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What is *Appreciate*?

Appreciate: Cards to support appreciative partnership learning is a tool to support the Higher Education Academy's (2014) *Framework for partnership in learning and teaching in higher education*. The cards are designed to be used by staff (academic and professional services) and students in higher education institutions (HEIs) who are seeking to develop or enhance partnership learning. These may be partnerships between staff and students, among students, or between HEIs and their students' unions, associations, or guilds. Using the cards enables people to learn from the experiences of members of successful partnerships. The challenges set out on each card are prompts for people to think through key issues which others have found to impact on their partnership.

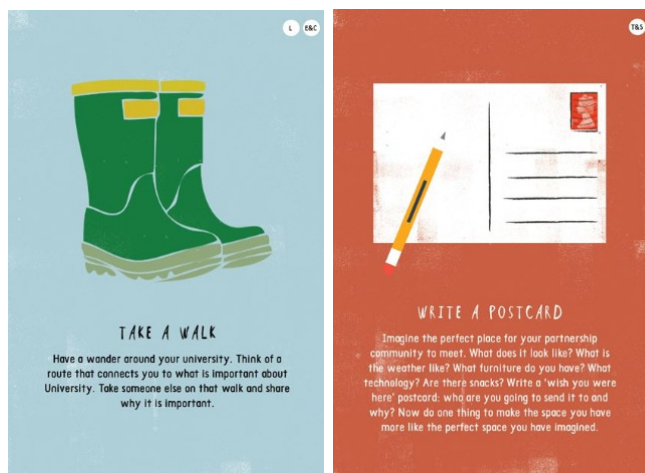


Image 1: Examples of cards

2. Methods

Appreciate has been developed through qualitative research investigating what enables partnership projects in higher education (HE) to work well. Five Universities from across the UK took part in the research: Birmingham City University, University of Edinburgh, Keele University, Manchester Metropolitan University, and University of Exeter. Academics, professional service staff, student union staff, and students took part in semi-structured interviews. The 34 interviewees represented a wide variety of experience and a wealth of expertise. Their partnerships included academics and students, student peer learning, HEIs and student associations as well as partnerships with industry, communities, and other institutions (public and third sector). Some of the partnerships were relatively new, others long running (10+ years). Some of the partnerships were within credit-bearing modules, some were in preparation for such modules, and still others existed as extra-curricular. The interviews lasted between 30 and 90 minutes and were recorded with consent. The research was reviewed and approved by a University of Exeter's Ethics Committee.

The research used an Appreciative Inquiry framework ([Cooperrider, Whitney et al. 2008](#)). Appreciative Inquiry is an approach to research which starts with the assumption that a focus on what is working well can afford significant insights. Interviewees in this research were asked about what enables their partnership to flourish and those involved to share its benefits. Where they identified problems or mistakes they were asked about their strategies for overcoming these. The research findings informed the creation of challenges which invite reflection and conversation. The aim is to facilitate readers to make positive changes by identifying things that can work well and by inspiring them.

3. Themes

Appreciate is organised by four themes: Learning, Time & Space, Evidence & Communication, and People, which emerged through analysis of the research data.

Learning

“I became a student with them.” (Academic)

Partnership learning creates the conditions for deep learning of disciplinary knowledge. This is often through creating opportunities for interactions between staff and students, often in the ‘real world’ or in authentic settings. Disciplinary knowledge was described by one Appreciate informant as the ‘glue’ which held the project together. Learning cards ask people to reflect on their assumptions about learning.

Time & Space

“I wanted to create a classroom outside of the class.” (Academic)

“I think often times we think that we have to bring students to us but I think going to them is really important... every time I go the Union. Something is created!”

(Professional Services Staff)

A partnership is conditioned by the times and spaces in which it operates. Using the experience of interviewees, Time & Space cards aim to focus peoples attentions on how they can work with and change the times and spaces in which their partnership learning takes place.

Evidence & Communication

“We were (all) speaking with the public and you would not have thought that one person is staff, that one is a student. We were (all) doing it because it was our project.” (Student)

Communication is central to creating successful partnership and the values which underpin it. Evidence is one of the things people to communicate. Evidence & Communication cards prompt people to think about how they communicate throughout their partnership ([Hinton, Gannaway et al. 2011](#)).

People

“I think I stopped seeing a member of staff as this more distant figure and more, they’re a learner as well, kind of thing. So it helped me realise that by all of our lecturers being researchers, they were always on a journey towards learning more and doing more themselves. They weren’t just static in their knowledge and we were just trying to catch them up. It was that we were all moving towards knowing more and so in that sense, I think it did change quite a lot, the way I perceive members of staff.” (Student)

Partnership is all about people. People make these things work and make them worthwhile. People cards ask people to pay attention to the people around them and suggests they connect with them outside of the roles they occupy within their HEIs (student, academic, etc.).

4. Poster aim

The poster will describe *Appreciate*. It will describe how it was created and draw out the core values connecting partnership learning, appreciative inquiry, and *Appreciate*. *Appreciate* is currently being piloted and evaluated. The poster will give details on how to be involved in this evaluation.

Hinton, T., D. Gannaway, et al. (2011). *The D-Cubed Guide: Planning for Effective Dissemination*. Sydney, Australian Learning and Teaching Council.

The Higher Education Academy (2014). *Framework for partnership in learning and teaching in higher education*. York, The Higher Education Academy.