

Parallel Session 1 (Thursday 12th, 09.45-11.15)

Session A | Employability

1A) 1. *The employability skills gap in economics*, Cloda Jenkins (University College London) and Stuart Lane (Economics Network)

In this session we will discuss the results from the Economics Network 2019 Employers Survey and the 2019 survey of Employability Skills in UK Economics Degrees. We will compare the preferences and perceptions of employers on skill development to the current levels of provision and integration within economics departments. We will highlight gaps between the two, particularly in areas where employers suggest economics graduates' skills are underdeveloped. We welcome discussion on whether these gaps should be managed going forward and if so, how best departments can improve skill development within their economics degrees.

1A) 2. *Talking your way through employability: evaluative conversations to develop confidence and critical thinking in Economics*, Fabio Arico (University of East Anglia)

This presentation outlines the findings from the evaluation of an innovative assessment design aimed at developing students' confidence and critical thinking, as well as communication and debating skills, in a History of Economic Thought (HET) module running at the School of Economics of the University of East Anglia. The assessment structure of the HET module consists of three pieces of summative assessment: (i) a group video-presentation, (ii) a critical essay, and (iii) an evaluative conversation (akin to a viva voce). Whilst the group submission constitutes a stand-alone component of assessment, the critical essay and evaluative conversation assessments are inter-linked. The evaluative conversation is designed to enable students to demonstrate how they have acted upon the feedback received on their critical essay. Our design generates well-structured feed-forward dynamics as students' engagement with the feedback received on their essay assignment directly affects their performance in the final evaluative conversation. Preliminary results highlight that students find the task helpful at developing new skills, as they recognise the usefulness of evaluative conversation. Our analysis also allows us to differentiate students' appraisal of this novel assessment by performance and by orientation towards feedback. We argue that evaluative conversations should be more widely embedded in curriculum and assessment design as an effective means to enhance employability skills of Economics graduates.

Session B | Student support

1B) 1. *Support services provided by universities - case study: career counselling at Bucharest University of Economic Studies*, Maria Liana Lacatus and Camelia Staiculescu (Bucharest University of Economic Studies)

Nowadays, the issue of integrating graduates into the labour market is a subject of great concern to universities and employers too. Universities should prepare professionals. That means that university programs should focus not only on knowledge but on developing professional competences to students too. These competences together with so called transversal or 'soft' ones will help them to find a job at graduation time, stay employed and be flexible and adaptable in order to develop and fulfil personally and professionally. From this point of view, universities together with employers have to provide students not with educational services only, but with career counselling services too. Counselling services will help them to properly manage their own potential and choose an educational and professional path. The paper is focused on support services for integration into the labour market provided by The Bucharest University of Economic Studies to students and students and employers perception on these services. It represents a synthesis of different research conducted recently on theoretical resources, on students enrolled at The Bucharest University of Economic Studies and partner-employers of the university. At the end of the paper some recommendations are provided as consequences of the conclusions of research.

1B) 2. *Understanding, supporting and teaching Generation Z*, Katerina Raoukka and Annika Johnson (University of Bristol)

What characterises Generation Z is vastly different from what shapes Generations X and Y and miles away from what shapes baby boomers. What happens then, when Generation Z is being taught by Millennials, Generation X or even baby boomers? Traditional ways of teaching economics are becoming more and more challenging to sustain in a generation that has experiential and intrapersonal learning preferences, that has great expectations and that most of their social life takes place online. A great challenge for academics and for faculty is to understand what is different about them and adjust teaching but also pastoral care appropriately. Embracing personal devices, personalising their learning and 'meeting' online, are some of the methods we could use to improve our communication with this generation not only to support them but also to clarify the expectations with which they enter University life.

1B) 3. Financial literacy and behavioural biases among university students, Inna Pomorina, Isik Akin (Bath Spa University) and Ros O'Leary (University of the West of England)

Financial literacy and behavioural biases are crucial factors, which may affect individuals' financial decisions and behaviour. University students who make financial decisions at this stage of their lives can feel impact of these decisions throughout their lives. Thus, university students' financial wellbeing is shaped by these two factors. This paper investigates the relationship between financial literacy level and behavioural biases among university students. Target population was selected from University of West of England – Bristol (UWE). Data will be collected via survey method. Financial knowledge, financial attitude and financial behaviour are used in order to measure financial literacy level among university students. Financial literacy is used as dependent variable for the research. The level of behavioural biases will be used as independent variables based on a five-point Likert type scale. The relationship between financial literacy and behavioural biases will be analysed via regression analysis. The result of the research will show to what extent university students with the low level of financial literacy are exposed to behavioural biases, and which factors most affect financial literacy of university students. At the same time, it will also show how can university students prevent behavioural biases in order to avoid wrong financial decisions.

Session C | Workshop

1C) 1. LSE first year challenge - creating greater sense of community within the Economics Department, Katarzyna Krajniewska (London School of Economics)

This academic year (2018/2019), we introduced at the LSE Department of Economics a new way of creating greater sense of community among our first year students and introducing them to economics and LSE heritage, the First Year Challenge. All of our fresher were divided in the groups of 5, and sent to various London locations where they met their peers. Each student received a clue which he/she should research in advance, and the big theme was 'Economic and Financial Crisis - 10 years on' through the lenses of the never ending Hayek - Keynes debate, to give it a bit of a connection to the LSE (Hayek was LSE professor from 1931-1950). Keeping in mind school's motto: Rerum cognoscere causas, the tasks encouraged students to analyse the crisis according to three aspects: (1) causes, (2) responses, (3) consequences and lessons learnt. The final product was a 3-minute-long video produced by each group. Initial judging was made by the Academic Mentors (all students within a group shared the same Academic Mentor). 18 out of 51 videos were shortlisted and final winners were selected by a panel of judges. During the

project students interacted with their group members, their Academic Mentors and Undergraduate Tutors. The project lasted 3 weeks and had 3 main aims: 1) create greater sense of community in the LSE Econ Department (develop sense of identity and togetherness, introduce students to the School's history, bond students with each other and their Academic Mentors), 2) engage the students in academic research early on, 3) encourage peer exchange and learning through a variety of mediums. The emphasis was on strengthening the sense of community. Students were encouraged to explore London together and the Ultimate London Explorer Prize was awarded.

