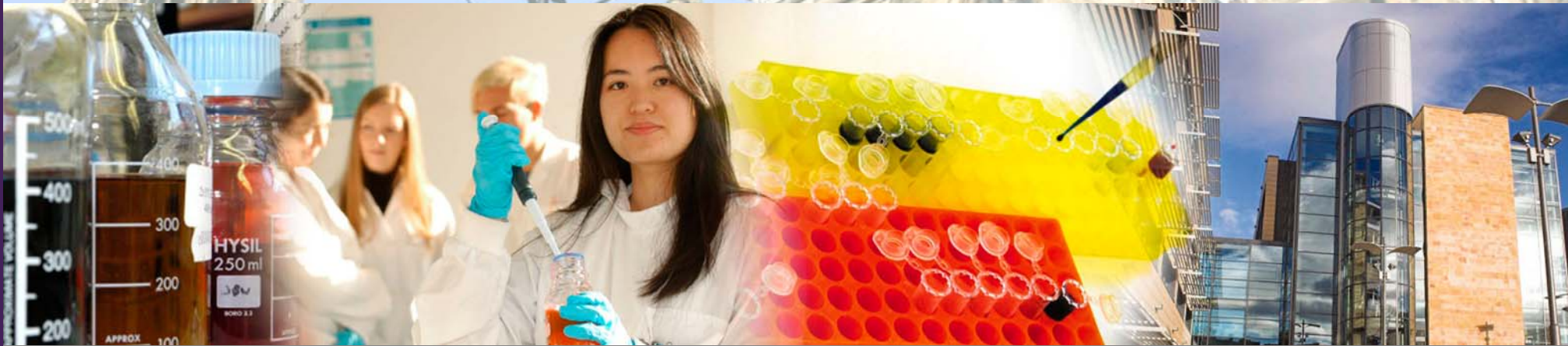




University
of Glasgow | Faculty of Biomedical
& Life Sciences

How undergraduate students tackle staff development roles

Anne Tierney



Outline

- Educational development project
- Carried out by undergraduate students
- Supported by academic staff
- 2 phases

Phase 1

- Seven UG students from years 1-3 recruited from six faculties
- Used principles of Enquiry-Based Learning to investigate EBL
- Worked full-time (paid) for four weeks during the summer vacation
- Supported by a facilitator
- Outputs
 - EBL guide for staff & students
 - website
(<http://www.gla.ac.uk/services/learningteaching/goodpracticeresources/enquirybasedlearningebl/>)
 - posters

Student experience

- Students quickly formed a close-knit working group – community of practice
- Developed strategies to feed back to one another
- Shared roles and responsibilities
- Became independent of the facilitator – (reassurance)

Student quotes from Phase 1

“Learning to communicate together and actually investigate the right kind of things... communicating in a group really helped and coming back, we had regular times when we came back together and said, ‘right what have we been doing?’... I think it took us a bit of time to learn how to work as a group.”

“We all tried to check each other’s work over as well, to get a second opinion on it.”

“I think it was more what we did together, you know, the most fantastic thing, I think is that I had such a good experience working in a group and it really changed the way I work in a group now. I never felt such trust for other people and I was so impressed by everyone else’s input.”

Phase 2

- Students worked alone (one pair)
- Departmental staff contact
- Part-time (1-2 hours per week...?)
- Semesters 1 & 2
- Outputs
 - EBL interventions in 6 faculties
 - Bioscience
 - Enzyme exercise, calculations, microscopy exercise (Level 1)
 - Business exercises (Level 4/postgraduate)

Student experience

- Students working on their own came to rely on the staff contact
- Students in the pair were independent of the staff contact
- Time was a BIG issue for both staff and students during Phase 2

Student quotes from Phase 2

“I think it was great [working with a partner] in the sense that you always had someone to discuss ideas with... it's like summer, you need to discuss things and in the group, to make the product.”

“I actually feel that she listens to what I say which I think is quite good because I think if it had been a different member of staff they might have been preset in the ways that they do things – she's very adaptable, flexible and we've deviated from the initial plan that we had and we're still deviating in a way just to find what the best way would be so she's quite flexible.”

“Time's been a major issue. Well, it's my final year on top of everything else, so when you do meet there's so much to talk about.”

Staff attitudes

- Students had the opportunity to present at three Teaching & Learning conferences
- This caused a drop in confidence
- They received a warm welcome and were treated as peers
- This contrasted with other staff attitudes (outside the project) which were mixed

Student quotes from Phase 2 (1)

“I’m actually scared, I’m really scared about doing the presentation, because I was looking at the lecture theatre, and like, it’s a three hundred seat auditorium and it’s like, I can’t talk to three hundred people, I can’t talk to three hundred staff members.”

“I thought it was amazing... I think it was really nice that we were given a chance seeing as we’d done the work, to actually present it as well. Obviously it’s a fantastic experience for someone who’s just coming out of second year to do that kind of thing.”

“I found it really strange at the [conference] sitting in a group and there were lecturers and staff members and professors asking me questions and it was really surreal and I was like, I’m not meant to be the one that knows more than you.”

Student quotes from Phase 2 (2)

“I was very close to dropping out in second year because I didn’t feel very challenged and I didn’t think the interaction with the staff was very great, but then, it’s a big university, with a lot of students so you can’t really expect that, so it felt really nice to do something and be taken seriously about it.”

“The feedback [for the guide] was mixed, there are some people who think that some staff won’t take it seriously but then in general it’s been positive, it looks different to everything else that’s sitting on the desk... They won’t take the booklet seriously... because they said it looks a bit childish and there’s more serious stuff about.”

Conclusions

- Student participation in their own educational development
- Mixed years AND mixed disciplines
- Summer (and Easter) vacation – not term time
- Opportunity to present their own work

- Research/Teaching tensions

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