



Joint SHEEC and TLG Bulletin, December 2022 – Looking forwards

Welcome to the TLG Bulletin - your quick guide to the activity of the Theme Leaders' Group (TLG). Please feel free to share this with any colleagues who might find it useful.



The 1 December 2022 marked the first time members of both the Scottish Higher Education Enhancement Committee (SHEEC) and the Theme Leaders' Group (TLG) had come together in-person since December 2019 following the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. As colleagues are aware the next two years mark an important point in time as Scottish colleges and universities continue to work with SFC on developing and implementing its Tertiary Quality Framework (TQF). The joint meeting provided an opportunity to bring colleagues together to discuss enhancement activity within this new Framework. QAAS Scotland were delighted to have Professor Alastair Robertson, Chair of SHEEC, welcome colleagues to this joint event.

Professor Clare Peddie, Leader of the current Enhancement Theme, *Resilient Learning Communities*, hailed the timing and relevance of the Theme, coming during a time of global upheaval caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff and student co-creation are at the heart of *Resilient Learning Communities*, which focuses staff and students' collaboration in mutually supportive ways, developing resources across the two core strands of the Theme: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and Flexible, Accessible Learning. Caroline Turnbull, Acting Director of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland at QAA, gave an overview of the joint SHEEC/TLG event, which provided an early opportunity to work collectively, sharing ideas and views on the place of enhancement activity in a tertiary landscape. Caroline introduced three groups of

colleagues presenting on various aspects of sector activity, providing context for a discussion activity supported by dialogue sheets.

Heather Innes, Student Theme Leader and Hitanshi Badani, Deputy Student Theme Leader presented on the Student-Led Project (SLP), a key feature of Enhancement Theme activity. Our Student Theme Leads provided an overview of the work of the SLP in Year 1 and 2 of the *Resilient Learning Communities* Theme. In 2019-20 the SLP focused on [Digital Student Communities](#). This project explored issues and themes relevant to how higher education institutions and students' associations/unions recreated student communities in an online environment during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the enablers and barriers this created for community creation. Many examples of practice were shared as part of the project. In 2021-22 the SLP was on [Promoting the Equity of the Student Learning Experience](#). The Year 2 project built on the momentum and lessons learned over the previous two academic sessions, exploring equity and inclusiveness, as staff and students worked collaboratively to build a student experience supporting all students however and wherever they learn. In this context, the SLP looked at how best to develop representative systems and student/class representative skills to effectively support all the students these systems and skills serve. In turn, the Year 3 SLP builds on the projects that have come before and is focused on [Exploring Community Partnerships for the Future of Further and Higher Education](#). Recognising the move towards a future tertiary quality framework, the SLP Steering Group was keen to reflect this in the project title and in its Group membership, which will benefit from having both college and university student representation. The focus of Year 3 of the SLP is on how community engagement and partnerships can be a positive influence on a student's learner journey and explores how students can build relationships with their local communities, especially international students. Through a series of case studies, the SLP intends to share current good practice and some will be in video format. The Steering Group is also planning an exciting visual display of learners and their communities.