1C) 2. Online learning: lessons from first-year undergraduate courses, Erkal Ersoy and Robert Mochrie (Heriot-Wat University)

At Heriot-Watt University, online learning now plays a key role in the delivery of principles courses in economics. These introductory courses are taught to a very diverse student population: students differ in many respects, including their degree programmes, the stage of their studies, their prior exposure to the subject, and their work experience before starting their degree. These differences reflected in their expectations, confidence, interest in the content, and potentially their success on the course. Jointly, these factors could also influence whether students choose to pursue economics further in their studies. Through a series of focus groups, we hope to investigate each student group's perception of online materials, their efficacy last semester, and their adequacy for future use.

Parallel Session 2 (Thursday 12th, 11.45-12.45)

Session A | Economic games and experiments

2A) 1. The microfinance game: a classroom activity to understand the dynamics of microfinance, Javier Sierra (University of Salamanca)

The aim of this paper is to present an innovative teaching and learning method consisting of a role-play simulation that allows students to get a first-hand experience about the dynamics and the complexity of the microfinance industry. This simulation also seeks to foster critical thinking and reflection about poverty, its multiple dimensions and the potential of microfinance to tackle poverty and inequality in different contexts. Students play different roles representing several stakeholders from the microfinance sector, and engage in discussions to implement a variety of initiatives and programs, which may generate different economic and social effects. This simulation has been organised within

the course on Poverty and Inequality, from the degree in Global Studies. Our results show that this simulation may be a useful tool to teach theoretical concepts about poverty and inequality, and particularly microfinance, to undergraduate students, who have very different profiles and backgrounds. It may also be an appropriate learning tool to develop a set of key academic and personal skills.

2A) 2. Classroom experiments, Adrian Gourlay, Chris Wilson and Anna Rita Bennato (Loughborough University)

Bounded rationality is a key concept with implications across all areas of economics. To help students better understand the nature, causes and forms of bounded rationality in individual choice, we present a flexible classroom experiment. Beyond providing students with some first-hand evidence of bounded rationality, the experiment shows how a range of factors can prompt bounded rationality and illustrates how it can manifest itself in the form of different heuristics. The experiment can be conducted with any number of students and takes approximately 30 minutes to conduct, with a further 10-20 minutes to reflect and debrief.

Session B | Economics and the NSS

2B) 1. Ten years of the National Student Survey, Guglielmo Volpe (Queen Mary University of London) and Alvin Birdi (Economics Network and University of Bristol)

This session provides some analysis of sector data on NSS returns in economics, business studies and mathematics. As well as general trends in these subjects, we look at determinants of high overall satisfaction scores. The session will provide an opportunity for participants to discuss the results and practical actions for improving NSS outcomes.

Session C | Workshop

2C) 1. Encouraging the inquiring learner, from passive to active, Mathilde Peron and Lilian Soon (University of York)

Faced with passive students and ever-decreasing numbers at lectures, one Economics lecturer tries a range of interactive tools and techniques, backed by research. From the humble one-minute pause to polling software, this session provides the audience with the chance to experience these interactions for themselves and to reflect on how these techniques may be transferable to their own practice. This interactive session will analyse the lecturer's interventions through the lens of cognitive science and invite the audience to contribute their own solutions to student engagement.

Parallel Session 3 (Thursday 12th, 13.45-15.15)

Session A | Assessment

3A) 1. Replacing multiple choice questions with a matrix puzzle to assess student understanding in economics, William Bosshardt (Florida Atlantic University) and William Walstad (University of Nebraska-Lincoln)

In an undergraduate classroom, multiple choice questions are commonly used to assess students' economic understanding. A series of multiple-choice questions on a topic, however, often provide only poorly connected bits of test information that may not reveal what student know and do not know about the assessed topic. A matrix puzzle, by contrast, can be a more efficient alternative to a set of disjointed multiple-choice items. It is holistic and requires problem solving for student to put all the pieces of the puzzle together in the correct way to show mastery of the economic content. In one example of a matrix puzzle, the topic for assessment is supply and demand in a competitive market. The rows of the matrix were the changes in demand or supply (increase or decrease). The columns were outcomes affecting price and quantity (increase or decrease). In each cell of the matrix puzzle, a student has to determine how each change in demand or supply would affect each outcome and provide consistent and correct answers across all cells to "solve" the puzzle. In this paper, we significantly extend that initial work and present other examples showing how matrix puzzles can be developed and used to test economic understanding across a wide range of content in micro and macro principles courses and in field courses in economics such as environmental economics. We also discuss instructors can use matrix puzzles to improve formative and summative assessment of student understanding of economics.

3A) 2. Enhancing employability through authentic assessment: A consulting report in intermediate microeconomics, Amrish Patel and Fabio Arico (University of East Anglia)

Undergraduate microeconomics education often involves essay-based assessments. Such assessments typically fail to encourage active learning, develop employability skills and give students confidence to attempt theoretical modelling. We designed and evaluated an authentic assessment as an alternative to essays: the "Economics Consulting Report". The assessment was used on a core Intermediate Microeconomics module with 287 students. Students were asked to imagine they work at an economics consultancy and to develop a model using Expected Utility Theory to advise their client on what to do in the

face of uncertainty. Several resources were developed to aid students in this challenging task. Our survey of students found that: 73% preferred this assessment to an essay; 81% learnt more from it than an essay; 93% felt it developed employability skills and 69% thought it should be used in other economics modules. We provide some reflection on the successes and difficulties encountered in implementation.

