

A PRACTICAL TOOLKIT FOR STUDENT-LED DESIGN OF INCLUSIVE AND AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENTS



University of
Reading

5 November 2021

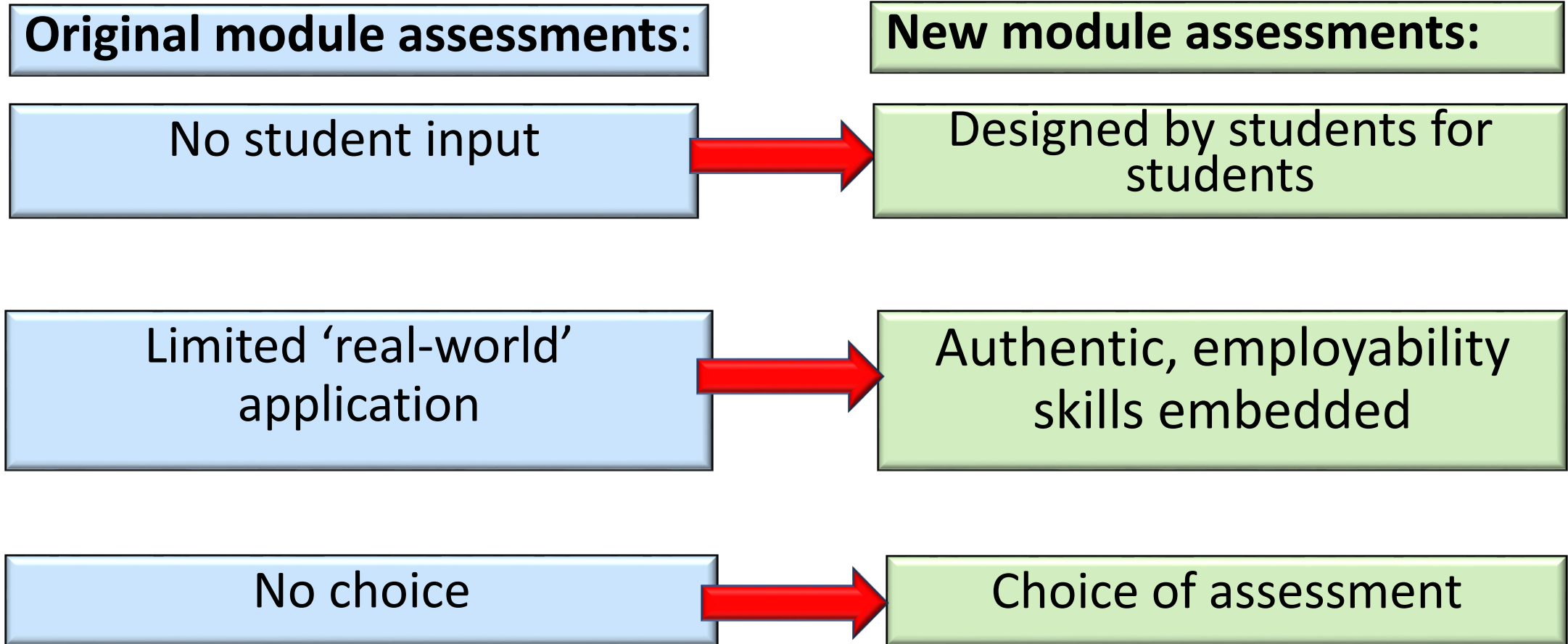
12:05 - 12:45

INTRODUCTIONS



- James Devenney, Transnational Professor of Commercial Law
- Elizabeth Conaghan, Associate Professor
- Rosa Fernandes, 3rd year undergraduate
- Anjola Odunaiya, graduate (2021)
- Harris Yousaf, 3rd year undergraduate

The aims of our project



Designed by
students for
students



Collaboration with students in the design of assessments gives them agency (**Healey et al 2016**) and is an 'authentic way to develop professional skills' (**Giles et al, 2004**).

Choice of
assessment



Flexibility of assessment can promote inclusivity by reflecting student preference (**Waterfield and West, 2011**)

Authentic,
employability
skills
embedded



Offers real world relevance (**Villarroel et al, 2018**), fosters learning and personal development beyond the classroom, is responsive to calls for future-orientated design principles (**Sambell and Brown, 2021**).

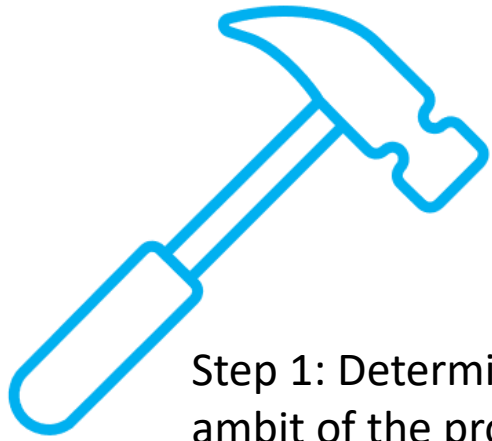


Integration as a core component of module design promotes inclusivity; every student can reap its benefits (**Manoharan, 2021**).

