

Guide to ESD in practice

Meme making for enhancing student reflection of learning

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1. Intended outcomes

1. Providing a playful approach to allow students to critically reflect on their learning.
2. Providing an opportunity to reflect and absorb alternative interpretations of learning.
3. Providing a more creative learning environment

2. Participants

Participants, ie students, were asked to create a meme which summarised a piece of information they had learnt during the session. This allowed students to express their creativity alongside reflecting and deriving meaning from their learning. The memes are then shared with the class, resulting in creation of shared knowledge.

The role of the participant is to reflect on class content to create a meme representing their knowledge, then further participate in reflecting on the class outputs. This activity can be done with variable class sizes, across disciplines and has no maximum or minimum participant numbers.

3. Activity/project

This activity allows the participant (ie student) to produce their own authentic artefact while encouraging critical thinking competencies through the production of a reflective meme. By encouraging students to develop their own meme, the educator is allowing students to derive meaning from presented information and transfer this meaning into a contemporary and accessible narrative.

This translates as an in-class activity where students are asked to reflect on their class content and produce a meme from it, this is then shared anonymously with their peers, allowing all students to see all memes. The process reflects the requirements of an ESD learning environment in its inclusive, playful and interactive approach while allowing participants to absorb other memes in order to consider other viewpoints and interpretations of knowledge.

4. Assessment or evaluation

With relation to this research, the team measured the success of the project in terms of student engagement through the survey of the students (very positive about the experience of meme making) but also through module and course representative feedback (both were very favourable).

Measuring performance around measuring the success of increasing retention on knowledge is more difficult. Survey data shows clearly that students perceive it to be increasing knowledge retention but ideally this would be measured about module marks and outcomes (but this is such a multi-faceted thing to measure it is difficult to say increased module marks are due to one factor).

One manner in which the academic can measure the success of the meme-making in enhancing the student experience is by being in the classroom and observing the lift of energy and conversation that this activity causes in the classroom – it brings a real energy and creativity to the room.

5. Useful resources

[Meme Generator](#)

[Padlet](#)

6. Example of practice

This has been used across six UK HE institutions (Teesside University, Staffordshire University, Northumbria University, University of the West of Scotland, De Montfort University and University of Strathclyde) and one US institution (Rutgers University) with forensic science students.

The activity allowed students to produce their own meme as a means to critically reflect on their learning. The contemporary and anonymous nature of this approach meant that it was highly inclusive while the act of creating the meme harnessed creativity, all features of ESD teaching.

The feedback from the students emphasised the inclusive and creative nature of the meme making but also stressed how this was considered a fun and fulfilling activity which lifted the classroom.

The activity was designed with QAA Forensic Science Benchmarks in mind as detailed below:

- + develop an enthusiasm for forensic science
- + have an intellectually stimulating and beneficial learning experience
- + acquire underpinning scientific knowledge and skills of direct relevance to competence as a practitioner in forensic science, and to those organisations concerned principally with the collection or analysis of physical or digital evidence.

These are very generic benchmark statements which underpin the transferable nature of this teaching approach – both across disciplines and academic levels. It can also be used for interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary practices.



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