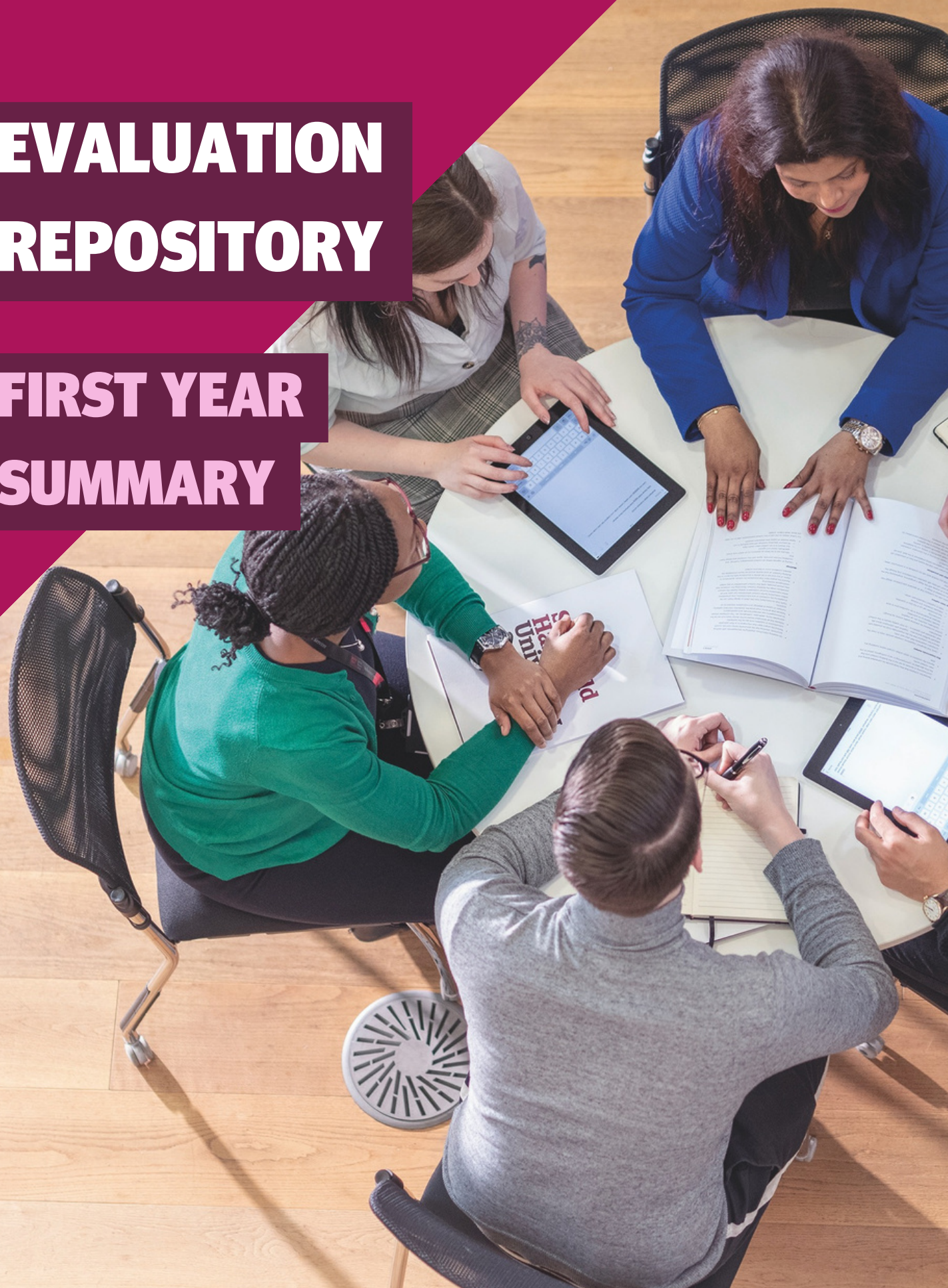**Sheffield Hallam University** | Student Engagement, Evaluation and Research

