

European First Year Experience Conference 2019

Engagement Through Partnership: Students as Partners in Teaching and Learning

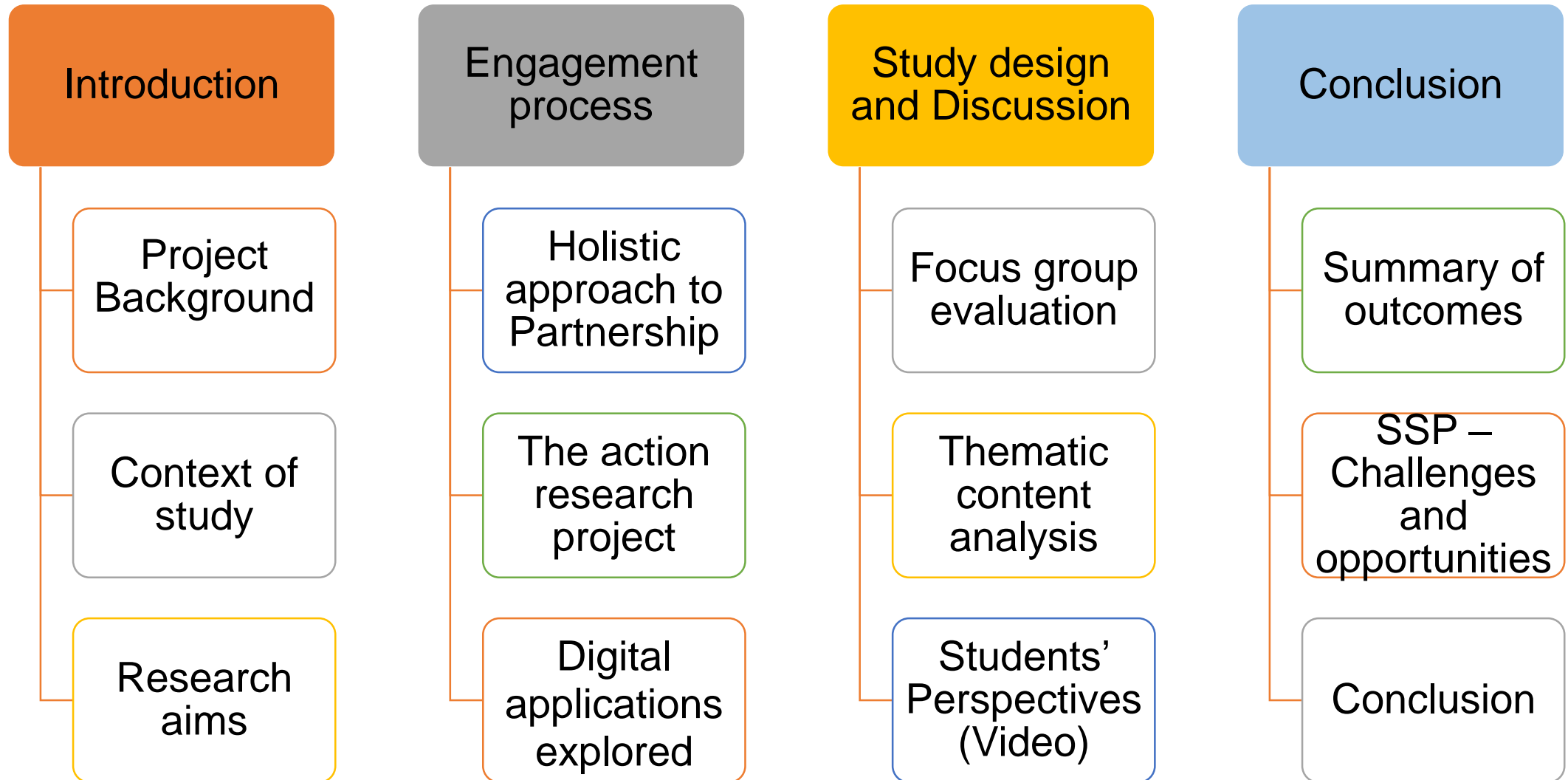
In the context of digital literacy skills development

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Overview



Project Background

As part of a postgraduate teaching qualification assessment, it was necessary to **review the curriculum design** of a 1st year undergraduate module **for possible weaknesses**.

The **instructions** were to:

1. **evidence** any **weaknesses** identified using an **action research approach**;
2. and implement a **transformative change**.

A **key weakness** was **identified** in relation to:

- a **module learning outcome** that emphasised on **developing students' digital literacy skills**.

The **contexts** in which students' **digital literacy skills** can be-

- developed or the resources to be used for this purpose;
- **was not clearly defined** in the module curriculum.

