

# A roadmap of cross-faculty innovation and collaboration

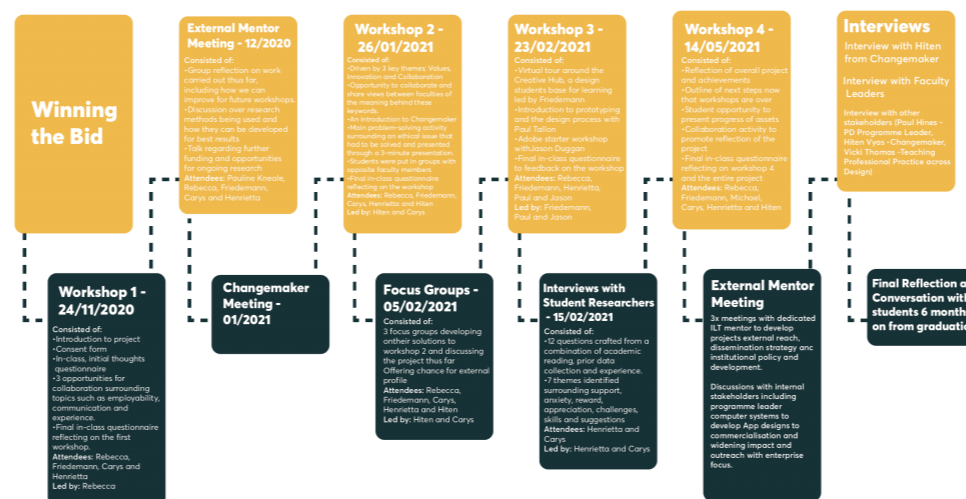
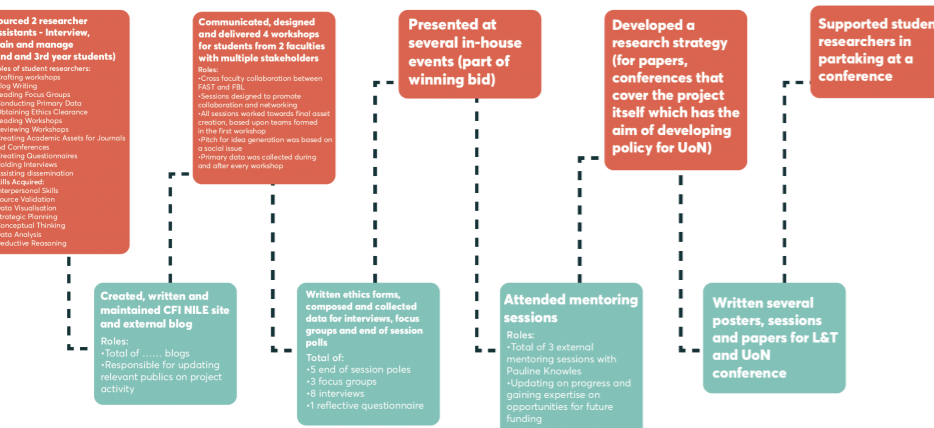
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## Introduction

Product Design and Entrepreneurship students have partaken in a year long cross-faculty innovation project (FAST-FBL) funded by the Institute of Learning and Teaching (ILT). The project demonstrates enhancing the delivery of the current Changemaker Certificate, which is an employability initiative developed by the University of Northampton. The learning for students included scheduled workshops with the possibility of new venture creation based on the new product development (NPD) methodology, student networking and applying their soft skills in a new context. Four workshop tasks (Enterprise, innovation and you, enterprise development, prototyping and venture articulation) were developed for this project and visualised in a roadmap. This project is advancing learning and teaching as a year-long inter-faculty student experience due to multiple touchpoints, activities and development of 'changemaker' competencies and social innovation.

## Method

The project has deployed collaborative methods of working together, namely problem tree exercise, exploring the causes and effects of a problem, Gamestorming, Visual Thinking, and an introduction to prototyping of screen-based applications using 'wireframes' and user experience design tools for mobile apps. The collaborative learning for students was over four (online) facilitated workshops with the possibility of new venture creation based on the new product development (NPD) methodology, students' networking and applying their soft skills in a new context. The project team included 18 BA Business Entrepreneurship students, matched by 18 BSc Product Design students, two student researchers and two senior academics involved in the workshop facilitation.