EVALUATION REPOSITORY

FIRST YEAR SUMMARY

Contents

Sheffield Hallam University's Evaluation Repository

Visit the website at https://shura.shu.ac.uk/steer/ or follow the QR code:

What is the Evaluation Repository?
In late 2022, Sheffield Hallam's Evaluation Repository was formally launched by Student Engagement Evaluation and Research (STEER) to share the learning from (previously unpublished) evaluations of interventions and research that are carried out by staff members and students within the University and at partnership organisations. This includes interventions that aim to enhance outcomes at a stage of the student lifecycle (access, success and progression into employment and further study). The purpose of this document is to showcase the items that were submitted during the first year of the evaluation repository, with the aim of raising awareness of practices that users can apply when designing and planning their own interventions and evaluations.

What is 'evaluation'?
There are many different definitions of evaluation that are available. Patton describes evaluation as involving 'making judgements about the merit, value, significance, credibility, and utility of whatever is being evaluated: for example, a program, a policy, a product, or the performance of a person or team'.

What records are available on the evaluation repository?
A range of evidence is available relating to different stages of the student lifecycle, student and staff groups, and types of evidence (exploratory, narrative and empirical), which refers to the claims that can be made from the findings of the evaluation or research. All the items summarised in this document are accessible on the Evaluation Repository website. Links and QR codes are provided.

How can I find out the meaning of some of the key terms used throughout this document and on the repository website?
Please visit the 'Glossary' page on the website to learn more about the key terms and concepts used.

Adding to the Evaluation Repository
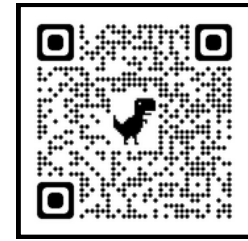
Any current member of staff working at Sheffield Hallam University or at a partnership organisation (e.g. Sheffield Hallam Students' Union, HeppSY, Hepp) can submit items. Submitting evaluation items to this repository helps others at Sheffield Hallam and across the sector to use the learning for their own practice. It also provides an opportunity for authors to gain greater recognition and visibility for their work, as the items appear on scholarly indexes, such as Google Scholar.

Prior to submitting, please read the **submission guidance** on the website and arrange to speak with a member of STEER by contacting us at **evaluationrepository@shu.ac.uk**

Complete the **online submission form**, where authors are required to outline the key details of the evaluation and upload any relevant outputs or documents.

The submission will be **checked by a reviewer** to ensure that it is suitable for inclusion. Please read the **submission guidance** to understand the expectations of each submission.
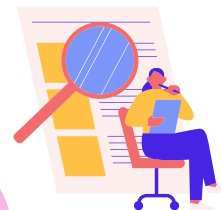
If the submission is accepted, the item will be **uploaded** and the author will be notified. If a submission is not initially accepted, authors will receive feedback and have the opportunity to resubmit.

Ditch the Doubt: Headline Project Evaluation Report HeppSY (2022)

Authors: Jessica Whitby

Departments, Directorates or Groups: Higher Education Progression Partnership South Yorkshire

Stage of the Student Lifecycle: Access and outreach

Type of evaluation evidence: Empirical (evidence has been collected which reports that there have been changes in outcomes for those receiving an intervention)
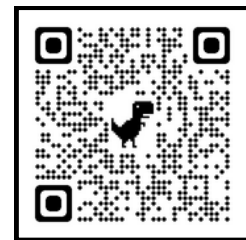
Link: https://shura.shu.ac.uk/32214/

Summary:
The Higher Education Progression Partnership South Yorkshire (HeppSY) works with cohorts of students who face additional barriers to progression to higher education (HE), beyond those of other students of the same age. Ditch the Doubt was developed for Uni Connect Programme students who face such barriers and it ran across 7 centres between March 2022 and June 2022. A total of 93 students participated. HeppSY adopted a mixed-method triangulation approach consisting of pre and post questionnaires, focus groups, rating scale activities and teacher observation forms. The data collected throughout the project was used to explore the impact of the programme in five key areas: HE knowledge, career knowledge, seeing your future self, academic confidence, and likelihood to apply for HE at age 18/19. Ditch the Doubt had a clear impact on the students who participated. Students were equipped with greater knowledge of pathways, which will support them in making an informed choice about HE. Students developed an increased understanding of student life and a greater sense of fit within HE. An increase in personal and academic confidence also emerged through survey and focus group data, as well as via the embedded coaching rating scales. The rating scales indicated that the coaching is a key component of Ditch the Doubt, highlighting its positive impact on the students' confidence, trust in their own judgement and perception of their future.