3A) 3. *Assessment and skill diversification in economics: a first-year undergraduate experience of a group video project*, Dimitra Petropoulou (London School of Economics), Panagiotis Arsenis and Miguel Flores Sandoval (University of Surrey)

Growth in student enrolment onto UK higher education economics programmes has given rise to several pedagogical challenges relating to assessment design and student engagement. At the same time, employer surveys emphasise the need to complement subject-specific knowledge with soft skills such as time management, teamwork and communication skills. There is thus a need for efficient means of assessing and providing feedback to large cohorts, while also stimulating student engagement and embedding a diverse array of skills into the learning outcomes of economics modules. To address these challenges in the context of a first-year economics module we replaced a 1,000-word individual coursework report with a group assignment, where students were required to work together to produce a three-minute video on an approved economics topic of their choosing. The assessment design included elements of peer assessment to account for heterogeneity in the contribution of group members and limit free-riding incentives. Focus groups were used to elicit students' perceptions on how the group video assessment contributed to their learning experience and skills development, how it compares with other methods of assessment, as well as suggestions for improved implementation. In addition, three dedicated questions relating to students' perceptions of the group video assignment were embedded into the module evaluation questionnaire. Our analysis generates insightful results regarding all these aspects. Students reported a preference for diversity in assessment methods, finding the video assignment a positive, engaging but also a challenging experience, which provided the opportunity for students to collaborate and develop teamwork and communication skills.

Session B | Data in economics courses

3B) 1. *Measuring the economy*, Georgia Tasker-Davies and Ed Palmer (Office of National Statistics)

The Office for National Statistics is creating an online book 'Measuring the Economy' for

use by universities to support undergraduate and postgraduate economic statistics teaching. The book aims to convey the importance of best-practice, real-world economic measurement, and as such to support academics and students in understanding the issues surrounding the measurement of the modern economy. Chapters are being written by leading experts in their subject area, with the aim being to bring their knowledge and expertise together in a single output. Our aim is for the chapters to be standalone, so that they can be used a la carte while, also maintaining a common and coherent approach. We are looking to develop teaching resources for each chapter- case studies, exercises and test questions for example, once the chapter has been published in Beta. We wish to collaborate with teaching staff and members of the Economics Network to shape the project and ensure the final product is beneficial to the University community.

3B) 2. *Eradicating data phobia in students*, Michael McCann (Nottingham Trent University) and Dean Garratt (Aston University)

Many aspects of everyday life, including economic, financial, social and environmental dimensions can be described by data, particularly quantitative data. Unsurprisingly therefore, the skills and knowledge associated with data analysis are an important part of the toolkit for any economics graduate. Indeed, repeated surveys of employers of economists show that they particularly value students who are comfortable analysing economic data, for example, using popular spreadsheet packages. Unfortunately, economics curricula across UK Higher Education tend frequently to 'ghettoise' the teaching of quantitative analysis so that students perceive data analysis as separate from general economic analysis. Quantitative analysis tends to default to econometrics, and overly complex and abstract presentation fuels many students' phobia of data with many eschewing the analysis of quantitative data altogether. Furthermore, curricula often fail to develop students' skills in the use of spreadsheet software that are valued by employers. This paper proposes ways in which students' data competency can be enhanced across the curriculum. Core economics teaching can incorporate the sourcing and analysis of economic data in their teaching, learning and assessment. This will help prevent students from viewing such analysis as distinct from 'other' economic analysis or, worse still, either largely irrelevant to the subject or something to be avoided. It can be embedded from introductory level, making students comfortable accessing data from credible sources and using contemporary spreadsheet software. Further, the analysis need not default to econometrics after introductory level. Effective integration should mean using all the analytical tools in the economist's toolkit, including charting and

descriptive statistics. Adopting this approach will produce economics graduates who are more comfortable in working with data and who, as a result, can make sense of economics data more easily and have developed a series of associated transferrable skills valued by employers.

3B) 3. *Doing economics: teaching data with CORE*, Eileen Tipoe (CORE) and Christian Spielmann (University of Bristol)

This session provides an overview of Doing Economics, CORE's online resource for teaching data literacy skills, with particular emphasis on how to teach statistics and data handling to non-economists. The session will introduce the resource and discuss various ways in which it can and is being used to support active empirical work in classes.

Session C | Public understanding

3C) 1. *Public understanding of economics*, Alvin Birdi (Economics Network)

This session reports the first analysis of results from the 2019 ING-Economics Network Survey of Public Understanding of Economics and discusses potential implications for economics education and communication. The ING-Economics Network Survey was first run in 2017 and we also provide some comparisons with the earlier survey.

Parallel Session 4 (Thursday 12th, 15.45-16.45)

Session A | Active learning

4A) 1. *Building capacities to help students learn in lectures*, Lilian Soon, Mathilde Peron, Michael Thornton and Laura Coroneo (University of York)

An action research project was initiated at the Economics department at the University of York to increase active learning in lectures. Passive students and the challenge of covering the content in time were initially thought to be the main issues to overcome. However, the research uncovered several problems facing students in lectures and seminars that had not been previously surfaced. Having used an appreciative inquiry (AI) approach, the research was able to go beyond the negative and draw out what students appreciated about their learning experience. It also motivated the participants to find creative solutions and become the catalyst for several initiatives in the department. This session will detail the findings and put forward proposals for further research that can be undertaken to better understand Economics education.

