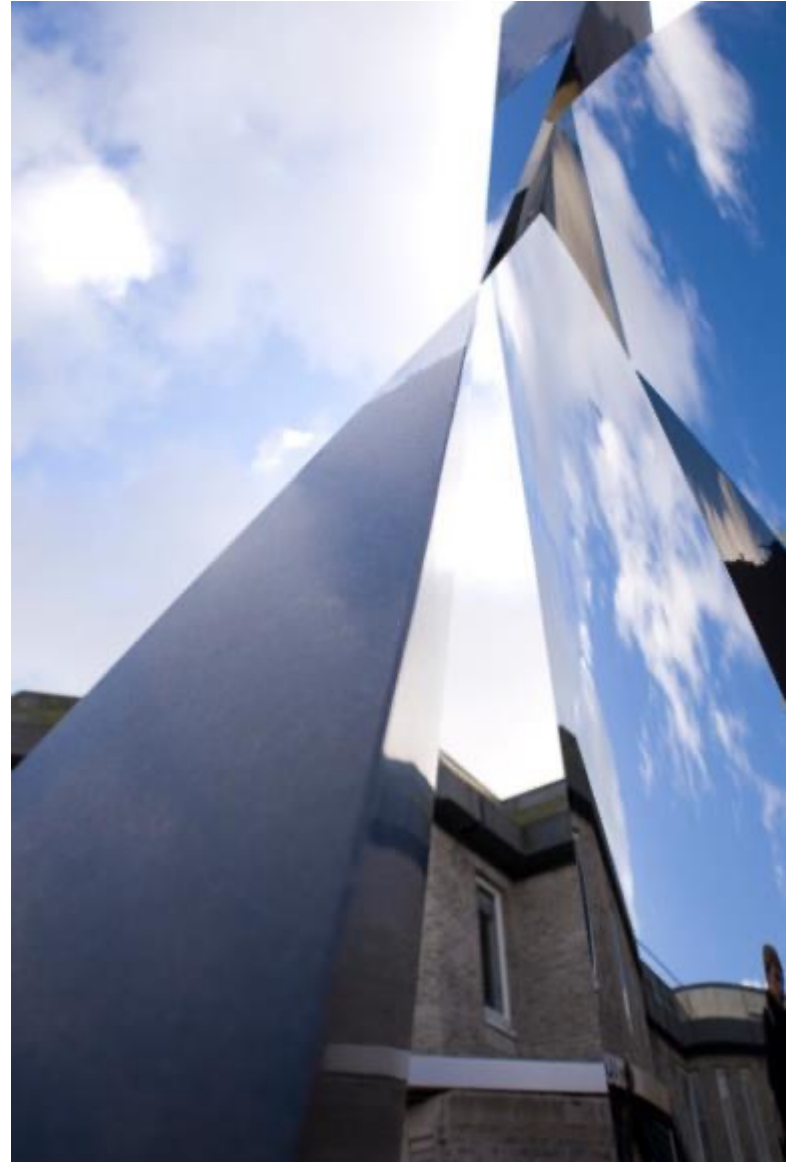


Virtual Writing Groups

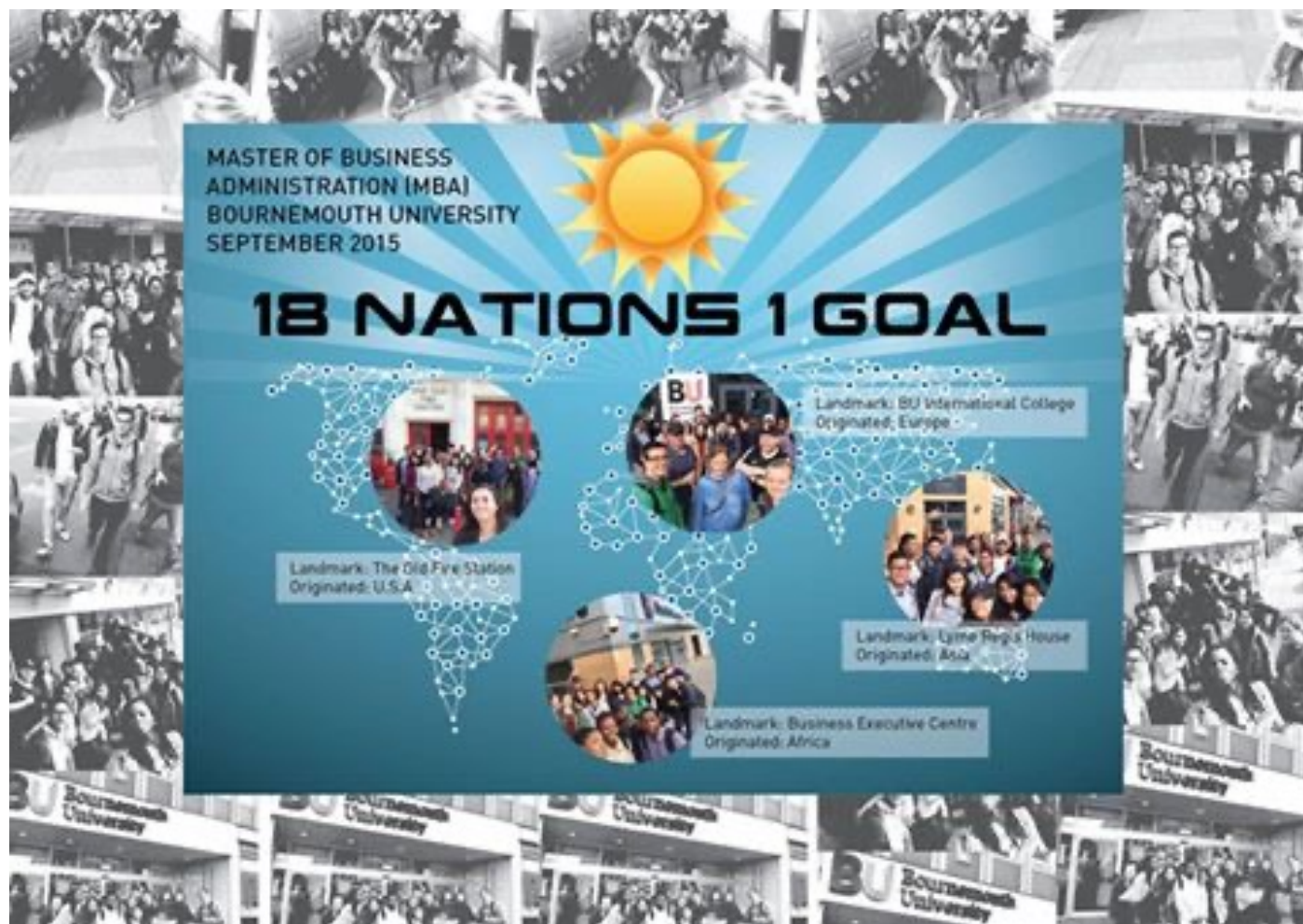
Staff-Student collaboration for
enhancing research quality, re-building
cohort identity and fostering student
confidence

Dr Milena Bobeva
CMgr FCMI, SFHEA
Senior Principal Lecturer

Deborah Taylor
Senior Lecturer
MBA Director



The Bournemouth MBA



The Bournemouth MBA 2015-16

Pre-COVID community building



MBA student experience



Guest Lectures

"Guest lectures help me decide what industries and companies I wanted to work for."

- **Ciayi Lim**
The MBA Cohort 2015-16



Company-based Projects

"The very professional, thought-provoking presentations made by the MBA students will stand the formidable Domestic Angels business in good stead and form a solid foundation for expansion."

- **Martin Spooner**
Dormen mentor for Domestic Angels



Internships

"In short, my MBA placement has been an integral and highly valued team member, so much more than I hoped when I took him on."

- **Chris Shephard**
Head of Economic Development and Sustainability at Bournemouth Council



Mock Assessment Centers

"The assessment day allowed me to try my interview skills without pressure."

- **Erin Kaine**
The MBA Cohort 2013-14



Company Visits/ Field Trips

"Visiting a company allowed me to gain a feel for different cultures within organizations."