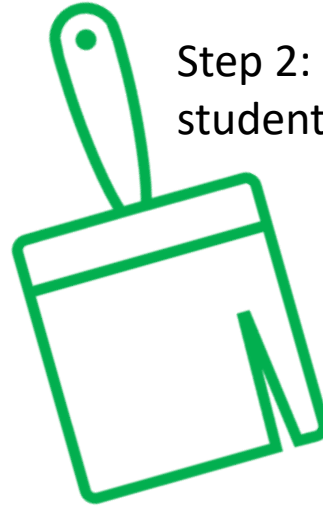
The benefits of
student-led
design of
authentic
assessments



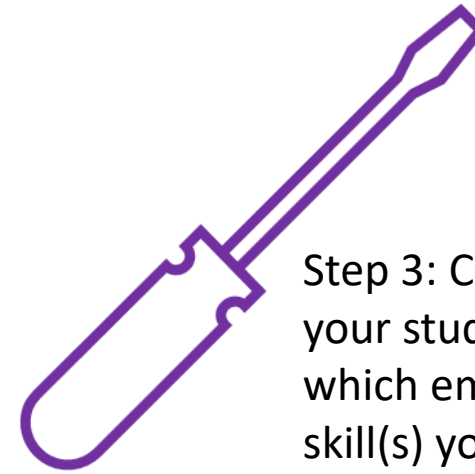
How did we
approach it?



Step 1: Determine the
ambit of the proposed
student collaboration



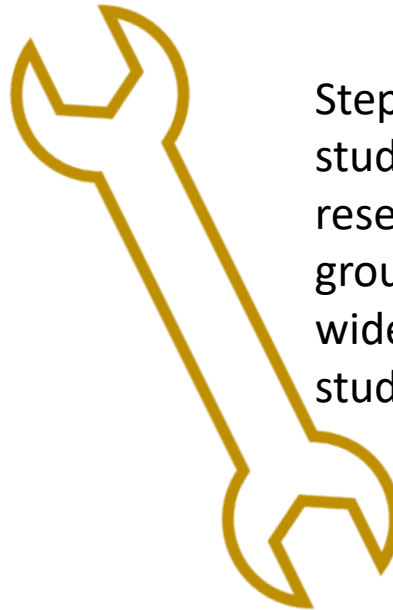
Step 2: Find your
student partners



Step 3: Consider with
your student partners
which employability
skill(s) you want to
embed



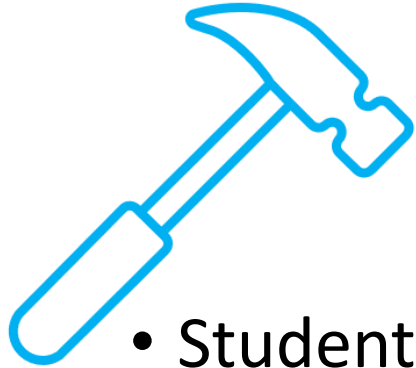
Step 4: Conduct
industry-based
research; interview
relevant employers



Step 5: Conduct
student-based
research; run focus
groups with the
wider cohort of
students



Step 6: Use the
research to co-design
a choice of authentic
and inclusive
assessments



Step 1: Determine the ambit of the proposed student collaboration

- Student voice or student action, or a mixture of both?
- The involvement of students in collaborative projects can be broadly categorised as follows (Dianiti and Oberhollenzer, 2020):