4A) 2. *Joining classrooms across borders*, Liliana Harding (University of East Anglia) and Gratiela Noja (West University of Timisoara)

Starting out from ubiquitous online communication platforms, we propose to explore ways to bring these into the classroom, to generate engagement and cross-border collaborative learning. First, we capitalise on the similar topics covered in a European Economy module by two universities. Second, we bring the online conversation into a structured classroom setting and use it as a tool to enhance communication skills, while exploring real-life applications of the economics of integration and fragmentation. Thus, Skype and GoogleHangouts have been used in our respective lecture rooms, to generate a face-to-face conversation for two groups of second year students in Romania and the UK, between 2017 and 2019. The online discussions were designed to encourage students' questions, feedback and reflection on the European economy, from their own countries' perspectives. In the ensuing discussions we focussed on recent developments and significant policies affecting the European economy, and explored students' understanding of how integration and fragmentation in the EU context affects their countries' economies. In a first session students were invited to put questions and reflect on the economic implications of Brexit, within a Skype facilitated joint lecture framework. In a second session we collected students' questions of potential interest, via Polleverywhere, before a joint lecture facilitated through GoogleHangouts. Students were encouraged to consider questions from the partner institution in advance of the joint lecture and these became the basis of the subsequent joint lecture and debate. In a third and final session, we are inviting students to consider the priorities of the presidency of the Council of the European Union, and link these with the theory covered in their module. Relevant issues related to the digital single market and environmental policy are then discussed with students and staff in the partner institution in a GoogleHangout facilitated joint lecture and debate.

Session B | Feedback

4B) 1. *Using formative assessment feedback and self-regulated learning to influence student engagement: tackling the wide distribution*, Pavlin Shipkov and Adam Cox (University of Portsmouth)

This paper investigates an approach to addressing a widening of the distribution of student ability and willingness to engage with Higher Education Economics courses. The widening distribution issue is overviewed in the context of a mixed-ability principles unit (Level 4 core microeconomics unit) and particular attention is given to combating

disengagement from participating in learning activities of both the highest and the lowest ability students. Our work is underpinned by the seven principles of good feedback practice identified by Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2006) and focuses on developing three key elements to add to the student experience for those on an undergraduate Economics course – 1) a blended learning environment that encourages participation; 2) capacity for staff to identify students' ability and willingness to engage early on as well as capacity for students' to effectively reflect on their learning and self-regulate; and 3) timely interventions for students at the top and bottom of the distribution which promote engagement. A combination of Virtual Learning Environments and in-class activities are used to assess both initial student ability and willingness to engage as well as to give and receive frequent feedback on what strategies are most effective in maintaining engagement. Realised results in the unit are observed once students complete their first year of undergraduate studies and the link between attainment and engagement is investigated while acknowledging the potential impact of external and pre-existing factors.

4B) 2. Does feedback improve students' performance? Evidence from a final year compulsory module, Peter Hughes, Antonio Rodriguez-Gil, Juliane Scheffel and Thereza Balliester-Reis (University of Leeds)

This paper evaluates the impact of written feedback on the academic performance of final year economics students. The intervention takes place in a compulsory final year module, Advanced Macroeconomics. Feedback is provided on small essays (500w) using a template that provides forward guidance and identifies the weaknesses and strengths of the work to the student. The activity is designed according to the 'seven principles of good feedback' popularised by Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2006). Data on the feedback activities has been collected over 5 years, providing us a sample of over 700 observations. We match participation data with individual data on students' exam performance; the week in which the essay was written; the student's programme; individual characteristics including, past performance, gender, disabilities, or participation in job placements. This allows us to evaluate the impact of the feedback, and whether timing or programme of study have a differential effect. To investigate these issues, we use a difference-in-difference approach, where participants in the feedback activity are the treatment group and the control group are students of similar characteristics that did not participate in the feedback activity. Our preliminary results suggest that feedback has a non-linear impact, with those at the top of the grade distribution benefiting the most from feedback. We

also observe some gender differences that we continue to investigate. This paper extends the existing feedback literature that has focused on the impact of interventions on student satisfaction and on students-staff understanding of feedback.

Session C | Altruism

4C) 1. Is altruism irrational? Fighting the stereotypic view on human behaviour during economics classes, Tomasz Kopczewski and Iana Okhrimenko (University of Warsaw)

The purpose of this article is to present the way of using the replication of the experiment Giving According to GARP (Andreoni & Miller, J. 2002) to teach the basics economic concepts and connect them with ethic issues. It is used to present problems related to the definition of the economic model (Homo oeconomicus). Although the scientific literature shows the evolution of homo oeconomicus towards the alternative form of ecological rationality, textbooks still tend to concentrate mainly on the simplified model. The method of using this experiment differs from typical classroom-exemplars. The new method is based on the confrontation of i) storytelling, which is included with textbooks ii) the statistical analysis of students' rationality and attitude towards altruism.

4C) 2. Altruism and market efficiency: a proposal to change the syllabus, Gherardo Girardi (St Mary's University)

The economics textbook suggests that, when market inefficiencies arise, there is an argument for state intervention. Whilst this is an entirely reasonable proposition, it overlooks the deeper fact that market failure is essentially due self-interest: if a monopoly were altruistic, it would not raise its price to be far above marginal cost; if economic agents took into consideration the effect of the pollution they cause on third parties, they would pollute less; and so on. This argument points to the desirability to educate economic agents so that they are altruistic. An experiment is performed in class in which, in addition to offering students the conventional argument for state intervention in the presence of market failure, students are exposed to the notion that, were agents altruistic, market inefficiencies would be reduced and even eliminated in some instances. A questionnaire and focus group are used to assess the reaction of students to being taught the effect of altruism on market efficiency, and to the ethical implication that altruism ought to be promoted, including among students in a class environment.

Parallel Session 5 (Friday 13th, 09.30-11.00)

Session A | Teaching to different audiences

5A) 1. *Blended learning for public engagement*, Parama Chaudhury and Cloda Jenkins (University College London)

We have been running an innovative blended course for government officials and others since early 2018, and will discuss the design, content and assessment of this course at DEE. In particular, we will focus on lessons learned about designing online courses for busy in-work learners who are completing the course as part of employment requirements but with few other incentives (the course is currently not part of the promotion or review process). We discuss the choice of online platform, learning pathways, interaction opportunities with learners, assessment and evaluation of the course. A second focus of our discussion will be the use of such courses as a way to engage with various stakeholders on important social issues such as financial crises, climate change, globalisation and inequality, and a way to introduce potential influencers to state of the art academic research on these topics. Thus we highlight the use of online learning to engage with non-economists about the power of economics to study and suggest policy on the hot-button issues of the day.