- **Jake Durbin**
The MBA Cohort 2014-15



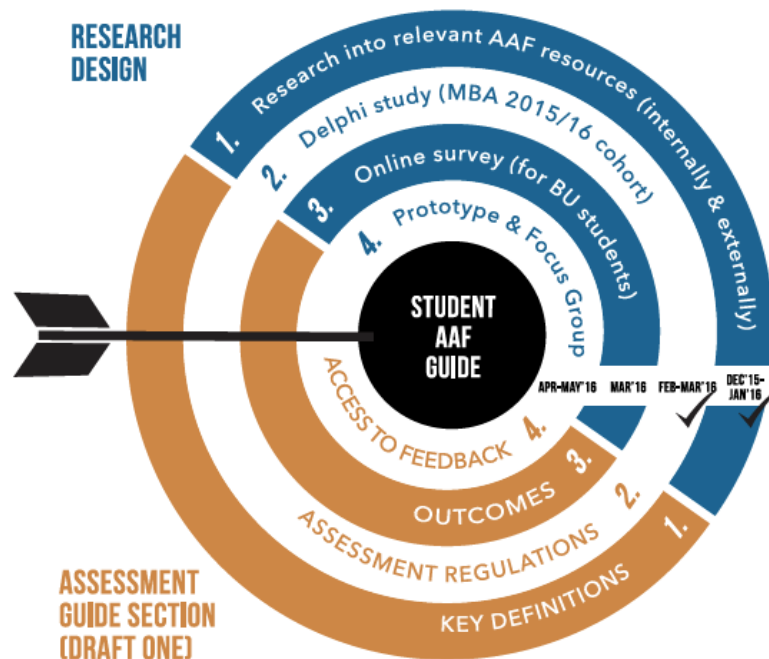
**NOURISHING THE FUTURE
THE BOURNEMOUTH MBA**

Your potential employees;
Highly-motivated,
future global leaders.

Staff-student collaboration

DEVELOPING A STUDENT GUIDE TO ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK (AAF)

Dr Milena Bobeva (milena@bournemouth.ac.uk), Phil Wilkinson (pwilkinson@bournemouth.ac.uk),
Alexander Lebedev, Sujon Ahamed, Ifeoma Onyejekwe, Hang Phan, Ciayi Lim (MBA 2015/16)



Overview

The project captures international student experiences with BU's assessment and feedback policies, procedures and practices, which determines the key element within the main artefact of this project - a student assessment guide.

Project Objectives

1. To develop an assessment guide addressing key challenges that have been identified by students at BU.
2. To offer the students in the project team an opportunity to develop their research, management and leadership skills through engaging in the design, development and evaluation of the Assessment Guide, and the dissemination of the results.
3. To create opportunities for students from different nationalities and cultures to share their experiences with and views on assessment and feedback, and contribute to the achievement of the BU2018 vision.
4. To inform the development of academic assessment principles, methods, and procedures with the aim of creating a supportive and inclusive environment for international students.



Bournemouth
University

Pre-COVID social interaction



And then...



Student feedback in 2020





Writing Groups (WG) are ...

For creative and academic writing

Aiming to enhance quality

Helping to build community of people with similar goals

Run in environment conducive to focusing on the task

The Virtual WG pilot initiative



MBA Writing Group

- A pilot of 4 sessions of 3 hours (9 am - 12noon), run once a week from 14 May'21 – 4 June'21, delivered via MS Teams;
- This was extended with a set of 6 more sessions (WG Cycle 1).
- Open to students and staff to work on their own research-related tasks, e.g. reading, writing, reviewing feedback;
- Informal evaluation at the end of each session to improve the experience with the next one;
- Optional activity; 25% of the cohort joined the pilot; Time and day did not suit some students.



Bournemouth
University

The virtual WG organisation

← → ↻ 📄 brightspace.bournemouth.ac.uk/d2l/home/151740

Announcements

Writing Group Tomorrow (Friday 14 May)

Deborah Taylor posted on 13 May, 2021 2:24 PM

Hi Milena

Just a quick reminder about the writing group that starts tomorrow. As we move away from formal teaching, it's easy to get quite isolated and we thought this might be a good way of you keeping up to date with your project and seeing some of your friends in the cohort. You don't just have to write, you can read and make notes of a journal article or write your questions for your survey/interview etc. I am a member of a PGR writing group in Cambridge (joys of virtual writing groups) and have found it very helpful and so we thought it might be for you.

Of course, you may be busy tomorrow, so if you can't make this Friday, you are always welcome to join next Friday.

You can find further details on the Sprint announcements page including the link to sign up for the MS Office group.

Hopefully see you tomorrow or soon.

Deb

WHAT? – SESSION AGENDA

9:00 – 9:05 – Welcome; Reminder of the terms of engagement and the session agenda; Q&A.

