

Deliverers or beneficiaries? A revolving cycle of widening participation (WP) opportunities for undergraduate students

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Overview

- REAP context and student ambassador evaluation
- A lifecycle approach to widening participation
- Student Ambassador profile and roles
- Training – current provision
- Student Ambassador motivations and revolving positions
- Informal learning versus training
- A revolving cycle of learning
- A lifecycle of learning outcomes
- The myth of the ideal student ambassador ...



A hybrid approach to OFFA evaluation

- The Researching Equity Access and Participation group is based in the Department of Educational Research at Lancaster University.

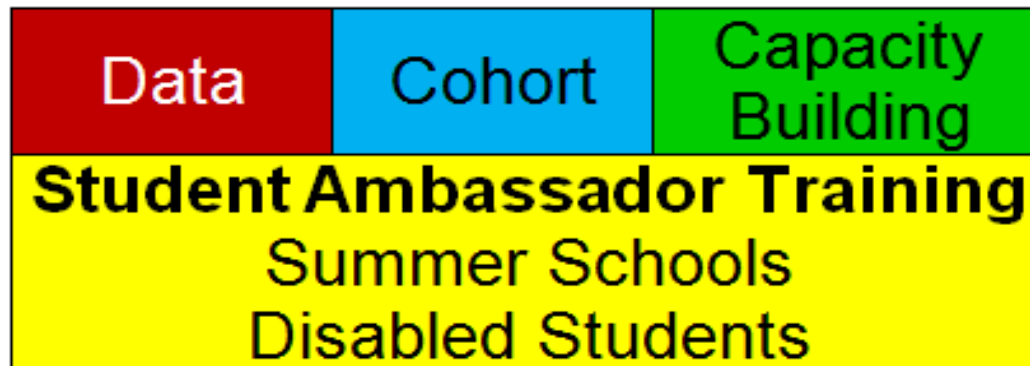
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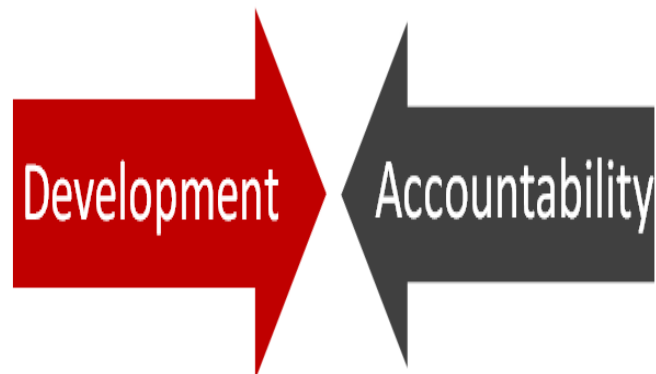


- Hybrid approach to evaluation

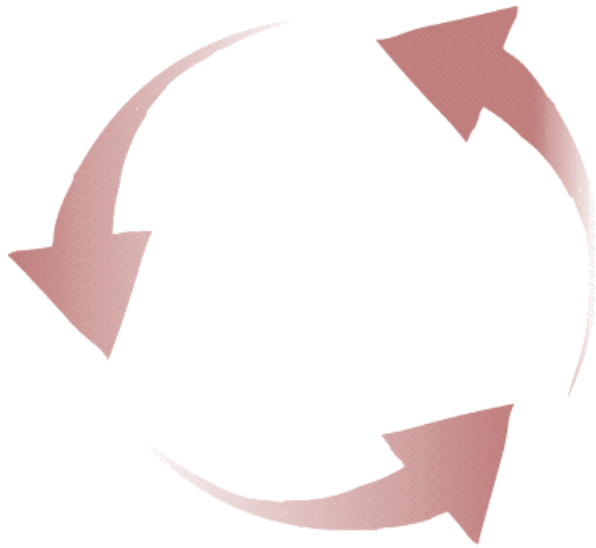


Student Ambassador Training

- How effective are LU OFFA activities in ensuring **graduate** progression by supporting students in preparing for transition into further study or employment?
 - ✓ Observation of training sessions
 - ✓ Interviews and focus groups ‘conversations with a purpose’
 - ✓ Review of training materials