STUDENT VOICE

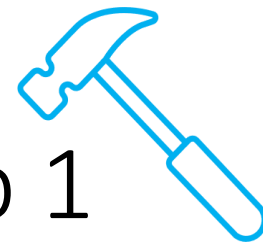


Students are
consulted on
their views

STUDENT ACTION



Students are
agents of
change



Step 1

STUDENT
ACTION



STUDENT
VOICE



Students increasingly active in participation

Students control
decision-making and
have substantial
influence

Students have
some choice and
influence

Tutors control
decision-making
informed by
student feedback

Tutors control
decision-making

Students in control

Partnership - a
negotiated curriculum

Student control of
some areas of choice

Students control of
prescribed areas

Wide choice from
prescribed choices

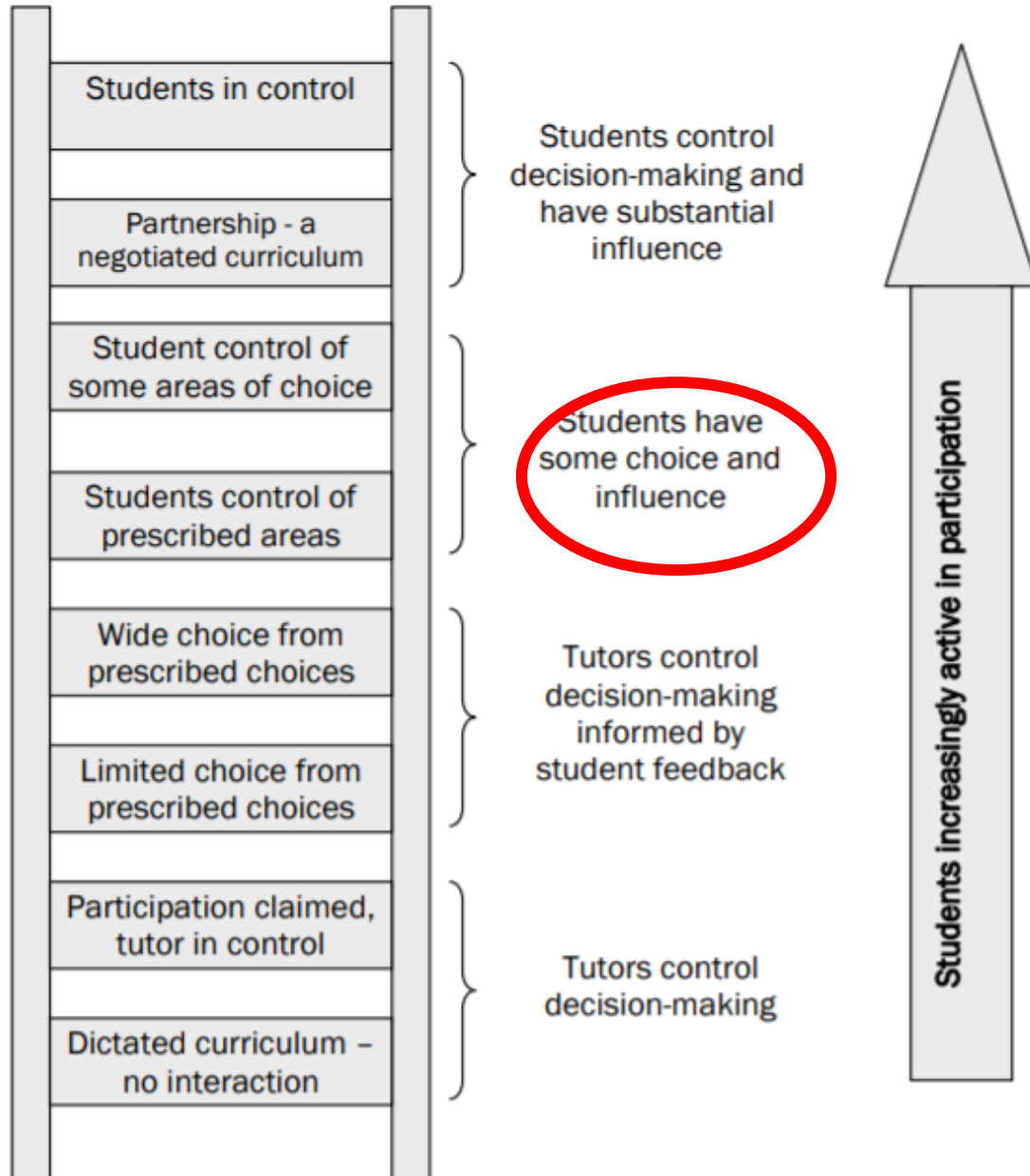
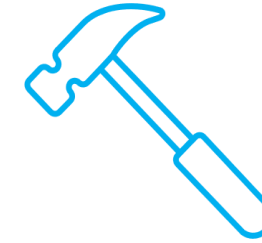
Limited choice from
prescribed choices

Participation claimed,
tutor in control

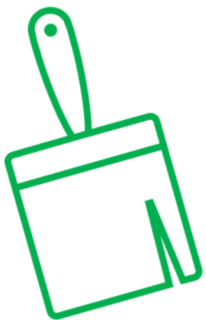
Dictated curriculum -
no interaction

Bovill and Bulley's
(2011) ladder of
student
participation is a
useful guide to
think about where
to 'place' your
collaboration

Step 1



For our project, we wanted the student partners to have some control over assessment design



Step 2: Find your student partners

Consider how you want to recruit your student partners; what criteria might be necessary? How many students should be involved? From which pool of students should a selection be made?



For our project, we created a 'Research Placement' which was funded by a small bursary.



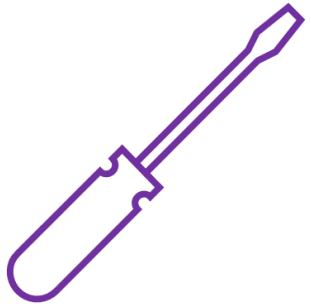
All undergraduate students at the School of Law were offered the chance to apply.



The Research Placement scheme aimed to afford the student-partners something tangible to add to their CV at the end of the process.

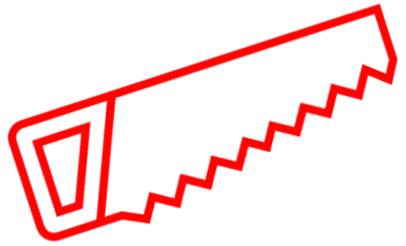


The application consisted of a 300 word statement by the student and a copy of their CV. Shortlisted candidates were then offered a brief interview.



Step 3: Consider with your student partners which employability skill(s) you want to embed

- We wanted to create assessments which provided students with career-ready skills training (Knox & Stone, 2019).
- The project related to an optional module about commercial law so embedding more ‘commercial awareness’ seemed an obvious choice.
- Commercial awareness has been frequently identified as a key element of employability (e.g. CBI with Universities UK, 2009).
- There is no single and agreed definition of commercial awareness, but as Poon and Brownlow (2014) observed, ‘there are common themes in all publicly available definitions. They all concern **an understanding of the client’s interests, the external environment of the business and the costs involved in delivering the outputs.**’



Step 4: Conduct industry-based research; interview relevant employers



Most of the existing literature on commercial awareness focusses on the perspective of the academic or HE institution.