9:05 – 9:15 – Setting and sharing individual goals for the session (30-45 sec per person)

9:15 – 10:15 – Independent silent work (Part 1) (either with camera on/ and mic off, or working offline away from the group)

10:15 – 10:30 – Review of the attainment of goals so far and update these as required (30-45 sec pp); short mindfulness/relaxation break

10:30 – 11:30 – Independent silent work (Part 2)

11:30 – 12:00 – Review and personal reflections on the attainment of the goals (30-45 sec pp); Peer support for questions/ reflections/ frustrations. Recommendations for future practice.

12:00 – End of session

MBA Writing Groups - Set 2

17 June, 2021 9:27 AM

Published

Following the review of the MBA Writing Group (WG) pilot, we agreed to continue with this initiative. We will be running a set of six more WG sessions, starting this Friday.

If you had not joined in yet and if you feel overwhelmed with your Project work, or not being able to concentrate on the tasks you have planned, or to motivate yourself on getting on with the studies, may be you should join the MBA WG and try whether being with other people working on their projects, could help you overcome these challenges.

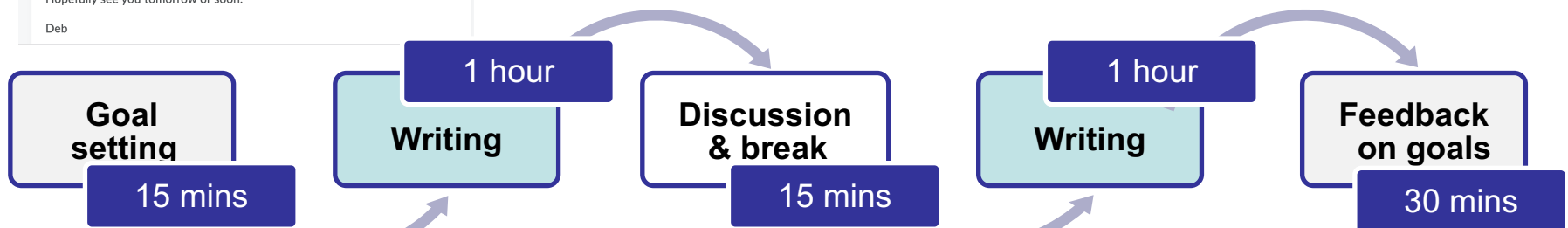
The link to all six WG sessions from this set is :

<https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ae53309d2cfa14fee82acc6c9d54bf96%40thread.tacv2/1623864403290?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%22ede29655-d097-42e4-bbb5-f38d427fbf8%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%2272f56bd6-d361-43d5-943e-00e7afe718b4%22%7d>

Have a happy Thursday!