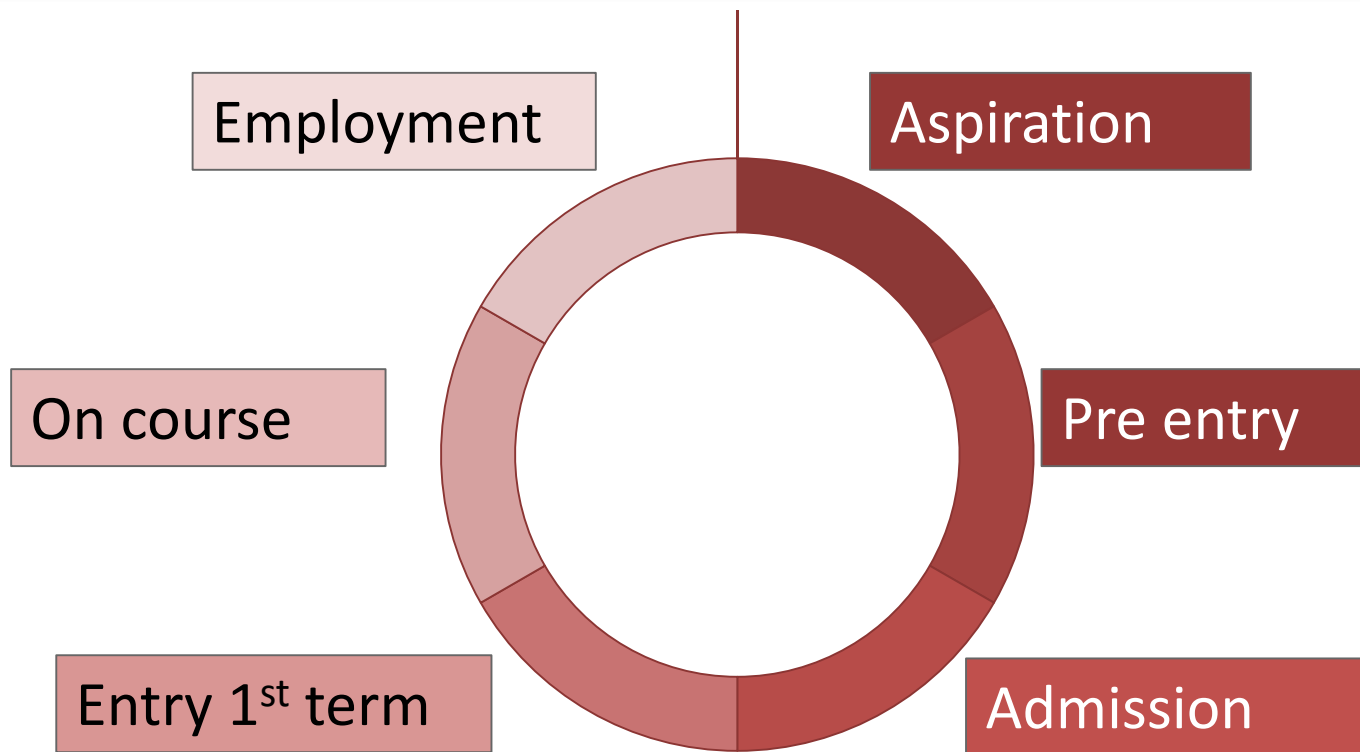
A life cycle approach to WP



“We need to take a whole lifecycle approach to all of these challenges, looking across access, retention, attainment and progression from HE.”

(White Paper, 2016:55)

Student lifecycle



The Dearing Report (1997) simultaneously acknowledged the importance of work experience while also stating that ‘...wider support and guidance for students which enables them to focus their attention fully on their learning’ (Chapter 8.4).

Student Ambassadors (SAs)

- Over 70% of SAs at Lancaster fall within a WP category.
- Paid and voluntary opportunities
- Majority of students start their role in either 1st or 2nd year and participate throughout their studies.
- Opportunities are advertised by application throughout the year. These include:
 - Taster days / Day visits
 - Supporting residentials
 - Mentoring
 - School projects
 - Tour guides

Student Ambassadors and staff at 'Campus in the City'



Roles



- Student
- Teacher
- Mentor
- Friend
- Peer
- Leader
- Team member
- Guide
- Coach
- Colleague
- Staff
- Individual
- Group member
- Representative
- Student-staff

SAs “occupy a position
between the teachers
and students”
(Ylonen, 2010: 101).