HeppSY Uni Connect Outreach: Longitudinal Evaluation (2023)

Authors: Daniel Fletcher

Departments, Directorates or Groups: Higher Education Progression Partnership South Yorkshire

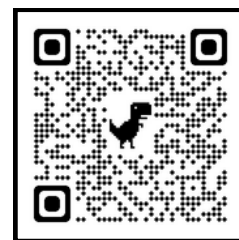**Stage of the Student Lifecycle**: Access and outreach

Type of evaluation evidence: Empirical (evidence has been collected which reports that there have been changes in outcomes for those receiving an intervention)

Link: https://shura.shu.ac.uk/32215/

Summary:

The Higher Education Progression Partnership South Yorkshire (HeppSY) is part of the Uni Connect Programme (UCP), funded by the Office for Students. The main focus of Uni Connect is to provide targeted higher education (HE) outreach to young people in Years 9 to 13 living in particular geographic areas. From August 2021 this broadened out to include the targeting of adult learners (learners aged 19 and above). HeppSY is working in partnership with Sheffield Hallam University, The University of Sheffield and South Yorkshire schools and colleges. To provide evidence for the impact of HeppSY outreach on outcomes relevant to HE access, a series of analyses were conducted matching together multiple waves of an annual student survey, HeppSY activity data, and student HE access data drawn from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA). The results indicated that students who participated in more hours of outreach displayed greater increases in self-reported HE knowledge across survey waves, while evidence for an association between outreach engagement and increases in intention of applying to HE was mixed. Importantly, greater engagement in HeppSY outreach was associated with increased odds of accessing HE, and this relationship remained significant after controlling for baseline intentions of applying to HE.

Pre-HE Mentoring Programmes: Rapid Evidence Review (2023)
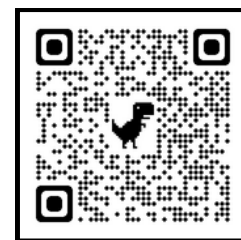
Authors: Julian Crockford

Departments, Directorates or Groups: Student Experience, Teaching and Learning

Stage of the Student Lifecycle: Access and outreach

Type of evaluation evidence: Exploratory (evidence of a specific topic that could be used to design an intervention)

Link: https://shura.shu.ac.uk/32024/

Summary:
This is a rapid review of a sample of evaluation reports concerning pre-HE (outreach) mentoring programmes for young people. The report identified a number of key practical and implementation issues associated with the impact of mentoring programmes, including the targeting, selection and recruitment of mentees and mentors, the role of mentor training, and how mentoring is understood to deliver its objectives (either as a delivery mechanism for other programme elements, or itself the key mechanism of change). The report goes on to provide an overview of the evaluation approaches adopted across the case studies and identifies a series of evaluation challenges, many of which are likely to be common to the evaluation of other pre-HE outreach activities. The report concludes with a summary of 9 case studies, comparing mentoring programme design and implementation, intended outcomes and evaluation approach. Although primarily written for an audience considering developing or delivering a mentoring programme in this space, we hope that elements of this report, including a discussion of evaluation challenges, may have wider relevance.