Best wishes,

Milena



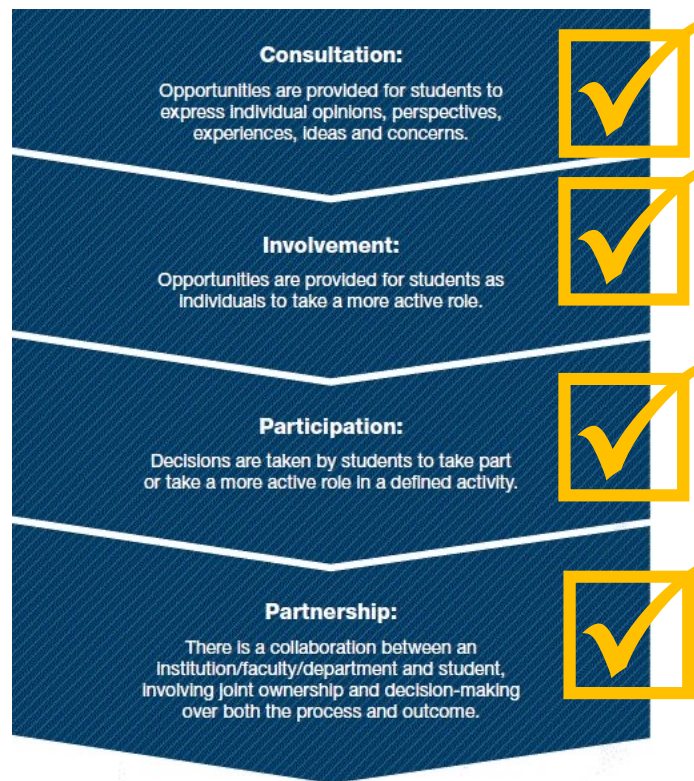
Student views

- “I have the feeling that I am being a part of something bigger than I am. I love the group and I love the dynamic.”
- “It [the WG] strikes me as an interesting opportunity for lecturers to lead by example. Quite often students might know about what lecturers are doing in terms of research, but they don't actually see the person doing the research. I think there's a value in this for students, particularly undergraduate students, to take part in an activity at the same time as and be able to see their lecturer doing the same thing that they are being asked to do.”
- “When it's an informal thing, the accountability is actually self-generated within the student rather than imposed from outside, which is probably a more valuable thing to develop and learn.

Staff views and reflection

- All participating students wished to continue the WG series.
- It was good to get to work with students informally and make progress on our own work.
- Many alluded to sense of belonging to a wider academic community, and appreciation of cohort, companionship and learning from each other (non-structured group mentoring and reverse mentoring).
- When probed on the running the sessions without academic participation, students noted they appreciated staff offering their time, facilitating the session and leading by example.
- The uptake might have been better if it were possible for the promotion and the first session to be done in-person in class.
- Time management might be a challenge with more people.

Reflections on the WG initiative

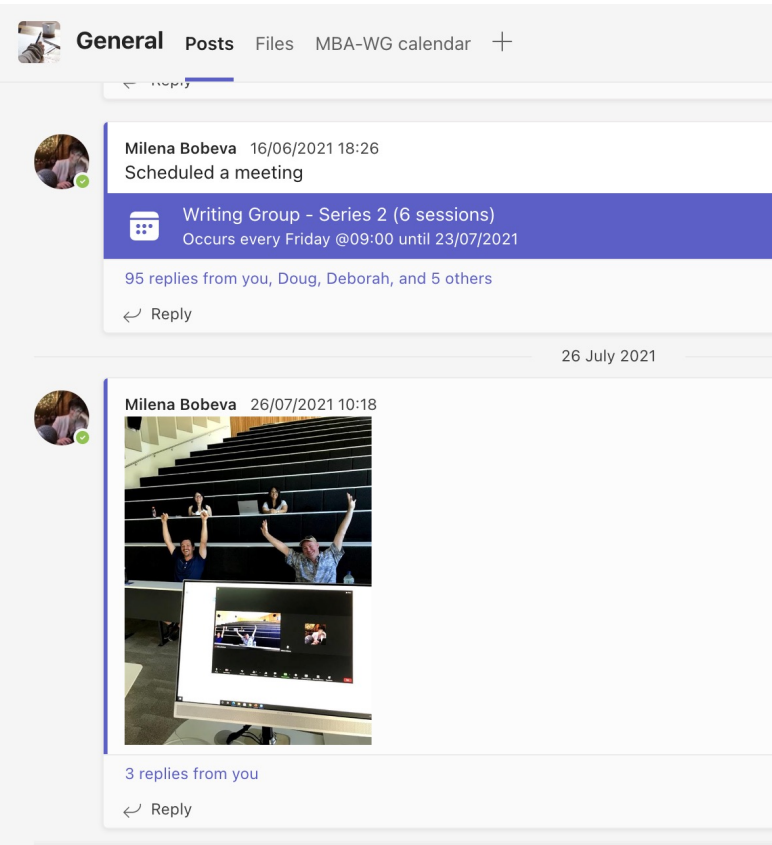
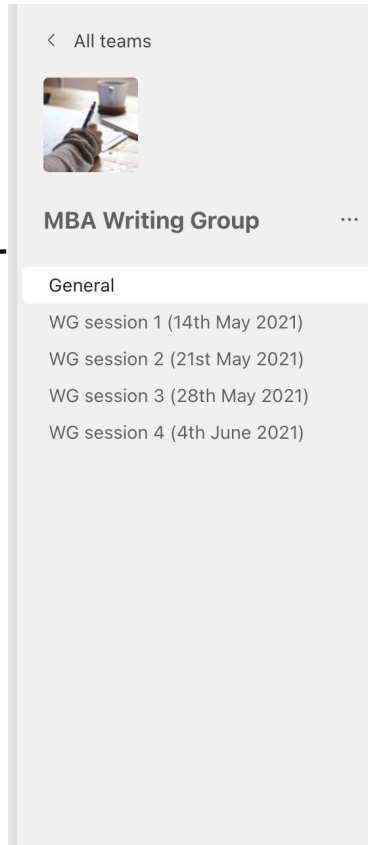


- The timings were agreed to take into account the student assessment calendar.
- Rotating student-Chair of the meeting.
- Promoting participation through Alumni talks and academic advisors, et al and to wider communities.

