

Using field time efficiently

Mark Langan (m.langan@mmu.ac.uk)

*Department of Environmental &
Geographical Sciences*

Manchester Metropolitan University





Aims of session

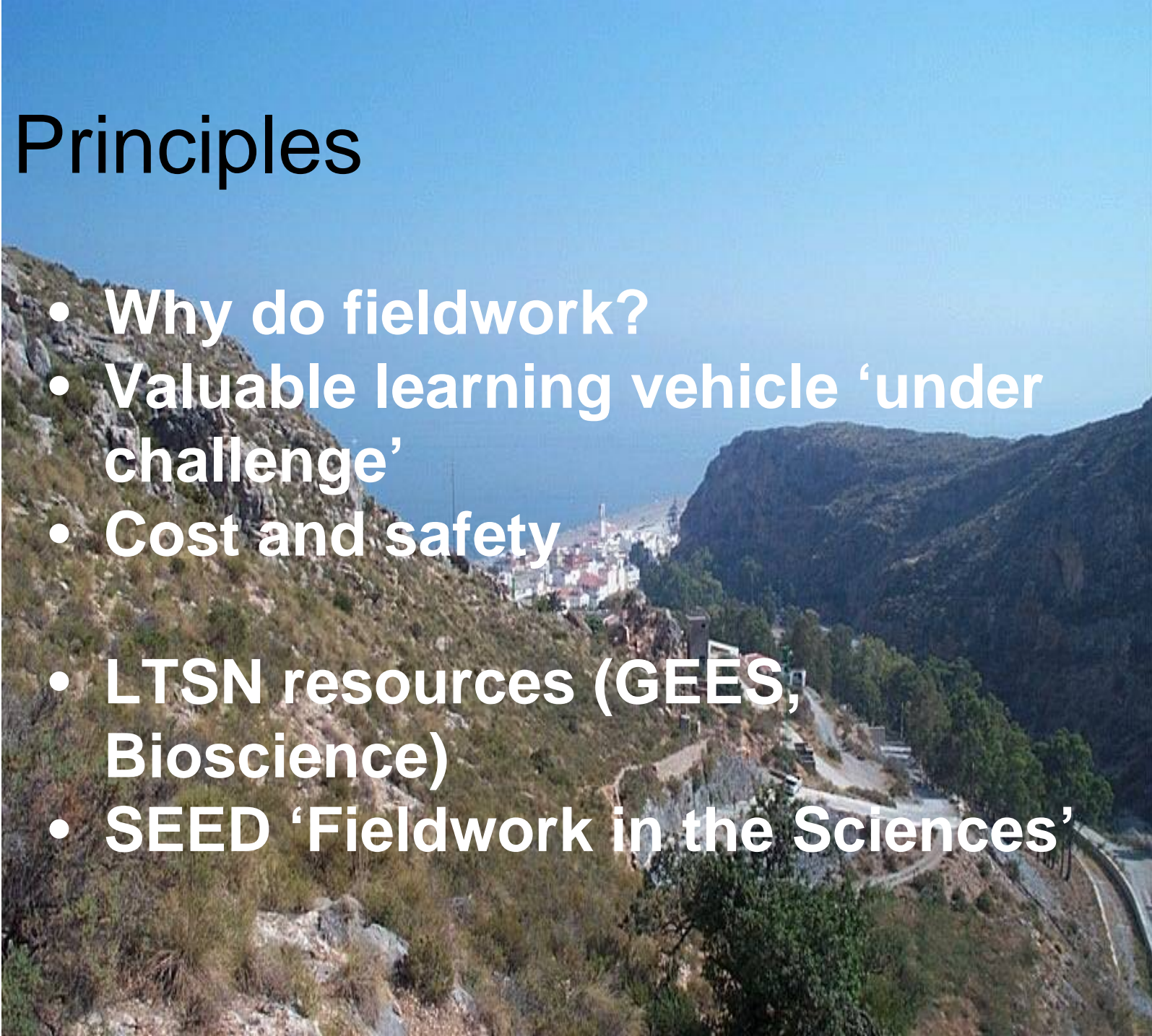
- Catalyse debate
- Share opinions of field work structures at several levels (from curricula to field visits)
- Briefly highlight some mechanisms used to enhance efficiency of fieldwork

Efficient *adj.* – ‘Acting or producing effectively with a minimum of waste, expense, or unnecessary effort’ and ‘Exhibiting a high ratio of output to input’.