## Process

The aim of the workshop series was to support students to develop their employability skills whilst embracing social innovation. This has been facilitated through engaging the students in social innovation in the context of learning, fostering student's abilities in terms of communication, networking, presentation, and team-building skills. In addition, the workshop series provided the possibility for start-up ventures and of gaining insightful experience by means of collaborating with staff and students with different sets of expertise and visualised in the roadmap diagram. Together, in five cross-faculty teams the students practiced social innovation, co-creation, and prototyping, by creating design proposals, storyboards, and wireframes - resulting in apps, products and services that are going to address the big social issues.

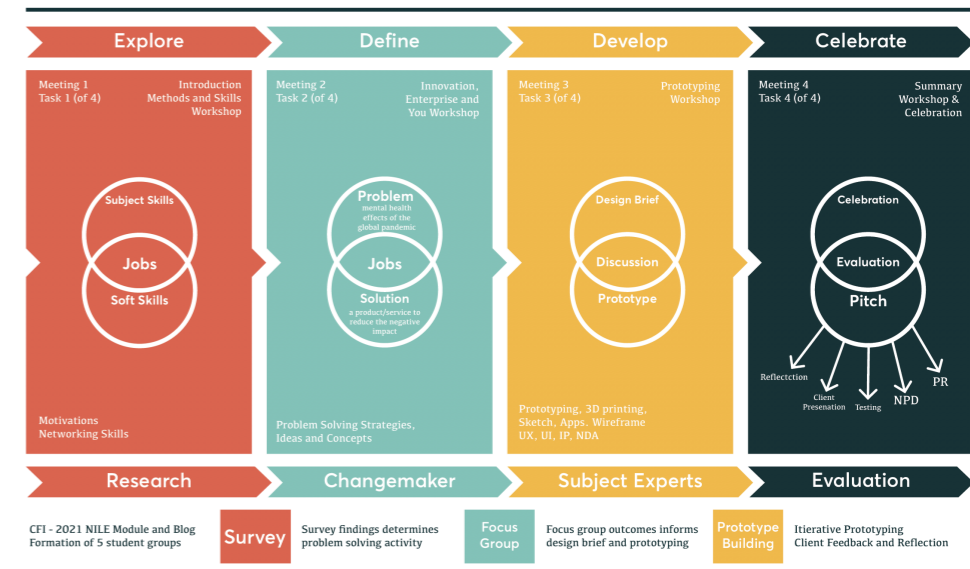


The project synthesis change practices at this UK university, by demonstrating an iterative model using a visual road map of learning journey. Building upon two frameworks of (collaborative) innovation processes - i.e. the startup navigator of St Gallen University (Grichnik & Hess, 2020) and the UK Design Council's Double Diamond Design Process (Ball, 2019), the project team developed, working remotely, a visual way to show the differing aspects of the project, in the form of an infographic, featuring steps taken during the collaborative innovation project and the feedback loops.

## Findings

Quantitative and qualitative forms of student evaluation were collected via opinion polls (survey) across all 4 workshops. Student feedback received was positive, with support of cross-faculty development within the university. Students were offered the opportunity to develop an online profile linked to the external facing blog. This is used to showcase the ongoing work with the intention of uncovering potential employment opportunities. Samples of student feedback: "Provided the chance to engage with students from the other faculty", "Communication is key for finding a job. This has made me more comfortable working with others." and "Solving a problem or solving an issue I am trying to move out from my angle and see it from another person's perspective."

### Cross Faculty Innovation Roadmap Embedding changemaker skills and social innovation into Design student learning



## Conclusion

The project activities resulted in a dedicated NILE Organisation Module, the co-creation of app prototypes that address the decline of mental health in students during lockdown and student's recognition of their own personal growth and development of working with other disciplines. The project explores the enterprise and innovation facilitation, informs 'Changemaker' competencies and proposes an iterative model of collaboration for other faculties and universities to consider.