5A) 2. *Engagement, empathy and communication – teaching economics to business students*, Robert Riegler and Dean Garratt (Aston University)

An increasing number of economics tutors find themselves teaching economics modules to business students. It is common for both staff and students to view economics and business as two distinct disciplines, with each having little to contribute to the understanding of the other. This misunderstanding has created a vicious circle making economics increasingly difficult for business students to engage with economics, and for tutors to engage with business students. From our experience, some of the causes of this vicious circle include the following: First, we often select topics that are perceived by students to have little relevance to the rest of their degree. Second, we struggle to find ways to communicate the purpose of economics and to explain economic concepts due to their subject-specific language and tools. Third, we focus frequently on the tools rather than their application, as evidenced by an overreliance on mathematics and diagrams, often at the expense of intuition and application. To overcome these problems, we suggest a series of constructively aligned activities that facilitate empathy and

engagement with economics. This requires economics tutors to think carefully about the materials they cover, the way they communicate them and the way they assess. Our paper provides guidance and practical examples drawing from our own experiences in teaching economics modules to business students. Our aim is to make the teaching of economics a more rewarding experience for both staff and students alike.

5A) 3. *On the epistemological break in economics*, Pavel Kuchar (University of Bristol) and Erwin Dekker (Erasmus University)

Economic education has to connect to pre-existing knowledge but there is a widespread belief among economists that the public is ill-informed. This is reflected in a variety of surveys and studies which demonstrate this ignorance. We suggest that while the problem might be in the education, it might also be in "measurement". The measurement might merely reflect what we call an epistemological break. This break is not necessarily reflective of ignorance or false beliefs, but rather of the use of a different language and concepts that economists use for familiar concepts. Our paper conceptualises and illustrates the nature of that break, it helps improve the way we understand economic knowledge held by the public, and most importantly suggests some ways to bridge the epistemological gap through changes in economic education.

Session B | Active learning

5B) 1. *Transformative learning and teaching in Economics*, Prashan Karunaratne (Macquarie University)

Higher education providers are offering a diverse and dynamic range of business-related specialisations where an entry-level economics course is standard. The challenge for economics curriculum designers is to ensure that their entry-level course is relevant – catering to the diverse student cohort as well as the dynamic avenues of career choices. However, entry-level economics has proven to be static and homogeneous across institutions and across time. This cohort needs to be equipped with transformative concepts that diverse graduates can integrate into a dynamic society. When a curriculum is traditionally content-driven and content-heavy, attention to the discipline's threshold concepts are a useful tool in guiding curriculum re-design. The benchmark UK higher education economics curriculum framework is formulated around the threshold concepts of economics. Relevance is created for graduates, as threshold concepts are those that transform the way one views the world, and these are the concepts that can be integrated into graduates' everyday experiences and challenges. Through a literature

review of the application of threshold concepts in economics, the author has systematically re-designed an entry-level economics course. The threshold concept framework was utilised to transform the design of the course structure, the learning and teaching activities, as well as the assessments, while keeping the final examination format and standards unchanged. The course grades noted an improvement in the achievement of the students' learning outcomes. Student surveys indicated an improvement in the student experience of the curriculum design and the course activities.

5B) 2. *Political economy: a serious play*, Riccardo Soliani (University of Genoa) and Mario Morroni (University of Pisa)

The paper describes an in-progress experience of teaching contemporary macroeconomics through theatre as a mean of understanding and comparison of different approaches. In 2014-15 professor Morroni wrote a play, where one "junior" and two "senior" economists meet by chance and discuss about the economic crises. It was staged by a group of students. The encouraging outcome suggested to continue along two paths. First, to look for people, in the academic environment, trained in theatrical acting, to stage the play at the STOREP conference held in Catania in 2016 and in their institutions, and to make contact with a professional stage director, who, since then, has been working with the students. Secondly, to write a refined version of the text. As a result, the play has been successfully proposed in different Universities, bookshops, clubs, associations etc. in Italy. Students have reached a satisfying level in this way of expressing economic contents, and they have even written themselves a new play, in the form of a dialogue, dealing with "hot" socio-economic issues in the Italian and European debate. The author has published a refined version of the play in Italian (Mario MORRONI, *Nulla è come appare. Dialoghi sulle verità sommerse della crisi economica*, Reggio Emilia, Imprimatur, 2016), and, revised and updated, in English (Mario MORRONI *What is the Truth About the Great Recession and Increasing Inequality? Dialogues on Disputed Issues and Conflicting Theories*, Springer Nature, 2018). The show goes on!

5B) 3. *Constructive alignment: e-learning and assessment*, Silvia Dal Bianco and Parama Chaudhury (University College London)

The constructive alignment pedagogical principle asserts that effective teaching creates the most appropriate learning activities, which are the ones aligned with the learning objectives (Shuell, 1986)*. Moreover, students' engagement in such learning activities is as important, if not more, than what teachers do in the classroom. Finally, effective teaching and learning is inspired by reflective practice, from both lecturers and students.

In this paper, we apply the constructive alignment principle to e-learning. Our main aim is to shed light on the drivers of e-learning optimal design, in the context of encouraging deep learning. Our empirical exercise is based on data on UCL Economics students and their journey through our undergraduate programmes. In particular, we consider the relationship between e-learning, assessment (and e-assessment) for teaching effectiveness, as measured by students' outcomes. Despite being Economics specific, we are confident that our exercise can be replicated and extended to other disciplines. The intended outcome of this project is to identify guidelines to help lecturers design an effective e-learning environment for different kinds of students. *Shuell, T.J. (1986). 'Cognitive conceptions of learning', *Review of Educational Research* 56, 411--436.

