfaction.
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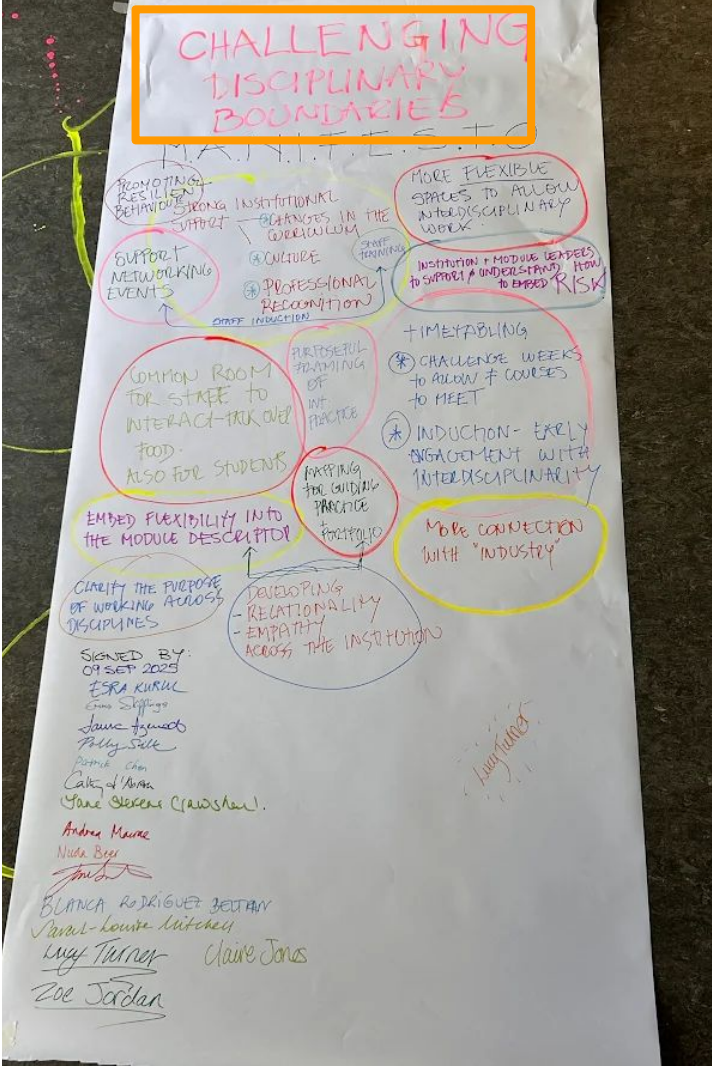
Learning

students and staff are **E**mpowered to co-create learning experiences, relational and affective knowledge valued, empathy (respecting differences), listening, and collaboration are recognised as integral to learning

Platforms:

encourage risk-taking and experimentation
allow for creative uncertainty beyond disciplinary comfort zones
foster shared physical and digital spaces where disciplines genuinely meet.

Align assessment and interdisciplinary mindset, rethink success beyond disciplinary metrics



Moving Forward at Oxford Brookes

Progressive & stacked **L**earning across disciplinary boundaries taking students on a journey from Novice (L4) to Emerging (L5) to Expert (L6)

Empowered students who recognise that they are developing skills to cross disciplinary boundaries

Aligned student awareness of interdisciplinarity with it's value and impact in their professional lives from level 4 (UG Yr 1)

The new supportive challenge framework as a **P**latform

Challenges going forward

Multidisciplinary / Interdisciplinary / Transdisciplinary:



The Pinna Model
 Connected in our field

A huge thank you to
 the Pinna Model
 community!

Big hat to the people who did the actual research, or helped me write it (alphabetically):
 Bauman, S. (2001). Advancing the social sciences through the transdisciplinary enterprise.
 The social sciences journal, 36(1), 1-10. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00427160108839089>
 Deitz, J. C., & A. J. & J. P. (2008). Multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary and
 transdisciplinary in health research, education, and practice. *Medical care*, 46(12),
 and volume of references. *Journal of Interpersonal Medicine*, 20(1), 20-28.
 Swanson, J. (2011). *From single-disciplinary to cross-, multi-, inter-, trans-, and
 super-disciplinary: how knowledge integration changes research*. <http://www.ncsl.org/2011/07/20/disciplines/>

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 @Jo_Bailey for all the references!

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Thank you!

We would love to continue the
conversation

Esra Kurul: ekurul@brookes.ac.uk

Lucy Turner: lturner@brookes.ac.uk