Supporting Care Experienced, Mature and Young Carer Learners into HE: Sustained Programmes and Train the Trainer Interventions (2022-2023)

Authors: Kelly Self (1-3) and **Nathaniel Pickering** (2)

Departments, Directorates or Groups: Higher Education Progression Partnership and Student Experience Teaching and Learning

Stage of the Student Lifecycle: Access and outreach

Type of evaluation evidence: Narrative (a narrative is provided about why an intervention is being carried out and why it might be effective)

Summary:
Hepp (Higher Education Progression Partnership) is a jointly funded initiative by Sheffield Hallam University and the University of Sheffield that provides impartial advice and guidance across South Yorkshire and North East Derbyshire. Hepp aims to encourage more children, young people and adults that have experienced personal, systemic, or cultural barriers to accessing higher education to consider it as a viable option. Underpinned by extensive literature reviews, these reports provide narratives and Theory of Change models for sustained programmes and train the trainer activities, which aim to increase awareness and knowledge about higher education among Hepp's stakeholders. There are separate records for three different groups of learners: care experienced; mature; and young carers.
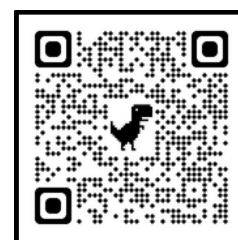
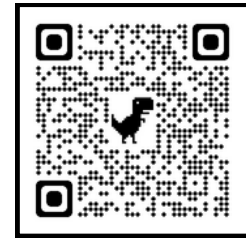| **1. Care Experienced Learners:**	**2. Mature Learners:**	**3. Young Carer Learners:**
https://shura.shu.ac.uk/31774/	https://shura.shu.ac.uk/30907/	https://shura.shu.ac.uk/32575/

Higher Education Engagement among Students with Armed Services Backgrounds: A Literature Review (2023)

Authors: Katherine Rogers

Departments, Directorates or Groups: Sheffield Hallam Students' Union

Stage of the Student Lifecycle: Access and outreach, Success (e.g. retention and attainment)
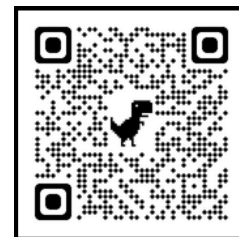
Type of evaluation evidence: Exploratory (evidence of a specific topic that could be used to design an intervention)

Link: https://shura.shu.ac.uk/31850/

Summary:
A systematic review of the literature relating to British military families (service and ex-service personnel, spouses and partners and children) and access to, and retention in, higher education; the review evaluates twenty-one articles and reports. Lord Ashcroft's 2014 Veterans' Transition Review provided a comprehensive account of the contemporary situation with regard to military service personnel and their families, and transition into civilian life (including access to higher education). This review examines the findings of the Ashcroft report and subsequent research to identify (positive and negative) factors that influence access to, and retention of students with an armed forces background in higher education. By synthesizing the literature, this report makes recommendations about actions to improve access to university, and retention, of students with an armed services background. Students with an armed services background are not a single homogenous group; the Centre for Military Research, Education and Public Engagement identifies six distinct groups. This report examines the different barriers encountered by different groups and makes specific recommendations for different groups of students with an armed services background.

The Value of Second Chances: Reflections of Undergraduate Students on their Foundation Year Experience (2022)

Authors: Nathaniel Pickering

Departments, Directorates or Groups: Student Experience Teaching and Learning

Stage of the Student Lifecycle: Access and outreach, Success (e.g. retention and attainment)
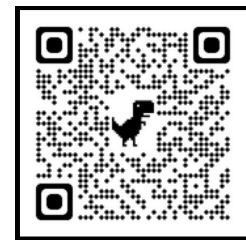
Type of evaluation evidence: Exploratory (evidence of a specific topic that could be used to design an intervention)

Link: https://shura.shu.ac.uk/32197/

Summary:
Foundation year (FY) provision provides access to Higher Education for those not meeting the requirements for undergraduate study by developing skills and subject-specific knowledge. The provision has experienced significant growth and now plays a crucial role within many institutions, helping them reach their widening access and recruitment targets in a highly competitive market. However, the 2019 Review commissioned by the Government (informally known as the Augar Review) raised concerns about the 'poor value for money' and the quality of these courses. Current research establishes a counter-narrative that shows the value and positive impact on students of FY courses. However, questions remain about how they prepare students to progress/succeed in their degrees and the value of that experience for those that access them. This presentation addresses these gaps by reporting findings from 18 interviews with students. The results show that the FY often provides students with a 'second chance' at education, and their value can be understood within four interrelated domains of value: functional, psychological, social, and monetary.