Four stages of student engagement (after HEA and NUS 2011) (Healey et al 2014)

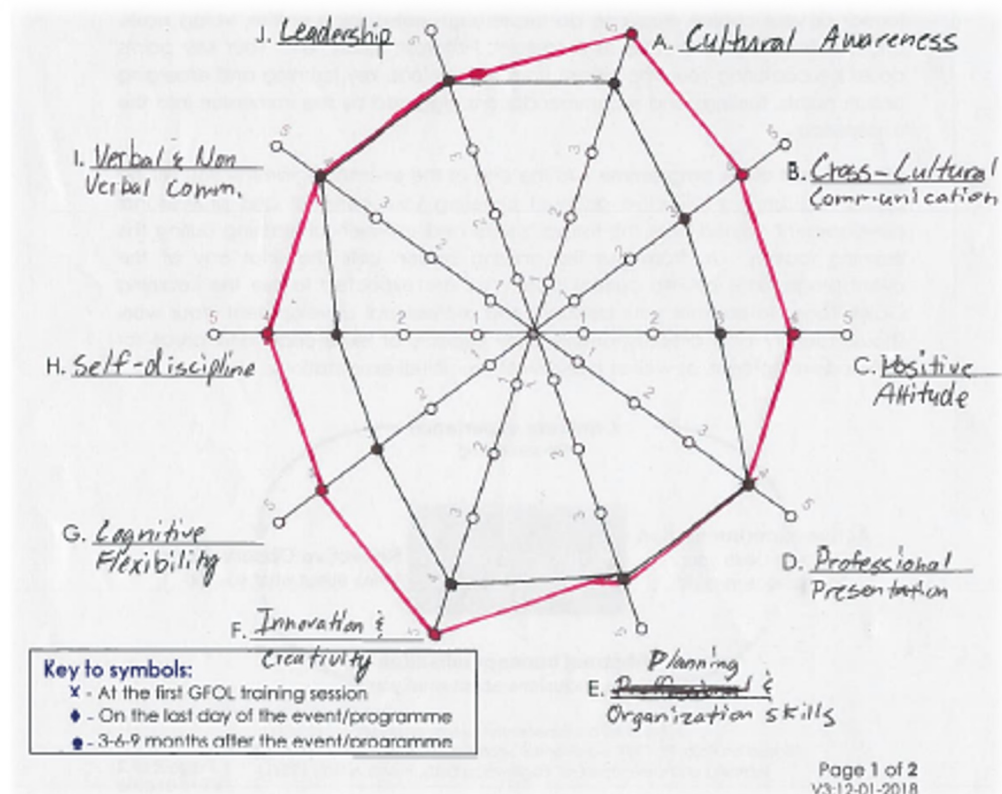
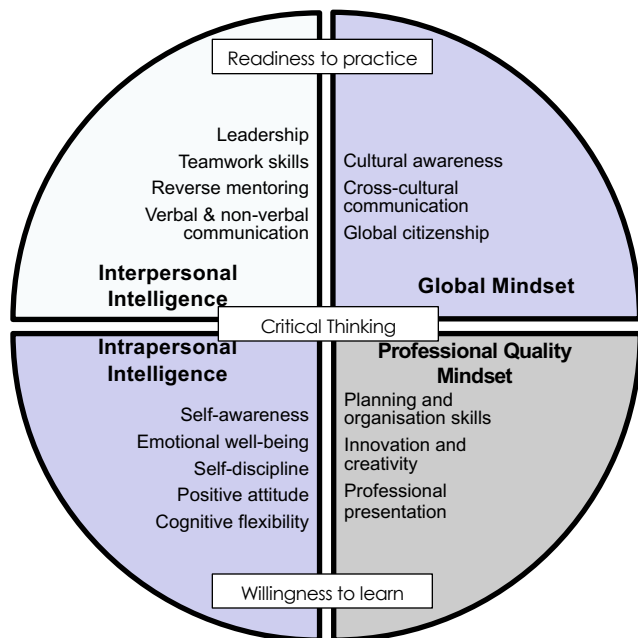
Impact: Design of WG Cycle 2