Formal training

Core workshops:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Managing behaviour, conduct and expectations
- LU Key facts and HE

Features

- Held once per term
- 1 Hour workshops
- Compulsory for all SAs each year

Plus:

- Activity briefings
- Project specific training
e.g mentoring, buddies
workshops

Motivations over the lifecycle



Long-term

- Confidence
- Public speaking
- Presentation
- Employability
- Money

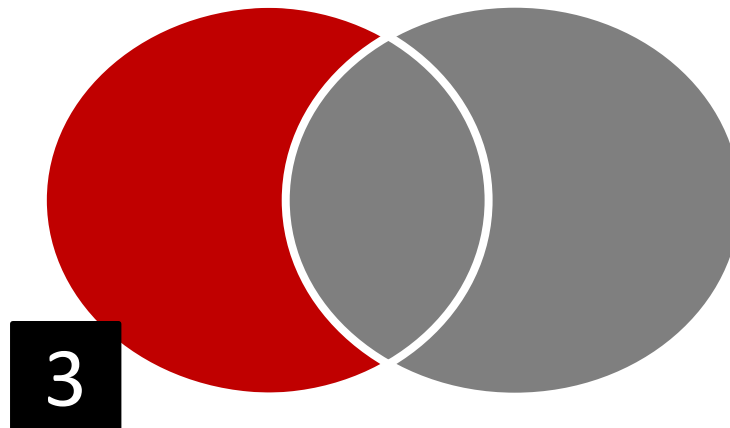
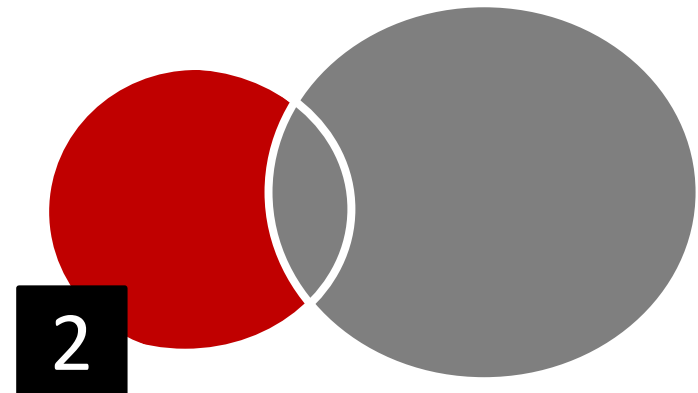
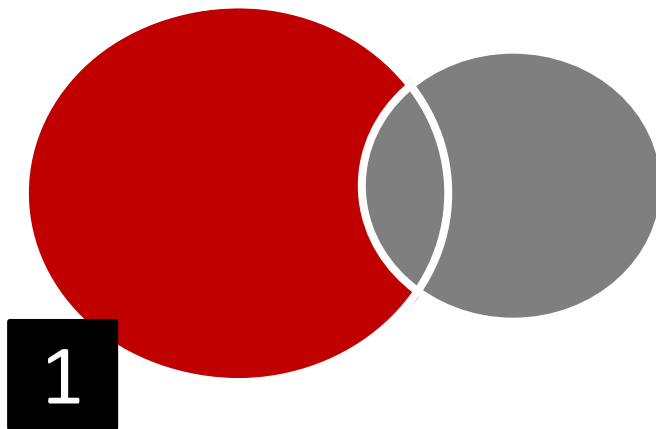
Short-term

- Employability
- Money

“It would appear that although the criteria for becoming a SA describes a certain type of personality, the image of the ideal student ambassador is perhaps a bit of a myth. The reality is likely to be much more complex”

Revolving positions ...

- Individually and across the life cycle



Beneficiary

Deliverer

Informal learning

- Peer learning
- Active problem based learning
- Deliverer or Beneficiary or ?
- Mentor or coach or?

**It's a 'baptism of fire'.
Always someone around
that has done it before.**

Difference between training and reality – we recognise new SAs and say right now the trainings been done do you know what you're doing? No? right let's go to the bar and we'll talk about what really happens...

Training versus learning

- Preparation for good quality information, advice and guidance



- Experience SA become a hot source of information for other SA

“because you’re a few years older, you can talk from experience and give them an anecdote rather than giving them something you’ve just learnt off a piece of paper or read in a handbook.”