A Process and Impact Evaluation of the PGCert and MA Student Engagement in Higher Education programme (2022)

Authors: Alan Donnelly and Liz Austen

Departments, Directorates or Groups: Student Experience Teaching and Learning

Stage of the Student Lifecycle: Success (e.g. retention and attainment)

Type of evaluation evidence: Empirical (evidence has been collected which reports that there have been changes in outcomes for those receiving an intervention)

Link: https://shura.shu.ac.uk/30905/

Summary:
This executive summary provides a brief overview of a project which evaluated the processes and impact of the Postgraduate Certificate (PGCert) and Master's (MA) in Student Engagement in Higher Education at the University of Winchester. The postgraduate programme of study focuses on student engagement practices, policies and partnerships in UK Higher Education (HE) and it was created in 2018 to address a lack of professional development opportunities for practitioners who are responsible for engaging with students in HE. A Theory of Change approach was adopted to structure the evaluation, which aimed to understand 'how much' and 'how and why' change had occurred on the course since its inception. A mixed-methods post-test design was used. An Advisory Group of practitioners, who were either studying on the course or had graduated, were recruited to co-design the evaluation and co-create the Theory of Change model. Evidence of impact was collated from practitioners studying on the course, graduates and staff on the course via peer-led interviews, online reflective activities and other sources of evidence. The evaluation findings highlighted that the programme had a positive impact on practitioners while studying on and after completing the course across several areas, for example, within their knowledge, skills and practices, confidence in academic spaces, networks and career progression. Impact was also reported within practitioners' organisations of employment. The blended delivery of the programme enabled individuals to study on the course alongside their professional roles and the effectiveness of these processes facilitated the impact outcomes.

Evaluating the Impact of Higher Education Funding Aimed to Address Student Hardship: Survey Findings (2021)

Authors: Alan Donnelly

Departments, Directorates or Groups: Student Experience Teaching and Learning

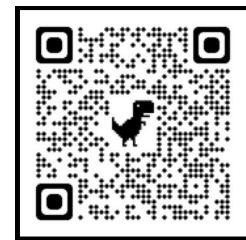**Stage of the Student Lifecycle**: Success (e.g. retention and attainment)

Type of evaluation evidence: Empirical (evidence has been collected which reports that there have been changes in outcomes for those receiving an intervention)

Link: https://shura.shu.ac.uk/30729/

Summary:

This report explores the findings of an evaluation conducted at Sheffield Hallam University to understand the impact of institutional financial support provided to students who are under-represented in higher education or who are facing hardship. This evaluation implemented the validated financial support evaluation toolkit, which is recommended by the Office for Students, as the framework for this data collection and analysis (McCaig et al., 2016). The survey tool, which was used in this current phase of the evaluation, contains closed and open-ended questions that explore what the funding has enabled its recipients to do and what might have not been possible otherwise. A total of 5,302 students received financial support from the University in 2020/21 and 347 of these responded to the survey, which is a response rate of 7%. The survey findings highlighted how respondents used other financial sources, aside from the hardship funding, to pay for their higher education, such as loans, overdrafts, earnings from work and money from friends or family. Without the financial support, its recipients reported that they would not only find it difficult to access the essential provisions of teaching and learning but also to be able to pay for basic living costs. Other key benefits reported by respondents were that the financial support enabled them to: concentrate on their university work, with the money helping many to pay for devices and IT equipment: continue with their studies; and ease their anxieties and support their mental health. However, it is important to note that the low response rate limits the generalisations that can be made from the survey respondents to the wider population.

