

Student Futures Manifesto Theme 4: A clear outline of the teaching students will receive and the necessary tools to access it

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Overview

The student future manifesto stems from the recognition of the significant impact of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, which disrupted students' learning experiences and necessitated a swift transition to new learning methods. A clear outline of teaching methods and the availability of accessible resources play a vital role in enabling students to comprehend the teaching approach, anticipate what to expect during their course, and access the necessary materials for their learning. This transparency and support contribute to an enriched learning experience, empowering students to actively engage with the curriculum. We administered a survey and conducted a focus group which revealed majority of the students are somewhat prepared for the learning methods but in retrospect wasn't as traditional as they thought. It is recommended that in-depth information be provided to students at the time of decision making, implement a pilot program to integrate flipped classroom into relevant modules, and the incorporation of comprehensive induction to support prospective students in making decisions prior to coming to the university and empower current students to actively engage in their learning and improve the alignment between student expectations and the teaching methods employed.

Introduction

The theme focuses on a clear outline of teaching and learning methods students will receive during their course and the available resource to access them. This theme emphasises the significance of students having a comprehensive understanding of the teaching approach employed in their course and its role in facilitating their learning. It involves effectively communicating the learning objectives, curriculum content, and structure in a manner that is transparent and easily comprehensible to students.

Teaching methods vary across colleges and universities at the University of Lincoln, encompassing a range of approaches such as face-to-face or online lectures, seminars, group work, small group teachings, tutorials, practical exercises, laboratory and clinical work, outdoor learning experiences, studios, independent research, flipped classrooms, or experiments. Each method serves a distinct purpose, and the outline should provide justification for how the chosen methods will be integrated into the overall learning experience of a particular module or course.

To support students' effective engagement in their courses, the availability of relevant resources is crucial. These resources may include textbooks, reference materials, online learning platforms, multimedia resources such as videos, podcasts, and interactive modules, academic journals, libraries, and research databases. Furthermore, the outline should offer guidance on accessing and utilising these resources, clarifying whether they will be provided by the institution or if students are expected to acquire them independently.

In order to co-create an inclusive and effective learning environment with student on this theme, the report examined the following objectives:

- Clarity of teaching methods
- "How" and "when" student find information about teaching methods to be encountered on their course
- Level of preparedness for the teaching methods and if it aids their learning experience.

Methods

To address the above objectives to co-create an inclusive and effective learning environment that aligns with students' needs and enhances their educational journey, a survey was administered to

students across all colleges and to promote representation of international, home, mature and disabled students. The survey was consolidated into a shareable SU weblink to encourage participation and easy shareability focusing on the following questions:

- What teaching and learning methods have you encountered at the University of Lincoln?
- When would you have found it most helpful to receive a clear description of the learning and teaching methods that you would encounter on your course?
- How prepared did you feel for the style of teaching and learning that you have received?

Upon receiving responses from participants, we conducted a virtual focus group with 8 students from Lincoln Business School, and across the Colleges comprising of both undergraduate and postgraduate students. The session delves in-depth into the objectives of the research questions, and everyone was encouraged to provide honest feedback on the topic.

Results

Teaching Methods Utilized by Colleges in The University Of Lincoln

The survey results provided insights into the teaching methods utilised in departments. Independent learning was reported by 75% of students, while lectures were encountered by 94%. The College of Arts emphasises small group teaching, tutorials, and studio-based teaching, while the College of Science focuses on practical work, labs/clinical work, and research-based teaching. The College of Social Science utilises outdoor teaching more frequently.

Interestingly, the flipped classroom teaching method is not widely implemented across departments. The College of Arts has the highest utilisation at 22%, followed by the College of Social Science at 8%, and the College of Science does not use it. This indicates a lower adoption of the flipped classroom approach compared to other methods. Feedback from focus group sessions revealed that students in the College of Science were indifferent towards the flipped classroom, while students in the College of Arts and the Business School believed it should be integrated into specific modules. They recognised its potential to enhance engagement and guided learning. Students also said a mix of learning methods should be adopted across all modules as required for the course as not one fits all. Further exploration of the flipped classroom's benefits and potential implementation is important to enhance student engagement and learning outcomes.

“How” and “when” student find information about teaching methods

According to the survey results, most students across all categories considered it most helpful to have a clear overview of the teaching methods while selecting their course. This emphasises the significance of giving this information during the decision-making process, as it is critical in assisting students in making well-informed choices.

In terms of specific groups, international students and registered disabled students express a higher preference for receiving this information during induction, indicating that they may require additional support and guidance to understand the teaching methods specific to their circumstances. During the focus group, students claimed they found the information on the university website, the offer holders' day and through Blackboard for course related information. However, the open day was not considered as valuable in terms of providing detailed information on teaching methods. Additionally, students reported that while the website accurately reflected the contact hours and emphasis on lectures, it lacked awareness of the extent of independent study and additional learning required prior to arriving at Lincoln. They also expressed struggling with online timed assessments due to a lack of guidance.

Level of Preparedness for The Style of Teaching and Learning They Have Received?

The analysis of the data reveals that most students (38%) felt somewhat prepared for the style of teaching they encountered, while a significant portion (31%) felt fairly well prepared. On the other hand, a notable percentage (18%) expressed that they did not feel prepared at all. International students exhibited similar levels of preparedness compared to the overall average, with 23% feeling

well prepared, 32% feeling somewhat prepared, and 23% feeling well prepared. Home students reported comparable levels of preparedness, with 40% feeling somewhat prepared. Registered disabled students displayed slightly lower levels of preparedness, with 39% feeling somewhat prepared and only 6% feeling well prepared.