Context of study - Students as Partners for curriculum delivery

One of the many approaches to curriculum delivery is to:

engage students as partners (SaP) in the co-delivery of the curriculum through student-staff partnership (SSP).

(Bovill et al., 2011; Healey et al., 2014)

SSP for curriculum delivery can be traced in a number of contexts including:

Involving students in the teaching and learning processes through –
contents curation, co-creation, course design or pedagogical planning processes.

(McCulloch, 2009; Bovill, Cook-Sather and Felten, 2011)

Context of study – Co-creation using digital application



- Research studies on the use of technology in higher education (HE) suggests using digital applications in the classroom to create e-learning materials since it:
- Enables learners' to make use of web enabled devices to truly enhance their learning;
- Hones learners' digital literacy skills;
- Allows educators to personalise teaching learning;
- Assist educators to track individual student achievements (Curtis, 2014).

Context of study- curriculum delivery through co-creation

Higher Education (HE) students today are most likely to use a web-enabled device with access to digital applications to avail e-learning materials.

However, relatively few students can claim to be creators or producers of e-learning materials using digital applications (Jones, et al., 2012)

According to Neary et al., (2013) educators can partner with students to co-create digital materials to support curriculum delivery in the classroom.

Applying this form of an initiative will provide a scope to the teachers to : _____

Design and deliver a curricula that promotes digitally enriched learning environment.

Provide learners' with the opportunity to develop their digital literacy skills to survive in a digitally connected world (Terrel, 2017).

Research aims

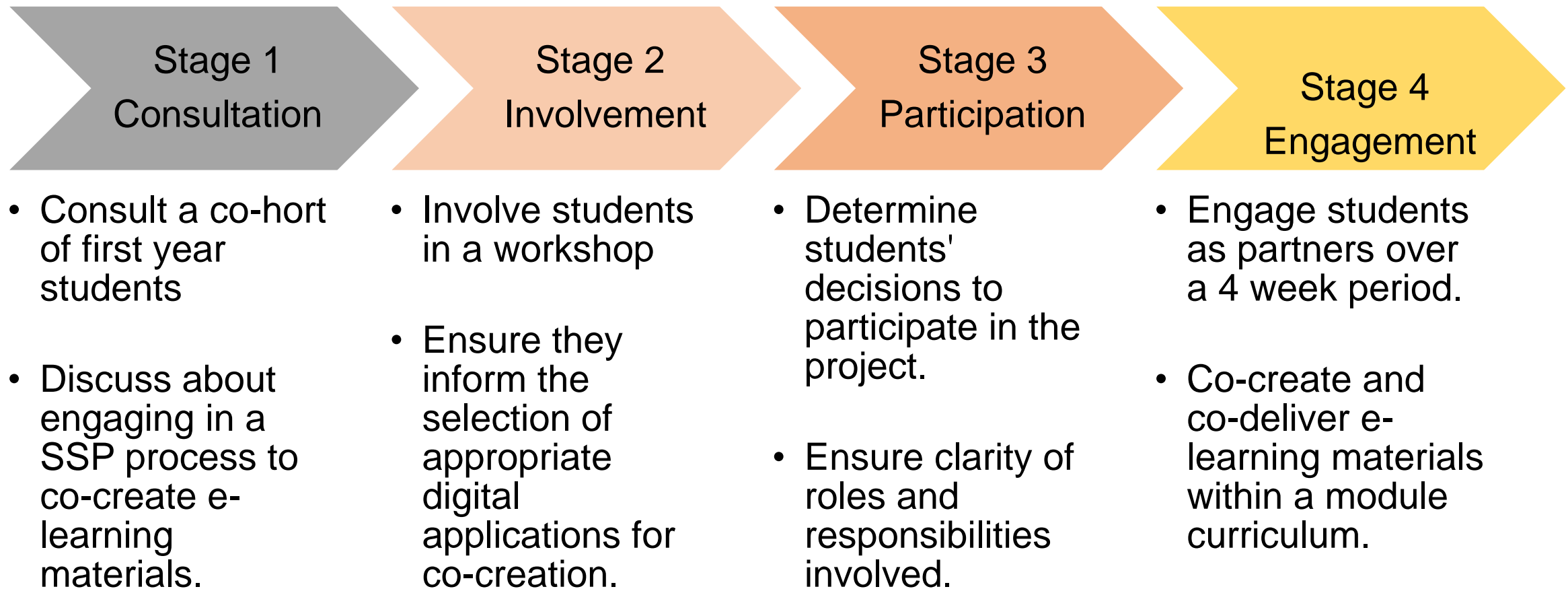
The following aims were set to address the weaknesses identified in the module curriculum

➔ **Evaluate the benefits and limitations of SSP as a facilitator of:**

Students' digital literacy skills development through co-creation using digital applications.