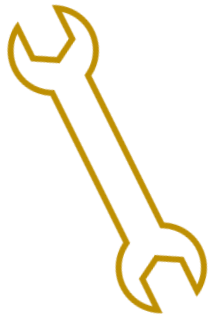
For our project, we felt it was important to speak directly to employers.



The student-partners conducted semi-structured interviews with a number of lawyers in practice.

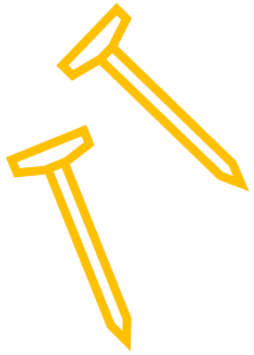


Staff were not involved in the interviews, other than to arrange the initial introductions.



Step 5: Conduct student-based research; run focus groups with the wider cohort of students

- An understanding of students' views can contribute to the design of a student focussed curriculum (McCuddy et al, 2008).
- Students undertaking the module were invited to join a focus group.
- The student partners also ran the focus groups.
- Empowering the student partners to run both the focus groups and employer interviews was an important part of power-sharing within the staff-student collaboration (Matthews, 2017)



Step 6: Use the research to co-design a choice of authentic and inclusive assessments

Suggestions
from
employers

Role play to understand the client's perspective

Lectures from practising lawyers

Case studies where students have to try to solve a client's problem

Drafting a letter to a client

Negotiation exercises

Choice of assessment to give students more autonomy

Mock interviews

Due diligence exercises

Suggestions
from
students

Choice of assessment including topic and format of submission (e.g. essay OR individual presentation)

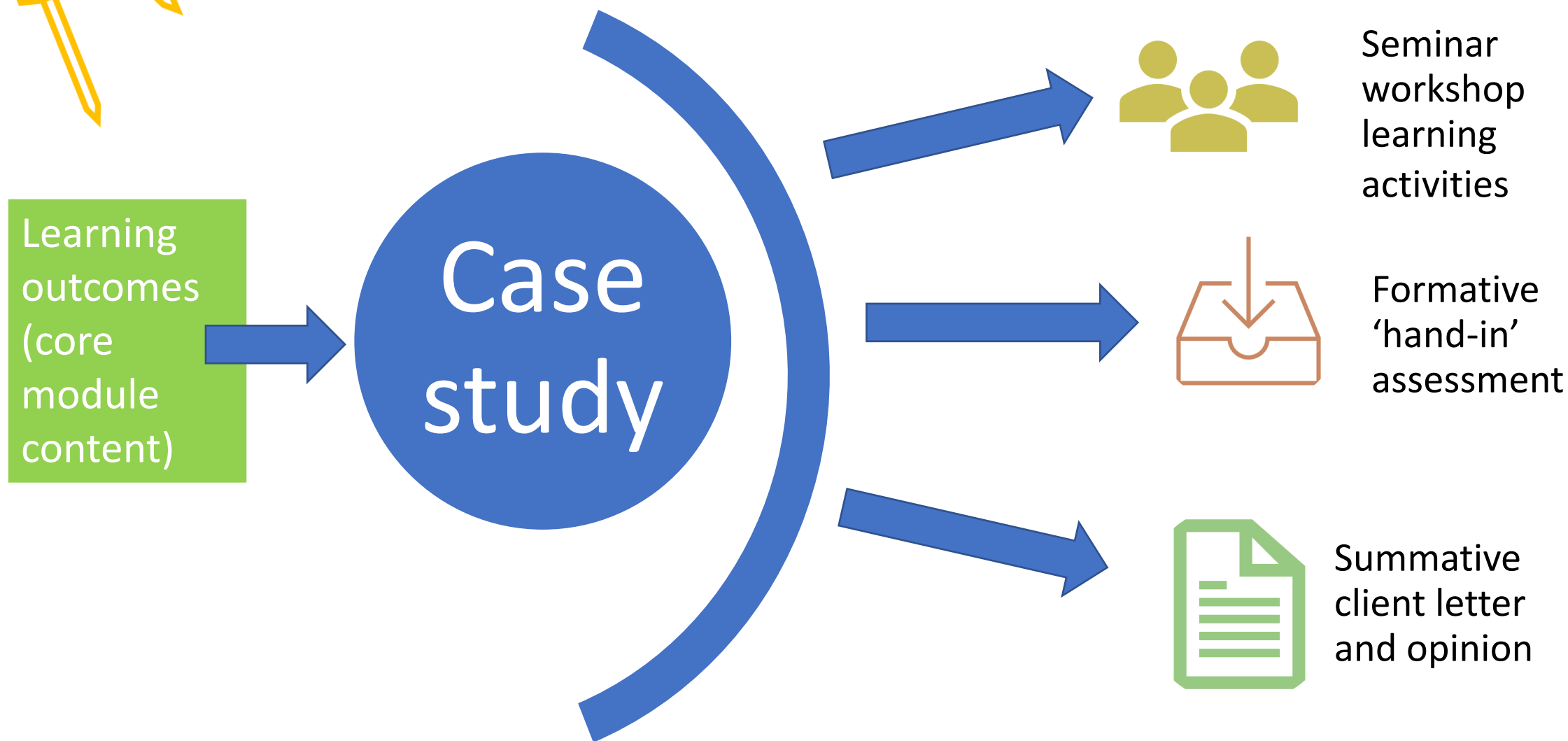
Practical assessments such as case studies and role play