Session C | Curriculum

5C) 1. *Curriculum structure, content and reform*, Giancarlo Ianulardo (University of Exeter)

Students who enter business schools and economics departments are rarely exposed to the study of the humanities as moral philosophy, theoretical philosophy, history of economic thought, literature. Recently, calls have been made to reshape economics along a human-centred approach, "Humanomics". In this article, we explore this approach as put forward recently by Vernon Smith, McCloskey, Morson and Shapiro, and concentrate on the contribution that it can provide to reshaping economics education. We concentrate, in particular, on Philosophy of economics, after a decade of experience in teaching this course. We indicate why it adds to the formation of the economic student and should be an integral part of the economics curriculum. Also, we focus on the method of teaching, involving formative and summative assessments, to student who generally have never been exposed to the subject. We conclude that a philosophical approach to education should inform both the teaching method and the content of the curriculum. Regarding the former, we claim that a problem-solution-error elimination approach, recently named in the educational literature as "Popper's approach to education", would be beneficial in developing a critical thinking attitude. Concerning the latter, we claim that philosophy of economics can help students address questions in the discipline, become aware of assumptions (hidden or not), challenge the answers that they learn in traditional economics textbooks, in areas such as the definition of economics, the role of models, the data/theory relationship, the normative/positive divide, the notion of rationality and others, which are an essential part of their curriculum.

5C) 2. *Economic history and the future of pedagogy in economics*, Christopher Colvin and Graham Brownlow (Queen's University Belfast)

There is a paradox in university-level economics teaching. Economics graduates achieve extremely good labour market outcomes as measured by earnings premia. But students are increasingly voicing concerns about the contents of their degrees being irrelevant and “out of touch” in the modern world. While the mixture of transferable skills and quantitative methods taught in economics programmes helps to explain the former, the dominance of decontextualised mathematical economics in most introductory-level teaching is no doubt the cause of the latter. We examine the scope that introducing economic history into undergraduate teaching has for “rehabilitating” university economics teaching. We think that lessons from economic history provide invaluable insights into the big global challenges of today’s world—whether it is trade wars, financial crises, migration pressures, climate change or extreme political uncertainty. We set out how economic history can complement other empirical branches of economics to help reform the dominant paradigm in economics pedagogy. We then explore the benefits and costs of introducing economic history across the undergraduate curriculum, both as stand-alone modules and integrated into other field courses. We conclude with a discussion of the particular challenges faced in the context of economics pedagogy in the business school.

5C) 3. *Teaching with historical perspectives*, Daniela Tavasci and Luigi Ventimiglia (Queen Mary University of London)

Stemming from the idea that economics is a social science that tends to forget its own history, this work reflects on the role of teaching with historical perspectives. It offers novel ways of integrating the history of economics into the curriculum, both in history of economic thought modules and in other sub-disciplines. Coming from a wide diversity of experiences across various sub disciplines, this approach explores the idea that studying the history of thought exposes students to pluralism, and that it is therefore an essential pedagogical tool. It also reveals the historical contextualisation of current theories and show how they are the results of a specific evolution within the discipline. It therefore offers ways to operationalize the approach to both those teachers who have been using some historical perspective in their teaching and to those who are new to the teaching of economics and looking for a supporting structure to underpin the planning of their module structure.

Parallel Session 6 (Friday 13th, 11.30-13.00)

Session A | Employability

6A) 1. *Value added versus widening participation: the great employability debate*, Duncan Watson, Peter Dawson (University of East Anglia), Steve Cook (Swansea University) and Rob Webb (University of Nottingham)

Human Capital suggests that a value-added approach can be adopted to highlight successful graduate skills formation. Evidence, based on that approach, has historically appeared impressive. Conlon and Patrignani (2011) for the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS), found that the earnings premium of a UK undergraduate degree is 27% compared to an individual leaving education with two ‘A’ levels or more. The average gross graduate premium is estimated at £125,000 over a working lifetime. Million+ (2013) have argued that a degree, not only providing access to a financial premium, also leads to more fulfilling careers and reduced state dependency. More recent evidence from the IFS (2018), however, has indicated less impressive outcomes. A third of male graduates, for example, were found to achieve only a negligible earnings gain. Our analysis investigates how the perception of degree value has changed. We consider the massification of Higher Education and the creation of ‘social congestion’ where an over-supply of graduates impairs career opportunities. Thus, with too many degrees chasing too few degree-level jobs, we conclude that the analysis into graduate employability should be refocused on attempting to level the playing field: to ensure graduates from working class backgrounds have equality of opportunity.

6A) 2. *Determinants of student salaries in professional training year*, Miguel Flores and Panagiotis Arsenis (University of Surrey)

The increasing cost of the UK higher education degree imposes pressure on the finances of many undergraduate students. The industrial placement year embedded in undergraduate degrees can lighten students’ financial burden and better prepare them for an increasingly competitive graduate labour market. Against this background, we collected data on three cohorts of placement students from the School of Economics, University of Surrey, including demographic characteristics, academic performance, programme of studies and employability-related characteristics. To identify the main determinants of students' salaries, we applied both OLS and quantile regression models. We find that academic performance, job location and industry are the main determinants

of placement salaries. Students' efforts in their first year of their course can increase the returns of their work experience due to the possibility of high placement salaries. We also find a positive 'London effect' and that placement salaries in the economic and finance sector are higher, whilst in the technology sector tend to be lower than in other sectors. The associations between placement salaries and the three previous factors are particularly strong at the top salaries. Moreover, although students' accomplishments (e.g. awards or high scores achieved in aptitude tests) are not relevant at the mean or median of salaries, they are crucial for top salaries. Furthermore, students' previous job experience and demographic characteristics (e.g. age, nationality, and ethnicity) do not appear to determine placement salaries. Finally, we find no evidence of salary differences due to gender.