Revolving cycle of learning

Bruner's Spiral Curriculum

Q. How can 'training providers' ...

- enhance the learning experience for SA who have attended the training before?
- build awareness of the benefits i.e. prepare SA who have not yet delivered activities?



Training connections to ...

Approaches to learning (Marton & Säljö):

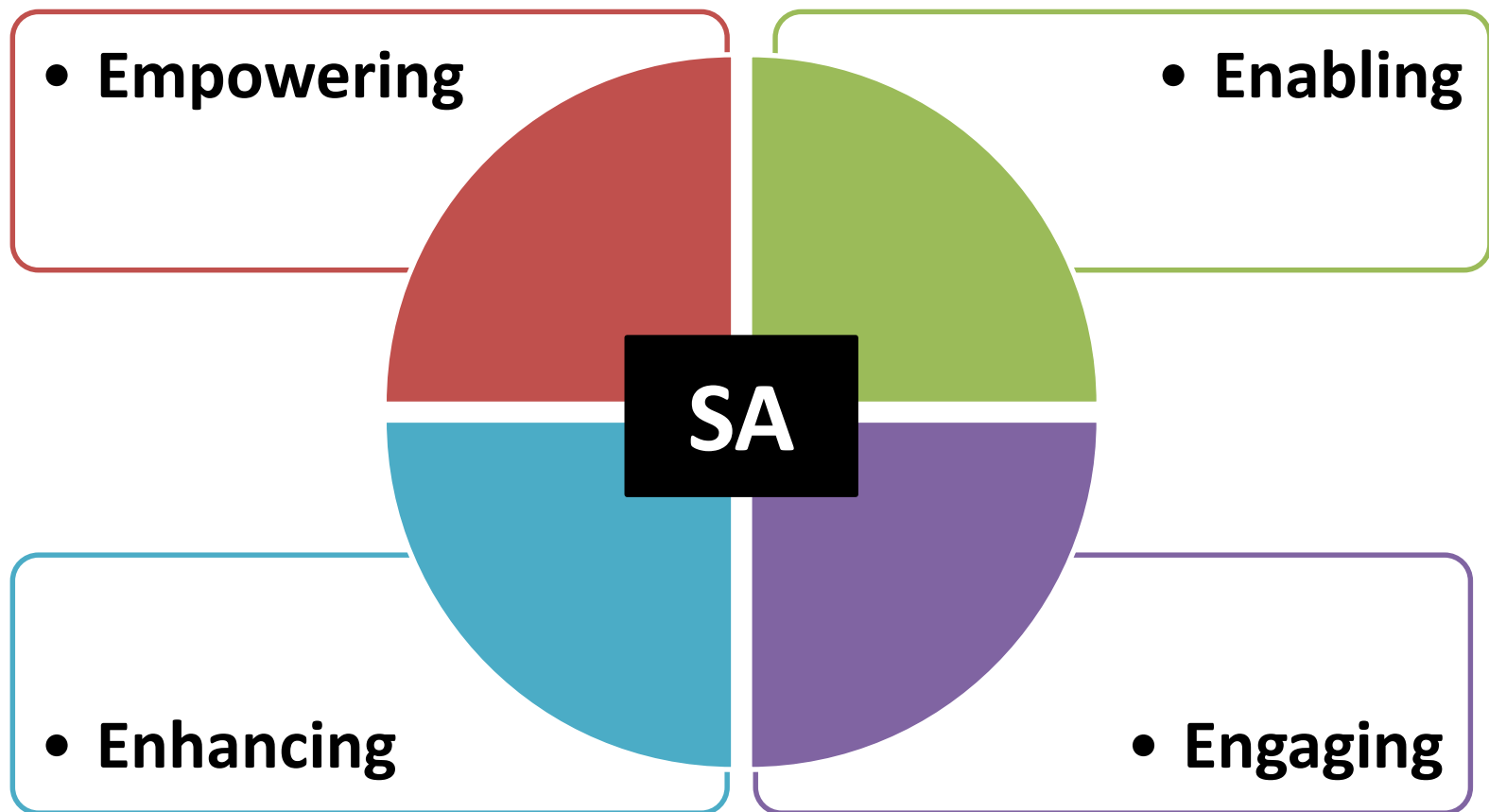
- Surface learning
- Strategic learning
- Deep learning