No assessed group work

Formative assessment should not be too near summative deadlines

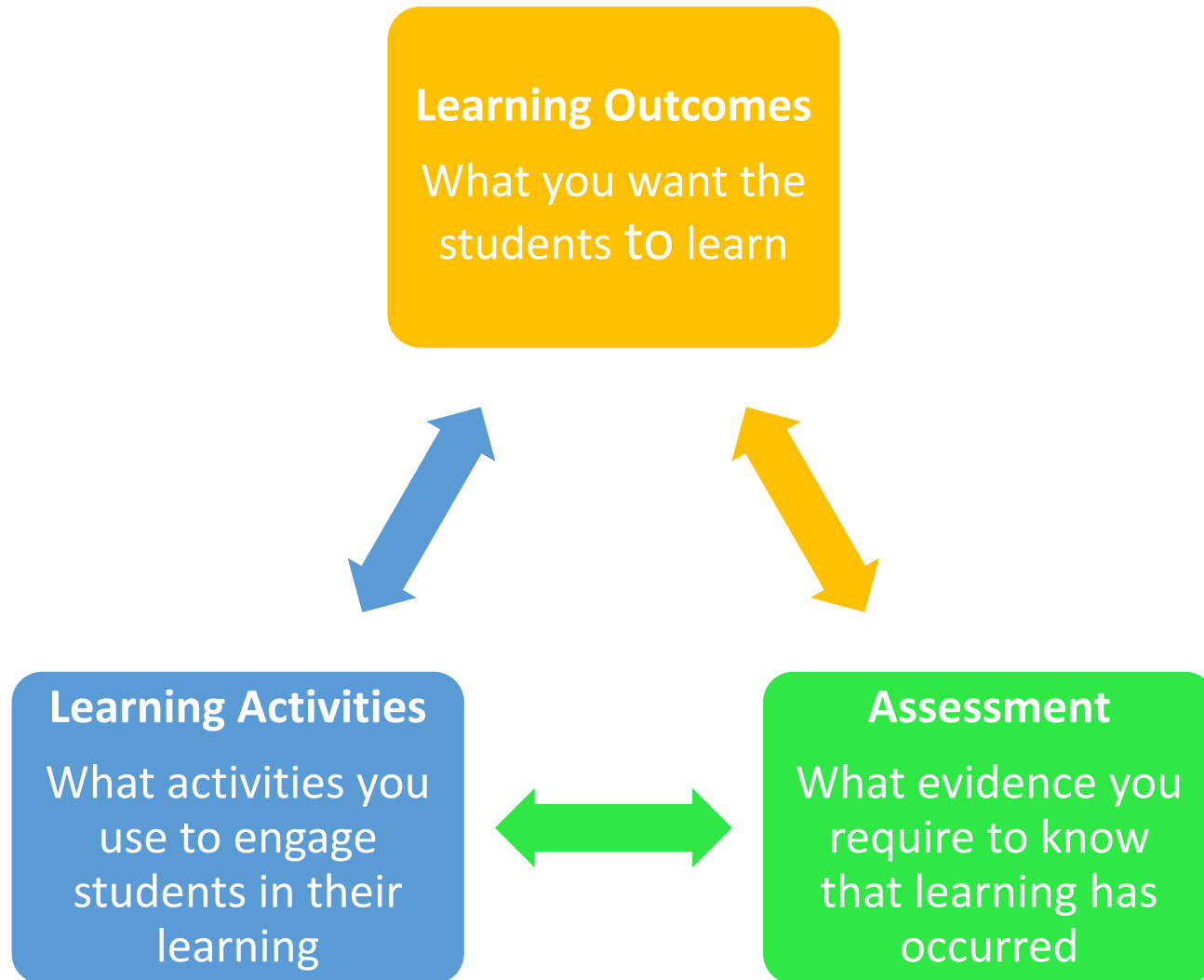


Step 6: What we did





Step 6: What we did



- We used the intended learning outcomes to form the basis of an authentic case study which involved two parties and 'real-life' documents.
- The case study was then used as a basis to create learning activities and assessments which aligned to the learning outcomes **and** which afforded students the opportunity to develop commercial awareness

The three components in constructive alignment (**Biggs and Tang, 2007**)