6A) 3. Schools of economics and business educational offer and employers' expectations in Romania - case study: the Bucharest University, Camelia Staiculescu and Maria Liana Lacatus (Bucharest University of Economic Studies)

For universities, the labour market represents a reference and, in the same time, an indicator of the quality, utility and necessity of the educational programs they are providing. It is the place where educational activity is validated both from the perspective of the life content of the programs offered to different categories of learners and the effort implied to successfully graduate the program, but also from the perspective of the conformation at the present and future economic reality. More than non-economic universities an economic one such as The Bucharest University of Economic Studies with the mission to provide higher and in-depth knowledge in the field of economic sciences and to develop competences required to economists and professionals for public administration functions will demonstrate its own value through the value of its graduates and through their contribution to the keep the economy in function and to develop it. For every graduate who is willing to have a career and searching for success, to find a job and to be able to keep it are essential. The paper is analysing how educational offer of The Bucharest University of Economic Studies, the most important economic university in Romania, is adapted to the employers' expectations and requirements. Employers' opinions regarding the university programs, students' knowledge, competences and work experiences are analysed together with their recommendations for educational programs with higher impact on students'/graduates' employability.

Session B | Flipping the classroom

6B) 1. Flipped classes and peer marking: incentives, student participation and performance in a quasi-experimental approach, Rabeya Khatoon (University of Bristol) and Elinor Jones (University College London)

In this research, we aim to flip small group classes by peer-marking. The flipping is implemented via virtual learning platform. The students will submit their homework on Turnitin within a specific deadline. The software then allocates scripts randomly among the students who submitted the homework, where they mark each other's submissions anonymously, based on some given solution criteria. This process of peer-marking allows the students to attempt and review a similar problem before the small group classes, thus works as a 'flipped small group class'. Unlike the traditional flipped classes, this process enables participation monitoring and thereby ensures effective use of the 'flipping' concept. The study is conducted in two UK higher education institutions independently with the coverage of undergraduate and postgraduate taught students. One of our aim to analyse the impact of an incentive in student participation of the activities. In one exercise, the students participating to the peer marking are granted online access to the solution of an additional set of problems. In another exercise, there is the absence of the incentive: all students are granted access to the additional exercise solution, irrespective of their participation to the peer review process. We also aim to analyse the impact of participation (if any), on their final exam scores.

6B) 2. Flipping CORE? The good, the bad and the ugly, Carlos Cortinhas (University of Exeter)

This session will focus on sharing the experience of adopting the new CORE ESPP syllabus on a large class of economic minor students (about 500 students). I will also reflect on my experience of flip teaching for the first time and discuss the pros and cons of my approach. Data and feedback from students on both the flip teaching and the new syllabus will be presented.

6B) 3. Flipping the classroom – how to start small, Ralf Becker (University of Manchester)

Flipped classrooms have become a popular strategy to structure the learning of students in a way that ensures that active learning elements are incorporated into lecture times. However, designing a flipped course unit is a major undertaking and requires more time than a lecturer would normally be afforded. In this talk we will discuss how lecturers can adapt a standard lecture course to incorporate elements of a flipped classroom. The aim

is to create some space in your lecture which then can be used effectively to allow students to actively engage with the material. We will discuss a range of methods suited to created space in your lecture as well as activities which can be used to enrich lectures with active learning elements. An important element of any flipping approach, but perhaps even more so of a partial flipping approach discussed here, is clear communication with students. A clear VLE design and communication is a vital element to making this approach work.

Session C | Attainment gaps

6C) 1. How can we explain the BME attainment gap in university? Parama Chaudhury, Hannah Buttle, Otso Hao and Alessandro Topetta (University College London)

At UCL, students from a BME background currently lag behind their white counterparts in academic attainment both in terms of average marks as well as the probability of obtaining a “good” degree (II.1 or above). In this presentation, we will discuss the details behind this finding, including the variation of this gap across faculties and programmes, gender, specific ethnic background, and other individual characteristics. In our presentation, we will discuss our main finding that the gap in the probability of a good degree is mostly in the likelihood of getting a first, and a third. That is, the probability of getting a 2.1 is very similar for white and BME students. This means that on the one hand, BME students are less likely to achieve the requirements for further study, with implications for the pipeline of BME academics. On the other hand, they are more likely to get a 2.2 or a third, thereby jeopardizing the chances of acquiring a good job. In addition, different ethnicities within the broader BME group have very different degree distributions. We also condition on the usual determinants of academic achievement such as prior marks, gender, a measure of parental background, and find that only a small part of the BME attainment gap is explained by these factors. Based on these findings, we suggest some areas requiring further research, in addition to some initial policy recommendations.

6C) 2. What affects the attainment gaps among various demographic groups in Economics? Stefania Paredes Fuentes (University of Warwick), Bahar Ghezelayagh, and Stefania Sitzia (University of East Anglia)

There is a lot of discussion on attainment gap in Economics and in particular on female’s performance being lower than male students. However, these are not the only observed gaps: national student surveys show that, compare to home students, international

students are less likely to be very satisfied with their teaching and learning experiences. A lower performance with respect to their counterparts may partially explain this dissatisfaction. However, this lower performance may also be an outcome of the dissatisfaction (less engaged students work less and achieve lower marks). In this study, we analyse these differences for two UK institutions (one Russell Group, one non-Russell group). The aims of this research are two-fold. First, we aim to understand whether there are gaps in students’ attainment by demographic group, and where these gaps are. A quantitative approach will help us to analyse whether variables such as students’ background, demographic characteristics (including countries of origin) university policies, etc. affect students’ performance; a qualitative richer and deeper understanding of this phenomenon may be achieved by meeting directly with students. Therefore, we will carry out some focus groups and interviews with students. The focus groups are going to be focused around how students’ use teaching resources to prepare for assessments, final exams, etc. This will help us to understand whether ‘direct’ communication with students (through teaching material) has any effect on the attainment gaps, while the interviews will help us to shed light on what else from the students’ academic experience may affect their engagement with the subject. We also aim to expand the number of universities participating in this initiative, so that we can provide a more complete policy analysis for the whole sector.