Exploring Course Leaders' Reflections of Learning Communities at Sheffield Hallam University (2021)
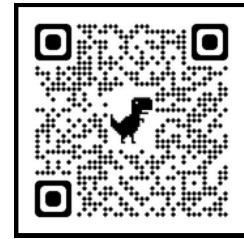
Authors: Alan Donnelly, Rachael Parsons and Dan Pearson

Departments, Directorates or Groups: Student Experience Teaching and Learning

Stage of the Student Lifecycle: Success (e.g. retention and attainment)

Type of evaluation evidence: Exploratory (evidence of a specific topic that could be used to design an intervention)

Link: **https://shura.shu.ac.uk/32216/**

Summary:
The overarching aim of the project was to explore and capture examples of practices and ideas for success to enhance the course experience for students, with a particular emphasis on the theme of learning communities. Learning communities was an area that received a notable decrease in student satisfaction in the 2021 National Student Survey (NSS) at Sheffield Hallam University. Interviews were carried out with eight course leaders to explore: the practices used on their courses; the aspects that could be made even better; and the evidence that they draw upon to understand the effectiveness of these practices. The following themes were identified: 1) staff-student relationships; 2) curriculum content and pedagogy; 3) peer networks and relationships; 4) supportive relationships between staff members; 5) societies and external networks. The practices identified by course leaders were consistent with practices identified in other relevant literature.

Minority Ethnic Male University Students' Perceptions of, and Preferences for Mental Health and Wellbeing Support Services at SHU (2023)

Authors: Claire Wolstenholme and Jozef Sen

Departments, Directorates or Groups: Student Experience, Teaching and Learning, Student and Academic Services

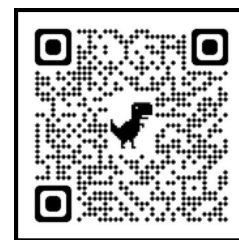**Stage of the Student Lifecycle**: Success (e.g. retention and attainment)

Type of evaluation evidence: Exploratory (evidence of a specific topic that could be used to design an intervention)

Link: https://shura.shu.ac.uk/33011/

Summary:
University support services are often underutilised by ethnic minority male students. This research aimed to identify the perceptions of ethnic minority male students around using university mental health support services, including the barriers and facilitators to utilisation. The project used Listening Rooms for data collection, whereby participants pair up and undertake a recorded conversation based around talking points pertaining to the project. Fourteen pairs (n=28) participated in conversations. A round table analysis of the data took place, followed by further thematic analysis on the transcripts using Nvivo. Participants overall appeared to be positive about and grateful for, the existence of a mental health support service, despite a mixed level of awareness of its existence and differing conceptualizations of what mental health means. Barriers to service utilisation could be split into institutional and sociocultural. Institutional barriers included a perceived lack of cultural and ethnic representation amongst practitioners, as well as bureaucratic factors such as access difficulties, whereas sociocultural barriers pertained to cultural taboos and fear of judgement. As university intakes become ever more diverse, university support services must adapt to meet the needs of their populations. Findings support the need for a more representative staffing of services which would engender confidence in ethnic minority male students. Working to further raise awareness levels of the service as well as explaining how, when and why one might access the service would also be beneficial to those who do seek support.

Research-Informed Teaching Toolkit (2022)

Authors: David Smith, Katie Shearn, Joanne Lidster, Girish Ramchandani, Jonathan Wheat, Melissa Lacey; Libby Allcock, Lewis Partington, Hannah Brierley, Ben Robinson and Tamas Sebok

Departments, Directorates or Groups: Department of Biosciences and Chemistry, Department of Nursing and Midwifery, Department of Sport and Physical Activity

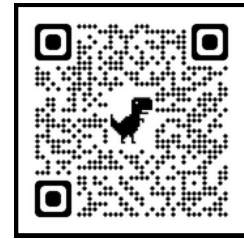**Stage of the Student Lifecycle**: Success (e.g. retention and attainment)

Type of evaluation evidence: Exploratory (evidence of a specific topic that could be used to design an intervention)

Link: https://shura.shu.ac.uk/32120/

Summary:
Research-informed teaching is a term used to describe the different ways in which students are exposed to research content and activities during their time at university. Depending on your discipline this could also be called practice-informed teaching. A four-year body of research involving over 600 students from across Sheffield Hallam University has been used to draw together the following five key Curriculum Design Principles to embed research and practice into teaching: 1) Embed research and practice skills at the course level and develop them through the course. Moving students from consumers of research and best practice to creators of research and best practice. 2) Academic research and practice can form the basis of taught content and be used as direct examples of applied knowledge. 3) Accessing research literature is a high-level skill and requires scaffolding. 4) Research and practice skills should be taught in context and task linked. 5) Research undertaken by the students should be co-created, with students involved in the design process. Students and University staff from Sport, Nursing, Midwifery, Biosciences and Chemistry were involved in the creation of this toolkit. This toolkit is most relevant for those looking to embed research-informed teaching in their practice. The toolkit includes an introduction to research-informed teaching, how students perceive research, the barriers and enablers for staff and students to engage with research-informed teaching, skills students develop and ideas for the integration of research-informed teaching.