Step 6: What we did

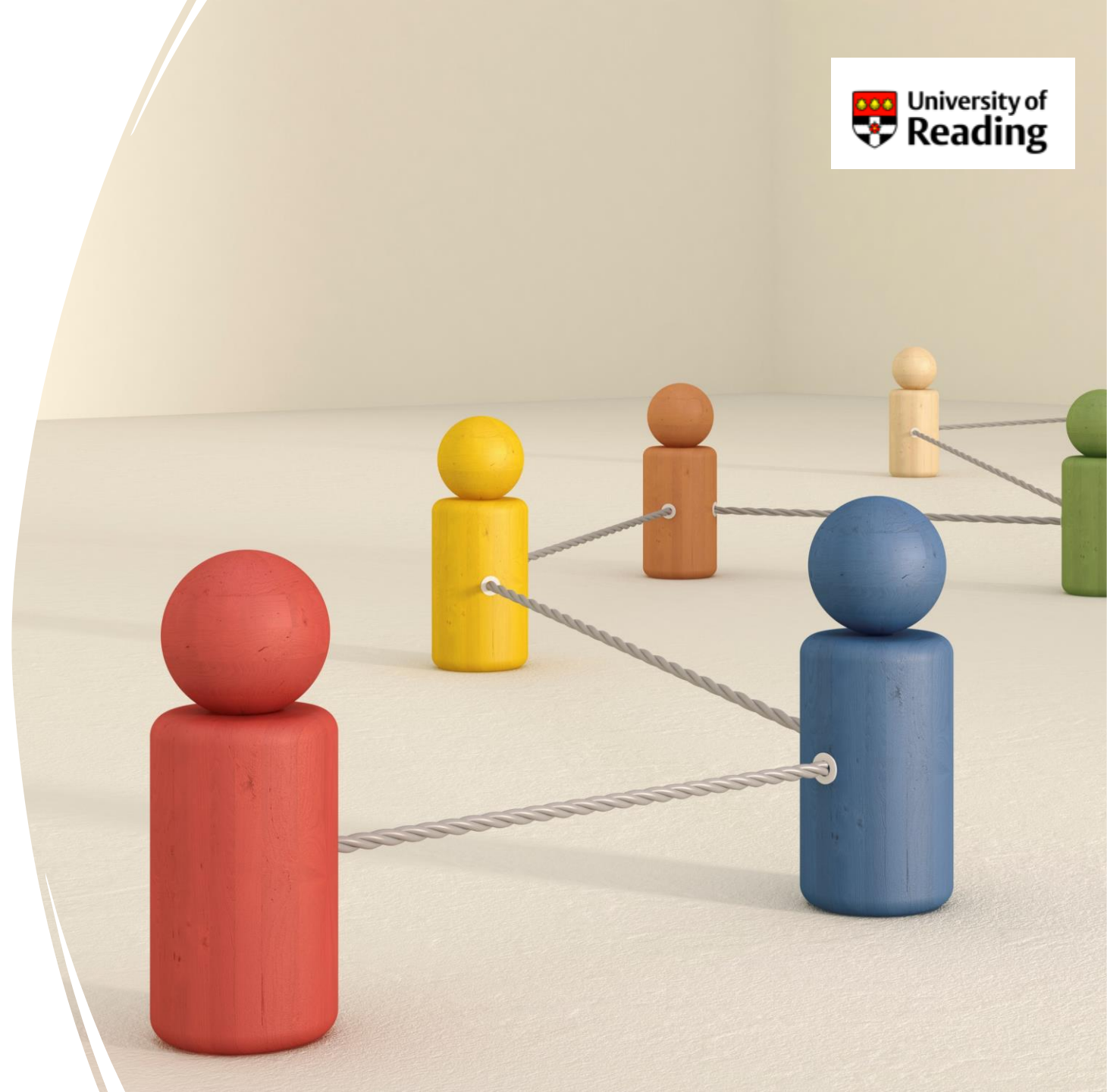
We extended our seminar time to allow for integrated formative activities.

- These activities integrated the ideas of employers and student focus groups.
- Studies into widening participation and student retention advocate greater use of formative assessment (Knight and Yorke 2003, Yorke 2001). Formative assessment that is integrated into programmes, rather than offered as an optional extra, ensures that all students get feedback on their learning without fear of failure (Hockings, 2010).

We offered students more choice in the summative assessment

- The students can choose from a range of topics and their assessment can be submitted as an essay or as an individual presentation.
- '[There is a] need for ... a variety of assessment so that students, whether disabled or not, have the opportunity to choose the form of assessment that enables them to demonstrate their learning most effectively' (Hockings, 2010)