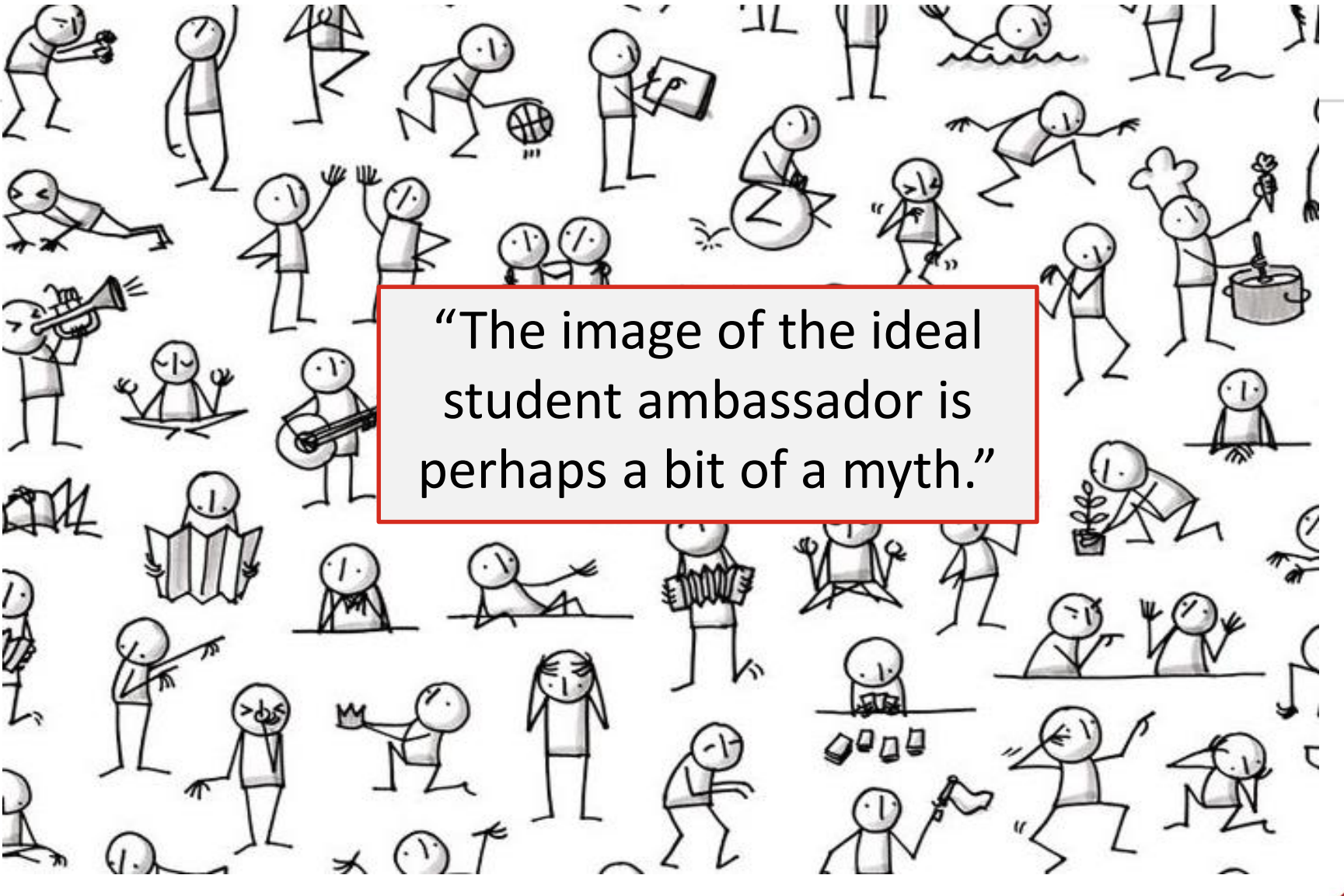
Features relating to:

- Ownership of learning
- Timing of training
- Motivation of student
- Short-term v. long term SAs
- Context

A lifecycle of learning outcomes

- Influence of training and experience of being a SA





“The image of the ideal student ambassador is perhaps a bit of a myth.”

Questions and Comments



Further information

The evaluation is funded by Lancaster University OFFA funding, it forms part of the Office for Fair Access Evaluation is conducted by the Researching Equity, Access and Participation (REAP) team in the Educational Research Department at, Lancaster University.

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