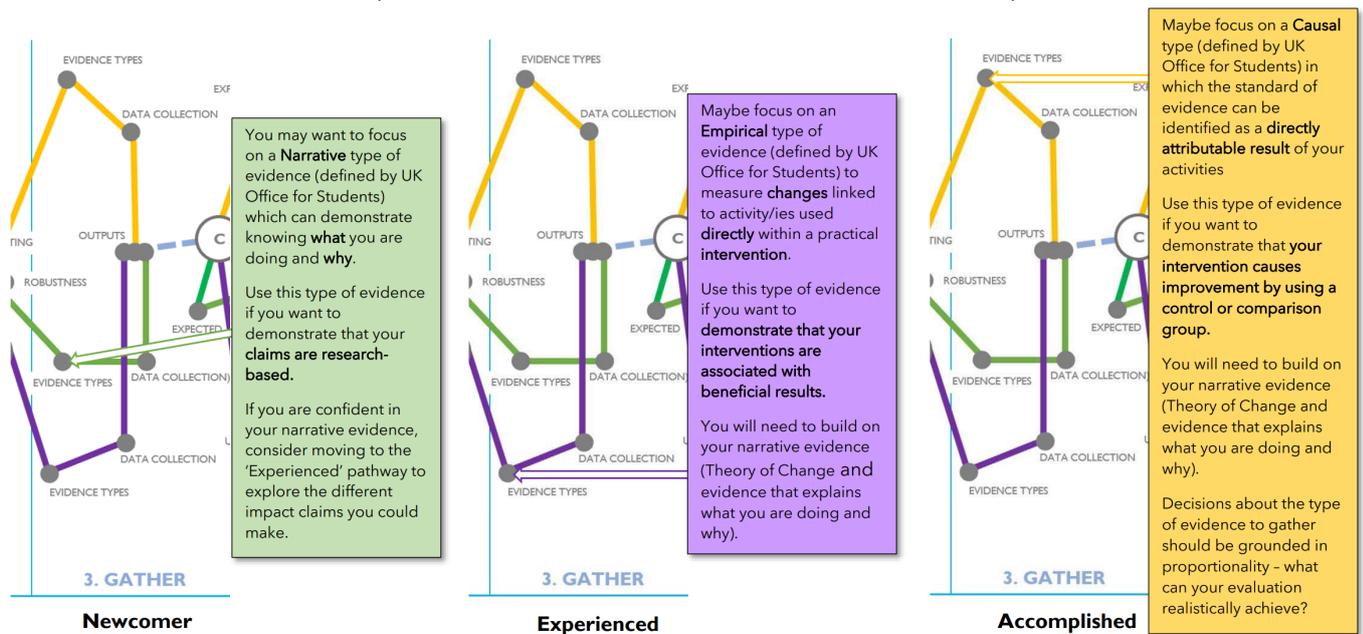
Debra Macfarlane, Quality Enhancement Consultant, and Karen Gray, Quality Manager, presented on behalf of Scottish Funding Council. Their presentation focused on the development of a Tertiary Quality Framework and highlighted:

- the SFC's statutory duties
- the size of the Scottish tertiary education sector (26 colleges and 19 higher education institutions) with around one quarter of higher education delivered in colleges
- the interconnectedness of quality in colleges and universities, benefits of a tertiary quality approach and focus on students
- Tertiary Quality Framework (TQF) project phases, developments and progress

- outcomes from recent workshops delivered by SFC
- an overview of the six components of the Framework, the six TQF development projects and anticipated next steps.

An image of the Universal Evaluation Framework

How it will look: Differentiated exemplar information - UEF 'Gather' Action Zone for all levels of evaluation experience



Our Theme evaluation consultants, Professor Stella Jones Devitt (Director of the SCoLPP Research Centre and Professor of Critical Pedagogy at Staffordshire University) and Dr Liz Austen (Head of Evaluation and Research at Sheffield Hallam University) delivered a third presentation on the ongoing evaluation of 20 years of the Enhancement Themes and development of a digital Universal Evaluation Framework. Stella and Liz highlighted the following in their presentation:

- overviewing key outcomes from each of the completed Enhancement Themes
- progress in the evaluation activity around 20 years of the Enhancement Themes: range of evidence analysed; co-creating a Themes Theory of Change; contribution analysis for impact assessment and contribution analysis focus on evidence to support and rival explanations; addressing remaining evidence gaps
- demonstration of the digital Universal Evaluation Framework, its key features and anticipated benefits and use.

While there is a large amount of evidence showing impact on practice from 20 Years of the Themes, in terms of the remaining evidence gaps, Stella and Liz are actively encouraging staff and students across the sector to make contact with them for examples of Themes impact on student experience and outcomes. In addition, Stella and Liz are also seeking volunteers to pilot the Universal Evaluation Framework. If you can support either or both activities, please do make contact by dropping us an email on ARCAdmin@qaas.ac.uk or directly to Liz (L.Austen@shu.ac.uk) or Stella (Stella.Jones-Devitt@staffs.ac.uk).

The three presentations set the context for a discussion activity prompted by a series of questions on dialogue sheets. This was a great opportunity for lively and constructive conversation around the development of future enhancement activity. QAA will be working with colleagues from the colleges and universities to develop a detailed project plan, which will qualify how sector conversations will take place to define the future of enhancement activity within SFC's emerging Tertiary Quality Framework.

We really welcomed the opportunity to network with staff and student colleagues in-person. We look forward to working together in 2023 as we support the development of the Tertiary Quality Framework.

From the team at QAA Scotland, our very best wishes to you all for a peaceful and restful festive season.

TLG is a group central to delivering the Resilient Learning Communities Theme. The group leads, supports and evaluates the work undertaken for the Theme. Please get in touch with your TLG [institutional staff and student representatives](#), [Scottish Higher Education Enhancement Committee](#) representative or [QAA Scotland](#) if you want to know more and get involved in Enhancement Theme activity.