Study Well, Stay Well: An Exploration of the Relationship between Academic Skills Development and Student Wellbeing (2023)

Authors: Liam Claricoats

Departments, Directorates or Groups: Student Experience Teaching and Learning

Stage of the Student Lifecycle: Success (e.g. retention and attainment)

Type of evaluation evidence: Exploratory (evidence of a specific topic that could be used to design an intervention)

Link: https://shura.shu.ac.uk/31789/

Summary:
This review of the literature examined academic skill development and student wellbeing within a Higher Education context. This review was commissioned by the Study Well, Stay Well Working Group at Sheffield Hallam University. This is a cross institutional collaboration between the Skills Centre and Student Support Services, with the aim of increasing student mental wellbeing via academic skill development. Evidence provided from this literature review is intended to assist in developing a rationale for an intervention design and delivery, whilst also demonstrating approaches to evaluation and the identification of outcomes and measures. Upon review of this evidence and that gathered from Listening Rooms research, a Theory of Change will be co-designed with students and key stakeholders to support student wellbeing via the development of academic skills. This review initially explored the relationship between academic skill development and student wellbeing in Higher Education institutions. Additionally, specific academic skills emerged as being predominantly associated with improving mental wellbeing in the student population. Peer mentoring interventions were predominantly used within research, although, academic writing workshops and embedding wellbeing into the curriculum were also implemented. Very limited research has considered the impact of academic skill-based interventions for particular student groups; however, available research did indicate positive outcomes for these students' mental wellbeing. Lastly, the data gathering methodologies that were employed to evaluate the impact of these interventions are discussed, followed by key recommendations.

Evaluation of the Global Citizenship Portfolio (2020)
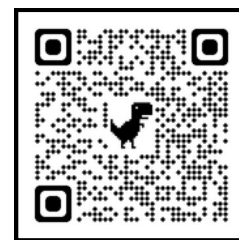
Authors: Alan Donnelly, Emily Houfe and Temi Labinjo

Departments, Directorates or Groups: Student Experience, Teaching and Learning, Student and Academic Services

Stage of the Student Lifecycle: Success (e.g. retention and attainment), Progression into employment and further study

Type of evaluation evidence: Empirical (evidence has been collected which reports that there have been changes in outcomes for those receiving an intervention)

Link: https://shura.shu.ac.uk/30365/

Summary:
This evaluation measured the impact of the Global Citizenship Portfolio (GCP), which is a non-credit bearing module at Sheffield Hallam University that aims to support students to become 'global citizens'. The GCP engages students in self-directed learning by combining: academic-run sessions; lectures; an intercultural experience which happens on campus, locally or abroad; and reflection. The evaluation was focused on the cohort of 78 students who started the module in October 2019 or January 2020 and completed it in May 2020. A mixed-methods project was conducted to provide quantitative and qualitative evidence from pre and post-module surveys and a sample of reflective journals. The findings of the evaluation highlighted that the GCP has had a positive impact on students' development in becoming 'global citizens'. Analysis of the data indicated that the majority of participants in the evaluation have demonstrated evidence of acquiring intercultural competencies, regardless of whether they undertook an experience 'at home' or abroad. This will help these students to engage with different value systems, communicate effectively across cultures and understand how their actions and those of others have global consequences. However, the drop in the number of respondents from the pre-module survey to the post-module survey might introduce a bias to the results of the evaluation. Recommendations are provided on the steps that can be taken to enhance the provision of the GCP and to increase the robustness of the evaluation.