But what is important? (e.g. learning, financial, time etc..)



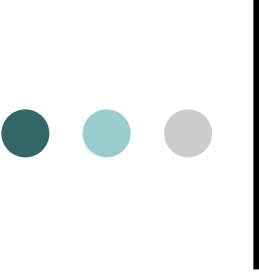
Principles

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- Why do fieldwork?
 - Valuable learning vehicle ‘under challenge’
 - Cost and safety
 - LTSN resources (GEES, Bioscience)
 - SEED ‘Fieldwork in the Sciences’



Fieldwork and the curriculum

- Placing FW in the curriculum (e.g. variety of LOs, different needs, updates)
- Integration (subject knowledge, data collection, research methods, process skills)
- Linking teaching and research
- ‘Usual’ good practice in L&T strategies
- Other institutions courses
- Value for money



EGS 2006

- Introduction of 6 week 'teaching blocks'
- Catalysed by preference to provide 'sufficient time' for fieldwork at several times of the year
- 5 weeks 'teaching' followed by 1 week of assessment/ reflection/ field activities
- Includes residential courses
- Cross-departmental consideration (e.g. Combined Honours)



Process

Preparation



*Activity**



Assessment



Reflection and feedback

*often constitutes minor proportion (e.g. 10%) of the time allocated to the learning experience



Agricultural Ecology (U/G L3)


Preparation

- Clear goals (tasks, outcomes, individual, team, assessment, unit, course)
- Relationship with prior learning (context)
- Walk through to predict problems (problem-solving problem-solving!)
- Information collection (e.g. data sheets)
- Ownership: methods, equipment, RA, H&S
- Field trials set-up (well) in advance (recce!)



Agricultural Ecology (U/G L3)

Activity

- Review group outcomes and individual responsibilities
 - Group-group support
 - Advisor availability (amount of guidance)
 - Flexibility
 - External inputs (guidance from academic)
 - Proctors
- 
- A photograph of two men standing in a grassy field. The man on the left is wearing a grey sweater and glasses, and the man on the right is wearing a dark jacket and holding a black folder. In the background, there is a white van and a brick building. The field has several wooden stakes and plastic bags, suggesting a field experiment or research site.





Agricultural Ecology (U/G L3)

Assessment, reflection and feedback

- Log books (individual responsibility)
- Peer review and self evaluation
- Dissemination in different formats (conference paper, tutorial, consultancy meeting)





A tale of two field courses

Year 2 – Wales (MMU; 1 week)

- Supporting lectures
- Intensive
- 2 phases (from prescriptive to semi-autonomous)
- Medium to small group
- Peer evaluation

Year 3 – Spain (MMU & U of M; 2 weeks)

- Few supporting lectures
- Pilot studies
- 1 phase (autonomous but advanced learner interactions)
- Individual
- *Peer and self assessment



***<http://www.ltu.mmu.ac.uk/ltia/issue4/index.shtml>**



Final thoughts....