-
- A brief reflection on benefits and challenges of this project



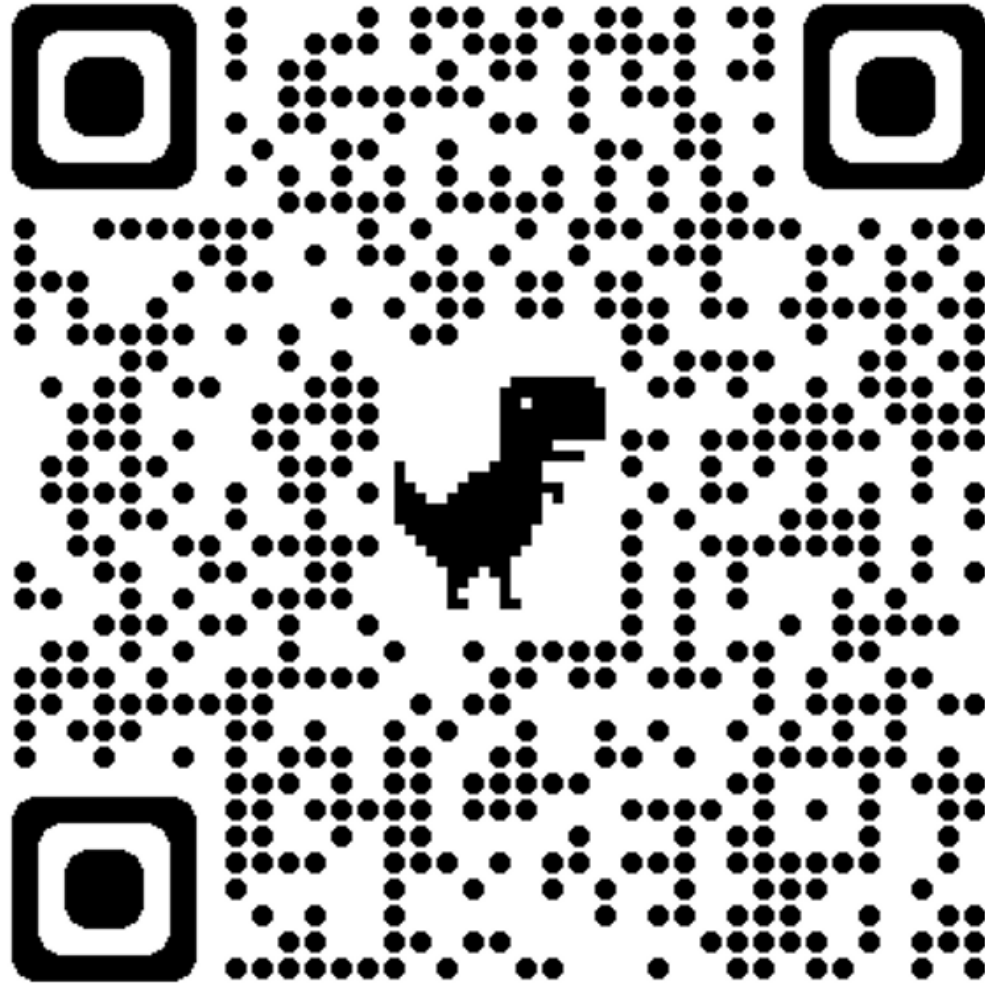
Introducing our case study

A set of authentic looking documents: letters, invoices, contract terms, company accounts, emails, WhatsApp messages, Facebook posts

A 'movie style' trailer

A website

The case study website



<https://techtasticsolutions.wordpress.com/>

More Than Your Average Tech Design Agency

Formed in 2015 by two Reading University graduates, Techtastic Solutions is an energetic and creative tech design company delivering outstanding support in respect of software and device design. Read more about about story here:

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Founders, Natalie Kotova and Alured Phillips

Our Services

[What we do](#)



We help organisations to use technology in promote efficiency and best practice

Case Study

[The story of Foxhill Skip Hire](#)



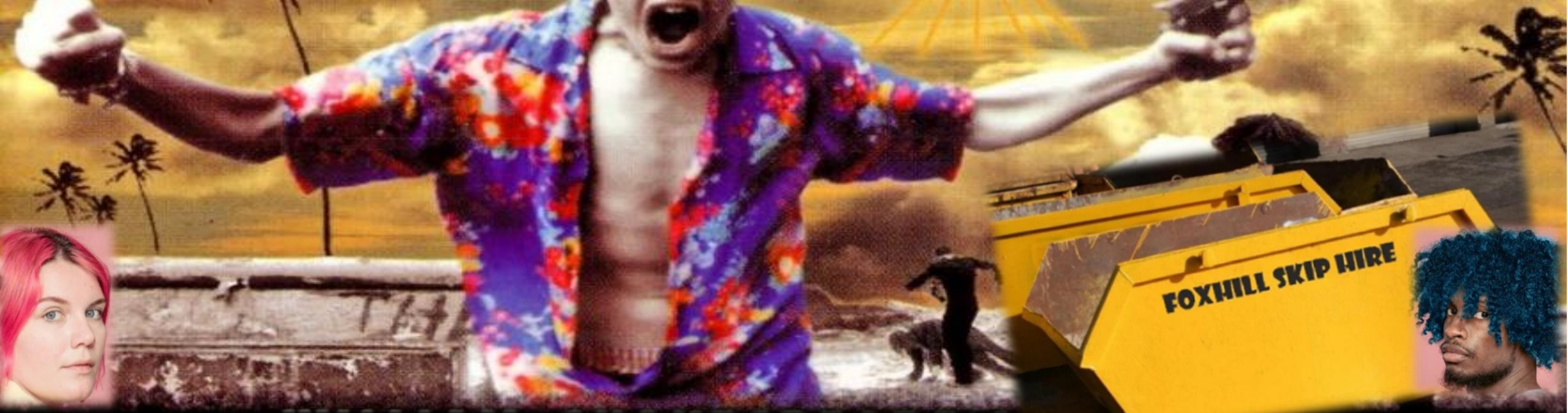
Take a look at how Techtastic Solutions helped to revolutionise a Berkshire company and increase their profits.