6C) 3. Designing unfair practice policies to encourage good academic practice in international students from Business and Economics, Tim Burnett (University of Warwick)

A number of recent media reports have highlighted a perceived ‘crisis’ in UK higher education associated with students cheating – either through plagiarising work, or otherwise through the reported growing problem of ‘commissioning’ (paying an individual or company to produce a bespoke essay). Of particular note in many reports is that non-EU international students make up a disproportionate proportion of discovered cases. One characteristic of this recent media reporting is that it frequently focusses on reporting and perpetuating a sense of moral outrage around plagiarism and associated offences. Whilst such exposure is useful in attracting the attention of the readership, politicians, and organisations responsible for academic standards, it is rarely helpful in encouraging institutions to consider the more holistic questions around understanding why students engage in such practices. Indeed, efforts by universities to eliminate these unfair practices have all the hallmarks of an ‘arms race’ – investments in detection and penalties increase, which drives ingenious ways to bypass detection, and yet has little

impact on the problem overall – resulting in increasingly inefficient uses of resources. Through focus groups and surveys of Economics and Business students at a number of UK HE institutions, this research aims to shift this system and the associated discourse toward a more constructive outcome by broadening understanding of international students' attitudes toward, and specific challenges around, unfair practices and policies. It is informed by the belief that unfair practice (UP) policies should facilitate the learning of students, as opposed to simply punishing students for non-compliance, and aims to produce a readily implementable set of policy guidelines which can be implemented across the sector.

Parallel Session 7 (Friday 13th, 14.00-15.00)

Session A | Research

7A) 1. *Why it works: using qualitative methods in economic education research*, William Bosshardt (Florida Atlantic University), Amanda Jennings (University of Delaware) and Peter Davies (University of Birmingham)

This paper examines the scope for qualitative methods in economic education research. Usually, when economists research teaching and learning in their subject, they employ quantitative techniques they use in researching economics. These techniques have been designed to answer particular types of question which necessarily assume that the definition of variables and processes has already been settled. In contrast, qualitative methods have been designed to investigate the appropriate categories to use when describing or explaining a phenomenon. These methods become useful when we are interested in how students understand economic phenomena, the nature of their misconceptions and the processes involved in the design of interventions in economics education. This paper examines the strengths and weaknesses of different forms of qualitative research (e.g. in-depth interviews, observation, design research) that may be used in economics education research. This review considers published examples of the use of qualitative methods in researching teaching and learning in economics. We evaluate each method in relation to the kind of question it is suited to answer, the challenges to be faced in using the method, how these challenges may be addressed and the feasibility (cost/benefit) of using the method. The paper offers a guide to ways in which qualitative methods may be combined with other qualitative and quantitative research in expanding what is known about economics education.

7A) 2. *Problem-based learning: opportunities for economics education*, Tim Burnett (University of Warwick)

Problem-based Learning (PBL) is a method of teaching which emphasises the role of students as active participants in learning through encouraging participants to respond to stimulus scenarios, identify 'problems' to be solved, and allowing them to identify the solution under their own guidance. Having first been used in teaching medicine where 'problems' are very literal, it is increasingly being adopted to teach a variety of arts, humanities, and social science subjects. By stepping away from a didactic teaching approach, students cease to be passive passengers in learning and instead learn how to engage in research, build communication and teamwork skills, and (crucially) it aligns learning with the type of real-world problem-solving expected of graduates. This interactive talk will outline the basics of the approach, with examples from teaching and suggestions for adapting economics courses.

Session B | Student engagement

7B) 1. *An evaluation of the University of Greenwich Employability Passport (GEP): journeying into employability*, Gabriella Cagliesi, Denise Hawkes, Agnieszka Herdan, Katarina Thompson, James Zhou (University of Greenwich)

The University of Greenwich has supported effective employability policy and practice and worked closely with practitioners, managers, senior staff and academics to develop strategies to embed effective employability practice within the curriculum. The Greenwich Employability Passport (GEP) is one of these initiatives. The GEP initiative started some years ago (2012) with the purpose of expressly recognising student's extra-curricular activities and endorse them more effectively to enhance the student's employability opportunities. The ultimate aim of the GEP was to encourage students' awareness of employers' needs, students' confidence, proactivity and expansion of professional networks. The GEP initiative prompted the design of a research project to explore and evaluate possible relations across the degree of students' engagement in the scheme, the academic performance of students and the likelihood to obtain a good graduate job on completion of the degree. A unique data set was built to match and triangulate the survey data on GEP with centrally held university administration data on graduate outcomes and with data collected by the Higher Education Statistic Agency (HESA) on Destination of Leaver in Higher Education (DLHE). This new rich data set has been used in this paper to investigate students' engagement in the GEP at different levels of academic progression and students' academic performance, as well as to explore the

effects of the GEP intervention across different cohorts of graduates (i.e., the 2014 cohort of graduates before the GEP, and subsequent cohorts of graduates under the GEP scheme). The results of the study are presented in this paper.

7B) 2. *The effect of class attendance on student performance*, Dunli Li (University College London)

Class attendance is regarded as important in higher education. In reality, however, absenteeism is reported rampant in undergraduate courses at universities (Romer, 1993). Romer (1993) found that, on average, one-third of students are absent from undergraduate Intermediate Macroeconomics courses at three major US universities. There has been considerable debate concerning the impact of class attendance on academic performance and mixed evidence is found. Using a sample of economics second-year undergraduate students in a UK university, my preliminary analysis suggests that class attendance has a significantly positive impact on academic performance and this finding is robust to different control variables. I also discuss possible approaches to foster higher class attendance rate. Moreover, I am now trying to get a larger dataset on Economics undergraduate students at UCL to investigate how lecturecast affects class attendance and whether the relationship between class attendance and academic performance depends on the availability of lecturecast.