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## Introduction

This poster delves into the critical role of lived experience in transformative learning, emphasising the necessity of diverse voices in understanding the nuanced challenges individuals face. Personalised learning and elevating student agency are core components towards Future Horizons in Learning and Teaching Practice. Through the examples of 'community, collaboration and networking', and 'Future curriculum and student experience' these nuances are unpacked.

## Purpose of the work

The Lived Experience is characterised as 'being-in-the-world' and 'meaningful totalities out of scattered events' (Frechette et al. 2020) this idea is emulated in the approach. Presented as four case studies from lived experience perspectives, addressing learning barriers and enablers, featuring insights from students and staff and students with visible and hidden disabilities. The poster and overview presents how these case studies were deconstructed and reconstructed into a Phenomenal-based experience (PhBL) (Qaa.ac.uk, 2023) at the University of Salford Festival of Learning and Teaching. This presentation deconstructs how this was approached in the session, and the thinking behind providing a lived experience discussion environment, agency as well as the sharing of ideas in a safe or brave space. The aim was to explore practice through a disability, neuro-diversity and international lens, advocating an authentic integration of lived experiences into pedagogical practices to make a positive difference to the student experience.

## Methods

This study explored the lived experiences of students and staff at The University of Salford and the edited case-studies came from staff and students from various levels and demographics who volunteered to take part. We recruited by targeting diverse groups and communities to build a range of experiences. During the session, the participants in the room where UoS staff at The Festival of Learning & Teaching with the session designed to immersive and interactive in exploring the artifacts of lived experience. The case studies, based on real-life experiences, were edited for the session while retaining authenticity. Scripts and poems were chosen to be memorable and support neurodiversity. Access the case studies via Padlet link or QR code and provide feedback. The room setup promoted equity by displaying materials on walls, facilitating movement, and providing reflection spaces. Phenomenon-Based Learning (PhBL) was used to create an inclusive environment for discussion and sharing diverse viewpoints that is further explained in the poster narrative recording. Artifacts included four case studies in poem and performance-based narratives as scripts. Key topics: behaviour (protection vs. pleasing), wellbeing, confidence, unintentional discrimination, racism, colourism, visible and non-visible disabilities, speaking up, masking, and coding.

## Elevating Lived Experiences – Reflections and Discussion

In recent years, Higher Education has increasingly recognised the importance of incorporating students' lived experiences into teaching practices.

This approach enriches the learning environment, making education more relevant and impactful. 'Nothing about Us without Us' (Duddington et al, 2023) advocating including the learners voice to avoid marginalised groups and structures, moving away from to be 'done to' and encourage 'to learn from and with' in both educational and professional settings. This exercise aimed to create an environment whereby lived experiences were shared to encourage reflection and discussion. The experiences used were engineered, rather than taken from those in the room. This was important to facilitate an open discussion and enable participants to share without feeling that the discussion is overly personal or that they may be marginalised, providing a space of confidence to empower a diverse range of voices.

## Poetry and Script Writing – Supporting Neurodiversity

Poetry was used as it often employs rhythm and repetition, which can help neurodiverse learners, especially those with ADHD or dyslexia, to better retain information. The predictable patterns in poetry can make it easier for learners to follow along and remember content (Leeds Trinity University, 2023). In addition to poetry, script writing can bridge the gap in understanding neurodivergent experiences. Both reading and writing scripts offer significant benefits by valuable medium for expressing and understanding unique perspectives (Heinonen et al., 2020).

## Safe vs. Brave Spaces

Safe spaces are designed to provide a supportive environment where marginalised or minoritised individuals can feel secure from discrimination, aiming to create a sense of physical and psychological safety to openly discuss experiences without fear of judgment or hostility. Critics argue that safe spaces can sometimes lead to intellectual isolation, where challenging discussions are avoided to maintain comfort (Ali, 2017). Brave spaces, as proposed by Arao and Clemens (2013), aim to foster challenging dialogues and intellectual growth by encouraging students to engage with difficult topics and confront discomfort, creating an environment where resilience is developed through open, respectful discussions. In this setting, the activity was presented as 'storytelling' space to encourage engagement with the dialog and link to the benefits of both safe and brave spaces.

## Conclusion

Equity and agency are central to the development of this activity as a PhBL approach to elevate the lived experience. It's an example of using the physical space to support and engage discussions whilst making the cognitive spaces feel secure and empowering. Here we explore the potential role of lived experience in transformative learning and elevate student agency through the narrative of case studies and the learning space. Aligned to supporting community, collaboration and networking; by adapting the learning space to further support the lived experience, we can encourage sharing, agency and voice. Utilising innovative pedagogical approaches of poetry, scripts and PhBL enhance how the themes and nuances are unpacked, thus, enabling neurodiverse learners to engage and feel empowered in a more equitable way. This work brings together a range of theoretical approaches as a practice-based pilot to support elevating the voice of diverse learners and provides a basis for ongoing exploration in learning and teaching.

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