Revisit curriculum constraints (role of multimedia)

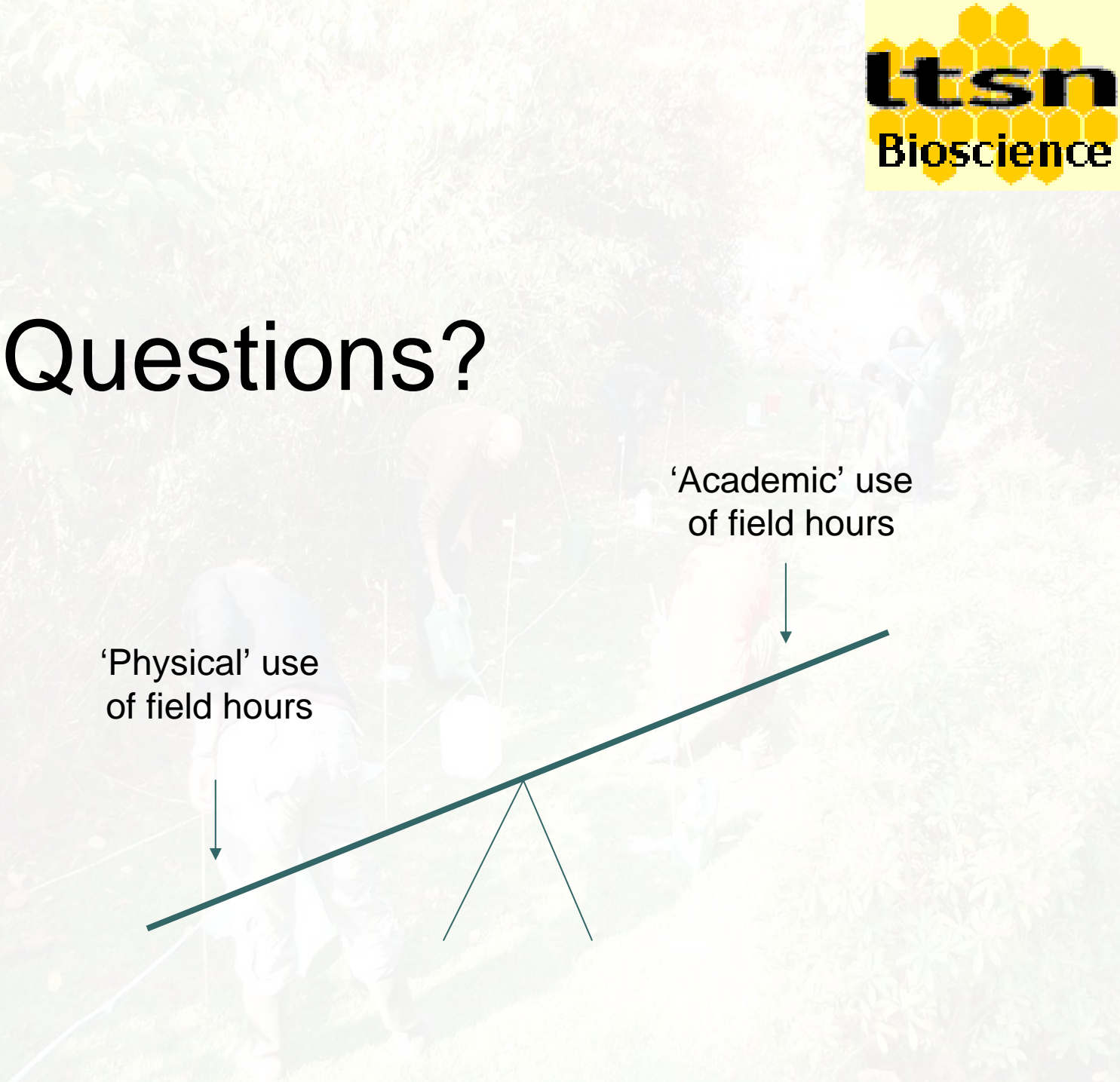
Engagement with preparation (clarity; motivation)

Organisation of field time/ resources


'Autonomy or not autonomy' A question of level? (NB safety)




Questions?



'Physical' use
of field hours



'Academic' use
of field hours





Questions?

'Physical' use
of field hours

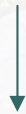
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Questions?

'Physical' use
of field hours



'Academic' use
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