# Rising to the challenge of student co-production of services

# Hello!



Then…

- Head of policy at NUS

- Director of the Student Engagement Partnership

- MRes at University of Lancaster in HE research, evaluation and enhancement

Now…

- Director of Policy at the University of Bedfordshire
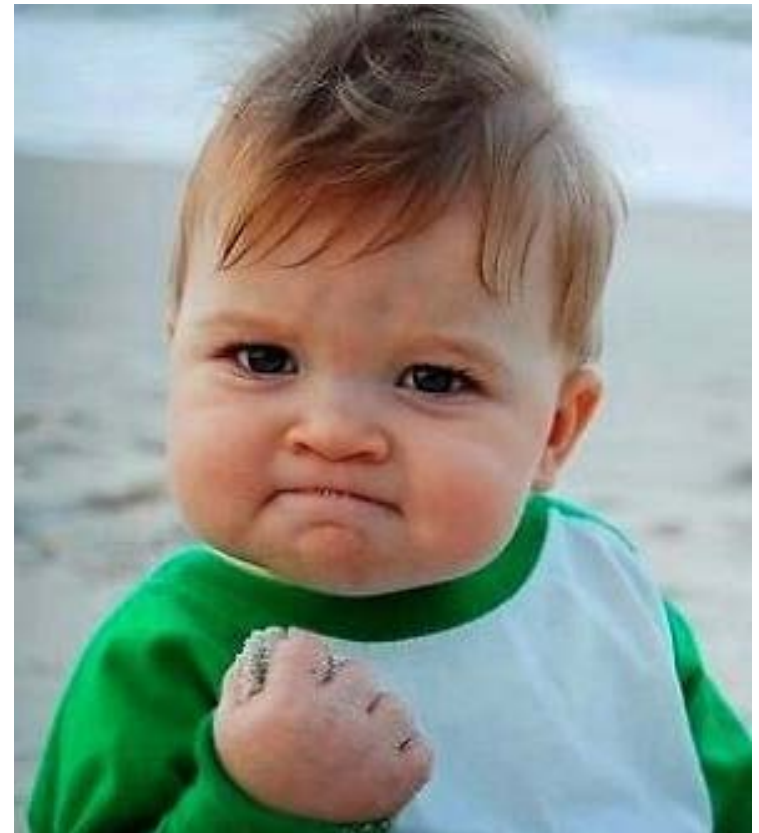
# Why?



Services attuned to student needs and experiences – efficient and cost-effective

Change processes become explicit and negotiated – fosters practitioner development

Gains for students involved – experience of participation in change with consequences for self-efficacy and change agency in the future

Political/democratic value of participative forms of service design and delivery – sends a wider message about valuing student voices

# Values

"Authorising student perspectives is not simply to include them in existing conversations within existing power structures. Authorizing student perspectives means ensuring that there are legitimate and valued spaces within which students can speak, re-tuning our ears so that we can hear what they say, and redirecting our actions in response to what we hear"

A.Cook-Sather, 2002.

# Challenge

Moving from concept to practice ('that's all very nice but can you give me an example of where it is working really well? )

Students don't always want to play – especially those with low social capital

Challenge to established cultures and practices (many of which work rather well)

Resource scarcity and leadership buy-in

Low confidence among staff

# Examples

Student participation in project oversight and working groups to deliver new library

Peer-assisted learning (PAL)

Extraordinarily high level of direct contact between learning resource staff and students

Use of student support processes to gather feedback and insight

Libraries - 24/7/365

# Start

How explicit are we about service design processes?

➢ Research

➢ Professional networks insight

➢ Intelligence from users

➢ Working (negotiating) with IT/estates/academics/management

➢ Pilot testing/Roll out/implementation

➢ Evaluation

➢ The micropolitics

# Partnership

1. Project definition and goals
2. Process design
3. Delivery
4. Evaluation

➢ Sound evidence
➢ Clarity of expectations
➢ Accountability
➢ Recognition framework
➢ Valuing of different views and voices
➢ Developmental process – reflection

# SU



Crucial to process but not a panacea

Political representatives and leaders of students not the sole voice of all students, especially the less-engaged

Role needs to be negotiated and thought through, not co-opted – there should be benefits on both sides
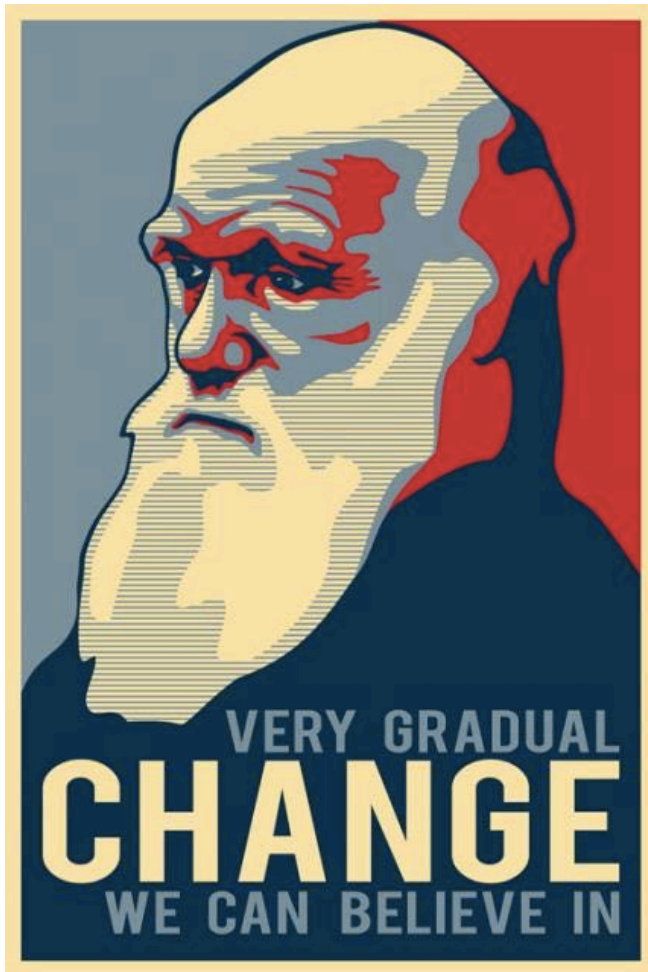
Will have valuable insights on 'what works' in your context

Mutual learning potential eg on working with mature and part-time students

# Options


VERY GRADUAL CHANGE WE CAN BELIEVE IN

Evolution, not revolution

Try one thing and make it work, don't assume you need a strategy or grand plan

Go with the grain

Lower expectations

Get proof of concept

Build enthusiasm

Encourage students to try things

Use digital