- In 2021-22 organise hybrid WGs as co-curricular activity.
- Introduce a 'taster session' (in-person writing day)
- Schedule in the timetable to ensure all students consider this support opportunity.
- Measure session performance



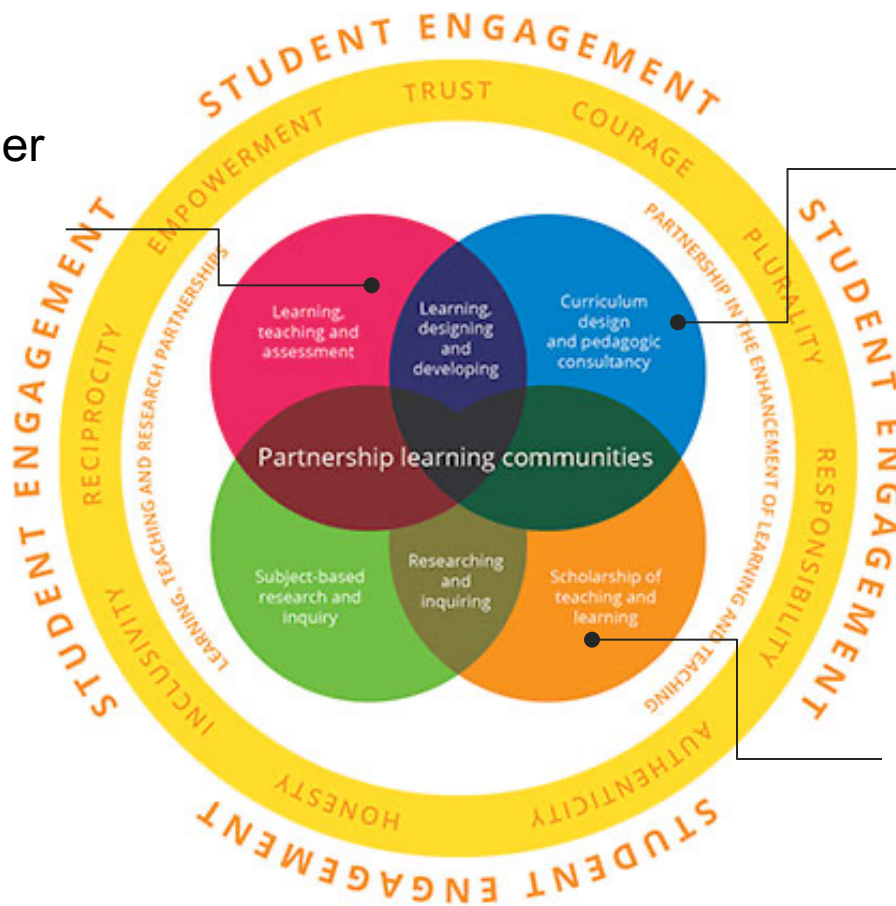
Enhancements in Cycle 2: Learning Gains Radar

Example of a Learning Gains Radar



The MBA Virtual WG & the Advance HE Framework for Student Engagement

Formative peer
feedback &
feed-forward



Informal feedback
(very helpful where the student
evaluation surveys have a very
low response rate)

Leading by example;
dissemination of good
practice and innovation

© Higher Education Academy, 2015

We are looking for partners for a comparative study of WGs



Photo by [Vardan Papikyan](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Thank You

Any questions



Dr Milena Bobeva, mbobeva@bournemouth.ac.uk

Deborah Taylor, dtaylor@bournemouth.ac.uk

References

- Guerin, C., Aitchison, C. and Carter, S., 2020. Digital and distributed: learning and teaching doctoral writing through social media, *Teaching in Higher Education*, 25(2), 238-254
- Murray, R., 2012. Developing a community of research practice, *British Educational Research Journal*, 38(5), 783-800.
- Murray, R. and Moore, S., 2006. *The handbook of academic writing: A fresh approach*. McGraw-Hill Education (UK)
- Rocco, T.S. and Hatcher, T.G., 2011. *The handbook of scholarly writing and publishing*. Jossey-Bass.