T&Cs

[The Small Print](#)



We are happy to adapt these standard T&Cs according to our client's needs.



READING LAW SCHOOL'S TECHTASTIC + FOXHILL SKIPS



+
○ • Two businesses, both
alike in dignity,
In fair Reading, where
we lay our scene,



- +
-
- From contract grudge break to new mutiny,
Where civil claims
makes civil hands
unclean.





From forth the
arguable claims of
these two foes
A pair of star-cross'd
lovers take to court;



+
◦ • Whose misadventured
legal overthrows
Do with their claims
bury their former
love.





STARRING



NATALIE KOTOVA

Founder of Techtastic Solutions Limited

BELINDA SIMPSON

Owner of Foxhill
Skip Hire
Alfred's former
girlfriend





ALFRED PHILLIPS

Founder of Techtastic Solutions Limited Belinda's former boyfriend

**DANIEL
JONES**

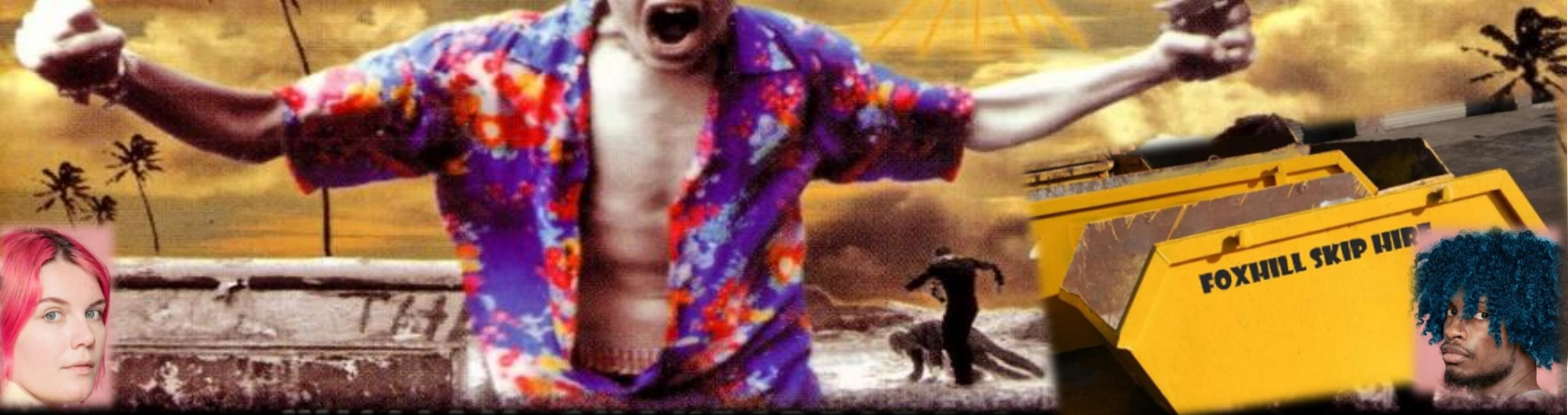
**Owner of
Foxhill
Skip Hire**



STEFAN WEISS

Owner of Foxhill Skip Hire





READING LAW SCHOOL'S TECHTASTIC + FOXHILL SKIPS



**COMING SOON TO A
SEMINAR NEAR YOU**

Useful resources

- Baughan, P. (Ed) (2020). *Assessment and Feedback in a Post-Pandemic Era: A Time for Learning and Inclusion*, Advance HE
- Bovill, C. and Bulley, C.J. (2011) A model of active student participation in curriculum design: exploring desirability and possibility. In Rust, C. *Improving Student Learning* (18) Global theories and local practices: institutional, disciplinary and cultural variations. Oxford: The Oxford Centre for Staff and Educational Development, pp176- 188.
- Dianati, S. & Oberhollenzer, Y. (2020). Reflections of students and staff in a project-led partnership: Contextualised experiences of students-as-partners, *International Journal for Students as Partners*, 4(1). <https://doi.org/10.15173/ij sap.v4i1.3974>
- Hockings, C. (2010). Inclusive learning and teaching in higher education: a synthesis of research Evidence. Higher Education Academy.
- Knox, J. & Stone, M. (2019). Embedding employability skills for the legal professional of the future. *The Law Teacher, The International Journal of Legal Education*, 53(1), 90-101.
- Matthews, K. E. (2017). Five Propositions for Genuine Students as Partners Practice. *International Journal for Students as Partners*, 1(2).
- McCuddy, M.K., Pinar, M. and Gingeich, E.F.R. (2008). Using student feedback in designing student-focussed curricula. *International Journal of Education Management*, 22(7), 611-637
- Millmore, A. (2021). Hand over the reins: A case study for student-staff partnership in designing module assessments. *International Journal for Students As Partners*, 5(1), 86-96. <https://doi.org/10.15173/ij sap.v5i1.4382>
- Poon, J. and Brownlow, M. (2014). Students' views on the incorporation of commercial awareness in real estate education. *Property Management*, 32(4), 325-351
- Waterfield, J. and West, B. (2011) *Setting the agenda for Inclusive Assessment: an auditing tool*, University of Plymouth: Plymouth