Overall, the data suggests that a significant number of students felt adequately prepared for the style of teaching they encountered. However, there is room for improvement, particularly in addressing the concerns of specific student groups such as registered disabled students and those in certain academic colleges. Efforts should be made to enhance support mechanisms and ensure that students feel well- equipped to engage with the teaching styles employed in their courses. In terms of improvement, students expressed a desire for more practical sessions that would allow them to apply theory to real-world contexts.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Clarity of teaching methods

Increase integration of flipped classroom approach: Given the positive reception of the flipped classroom approach by students in the College of Arts and the Business School, it is recommended to explore its integration into relevant modules across departments. This can be measured through the following actions:

- Develop a pilot programme in selected modules to implement the flipped classroom approach.
- Monitor student engagement and participation levels in these modules.
- Gather feedback from students regarding their experience and perception of the flipped classroom approach compared to traditional teaching methods.
- Assess the impact on student learning outcomes through comparative evaluations of student performance and achievements.

Enhance awareness and utilization of teaching methods: To ensure students are well-informed about the available teaching methods and their benefits, it is recommended to improve communication and resources regarding teaching approaches. This can be measured through the following approach:

- Develop comprehensive handbooks or online guides for students that provide detailed information about each teaching method employed in their respective departments.

Recommendation 2: “How” and “when” student find information about teaching methods to be encountered on their course

Enhance information provision to improve the clarity and depth of information provided to prospective students during the decision-making process, particularly regarding teaching methods, expectations and make learning curve a bit easier. This is particularly important for international students, registered disabled students, and students in their earlier academic years. To measure this:

- Track the conversion rates of prospective students who have access to comprehensive information during the decision-making process compared to those who do not, to evaluate the impact on enrolment.

Orientation and induction programmes: Incorporate comprehensive induction programs that familiarise students and during the induction period, dedicate specific sessions to explain learning and teaching methods to students, including the use of virtual learning environment and comprehensive explanations and demonstrations, addressing any concerns or questions they may have. To measure this:

- Utilise learning analytics tools available in the virtual learning environment to track students' engagement and progress in the modules or courses. Monitor the usage of virtual learning resources introduced during the induction period to assess students' adoption and utilisation.

Also, I recommend a close collaboration with lecturers and module coordinators to ensure accurate and up-to-date information is available to students and provide professional development opportunities for faculty members to enhance their teaching skills and approaches.

Recognise the unique needs of international students, registered disabled students, and students in different academic years. Offer targeted support and resources to help these students feel more prepared and confident in engaging with the style of teaching. This could involve additional orientation sessions, mentorship programs, or accessibility accommodations.

Recommendation 3: Level of Preparedness for Teaching methods and how it aids their learning experience.

Develop practical application opportunities: To address the desire for more practical sessions, The University of Lincoln should focus on integrating hands- on experiences and real-world applications into learning experience. This can include incorporating case studies, simulations, or collaborative projects. To measure this:

- Monitor student performance in assessments or projects that require the application of theoretical knowledge to evaluate the impact of practical sessions on their learning outcomes.
- Track the attendance and engagement levels in practical sessions compared to other teaching methods to determine student interest and participation.

Enhance pre-course communication to provide students with a clearer understanding of the style of teaching they will encounter. To measure this:

- Conduct a pre-course survey to assess students' awareness and understanding of the teaching methods and expectations prior to the start of the course.
- Track the number of inquiries and feedback received from students regarding the clarity and comprehensiveness of pre-course communication.

These recommendations can be measured through quantitative data as well as qualitative data including feedback and engagement levels. Regular assessment and monitoring of these measurements will provide insights into the effectiveness of the implemented improvements and allow for ongoing adjustments to further enhance the students' preparedness and learning experience

By implementing these recommendations, the university of Lincoln would enhance the overall student experience, empower students to actively engage in their learning, and improve the alignment between student expectations and the teaching methods employed.

Figures and Tables

Fig 1: Teaching and learning method by colleges

	Lincoln Int'l Business School	College of Arts	College of Social Science	College of Science	Average
Lecture	100%	100%	85%	92%	94%
Small group teaching	72%	44%	54%	36%	51%
Tutorial	61%	75%	62%	56%	63%
Groupwork	67%	75%	54%	72%	67%
Practical work	61%	81%	38%	80%	65%
Labs/Clinical work	11%	6%	46%	60%	31%
Outdoor	33%	19%	15%	16%	21%
Studio	28%	63%	0%	4%	24%

Independent work	72%	81%	69%	76%	75%
Research	72%	63%	38%	48%	55%
Flipped classroom	22%	6%	8%	0%	9%
Face-to-face teaching	78%	75%	85%	72%	77%
Online teaching	61%	69%	77%	76%	71%

Fig 2: Timing of information on teaching methods

	At the time of choosing your course	When you received your offer	During induction
International Students	59%	18%	23%
Home Students	62%	20%	18%
Registered Disabled	50%	22%	28%
Year 0	0%	100%	0%
Year 1	62%	29%	10%
Year 2	64%	14%	21%
Year 3 & 4	65%	12%	24%
Postgraduate	61%	11%	28%
Female	63%	22%	15%
Male	58%	16%	26%
Lincoln International Business School	67%	11%	22%
College of Arts	63%	19%	19%
College of Social Science	54%	31%	15%
College of Science	60%	20%	20%
Part-time	67%	0%	33%
Full-time	61%	20%	19%