Enhancing student engagement.

Holistic approach to Partnership- 4 Stages



Healey et. al., (2014)

The Action Research Project

Research design:

Action research for work-based learning over a period of 4 weeks (Millwood et al., 2008)






Student partners involved:

35 first year (HE4) students undertaking a BA (Hons) degree in Accountancy.

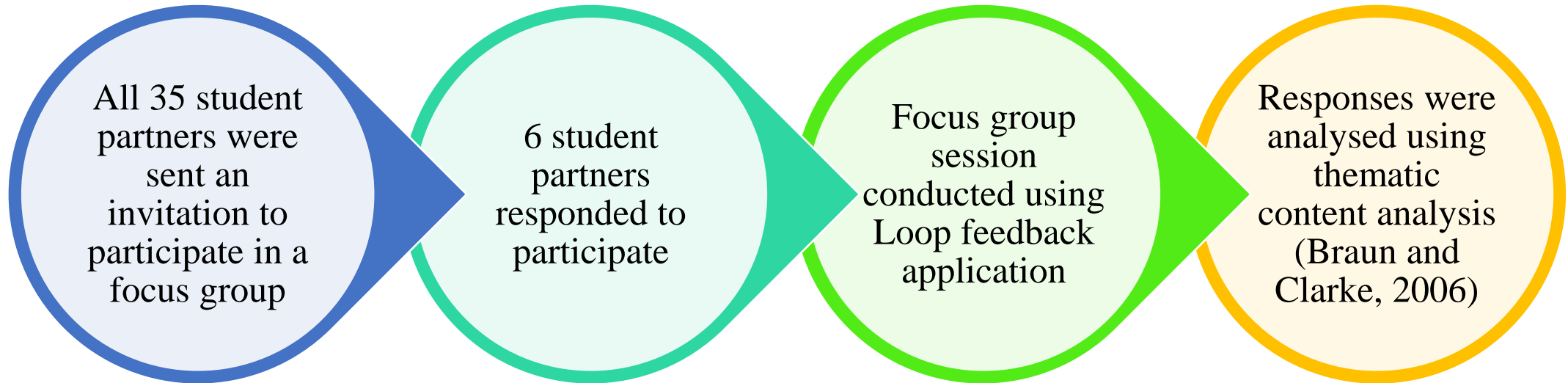
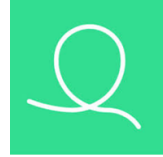
Digital applications explored:



The 4 week engagement process

Weeks	SSP engagement processes	Outcomes
1 	Curation of online resources using Sutori for storytelling	Database of online resources for flipped learning.
2 	Design infographics for group discussion	Compilation of infographics for curriculum delivery.
3 	Creation of short length topic related educational videos	Selection of online videos co-created by students for curriculum delivery.
4  	Co-delivery of a lecture session using Prezi to present and Kahoot for game based formative assessments	Extended the skills and awareness's of learners about curriculum development process.

Evaluation – Week 5



Results – 4 key themes identified

SSP for enhancing
student
engagement

SSP for digital
literacy skills
development
through co-creation

Benefits of SSP for
first year student
engagement

SSP for research
and inquiry skills

Students' perspectives



Summary of outcomes

SSP enables a lecture to be imparted in a more relaxed and collaborative environment.

SSP makes the class academically engaging and improves student participation.

Engaging students in curriculum delivery through co-creation of e-learning materials can promote active student engagement in a class.

Using digital applications for co-creation can enable students to improve their digital literacy skills by enhancing their confidence in using technology for learning.

SSP -Challenges and opportunities

Challenges	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The success of a SSP project is based on excellent and constructive communication between both parties.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provides scope to learn mutually through peer collaboration by overcoming any barriers to express concerns and asking questions more confidently.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Difficulty in overcoming the power hierarchy barrier between staff and students.• Students may perceive staff members as peers who must be treated with utmost respect.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It can change the sense of belonging and university experience for students through active engagement and staff-student collaboration.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Finding the time in the curriculum to engage in SSP initiatives since it can be resource and time intensive.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It can assist in improving communication between staff and students.

Conclusion

- ✓ SSP proved to be effective as an approach for enhancing student engagement.
- ✓ SSP provided an collaborative platform for exploring digital applications in the curriculum for co-creation of e-learning materials.
- ✓ Embedding digital applications in the curriculum for co-creation and delivery could assist in digital literacy skills development processes of learners.

Future recommendations

- Conduct another cycle of action research to gather further empirical data to support the rationale for using digital applications for co-creation to develop students' digital literacy skills.
- Undertake a systematic review of SSP literature to navigate around the power hierarchy issues to make the process of partnership more evocative.

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