

QMU Learning and Teaching Framework

QMU has a Strategic Plan, which sets out our Vision, Mission, Strategy and Values, indicating that “we will aspire to be:

- Ambitious, confident and inspiring to instil staff and students with a sense of belonging to the QMU community.
- Committed to social justice, recognising equality and diversity in all that we do.
- Excellent in research, teaching and knowledge exchange.
- Supportive and enterprising.
- Focused on meeting the needs of students, staff, employers and our communities.
- Committed to all forms of sustainability.
- A university without borders that embraces partnership working with the local, national and international communities.”

These values and aspirations are translated, in the QM150 Strategy, into a high level plan for how we intend to develop over the next few years. The 3 sub strategies (Student Experience, Research & Knowledge Exchange, International) list more specific actions we are taking in order to achieve the strategy. The Student Experience Strategy has targets for our strategic aims in learning, teaching and the student experience. Figure 4 below maps current actions in the Student Experience Strategy to the different aspects of the L&T Framework.

What we have not put in writing so far is what all of this means for our approach to learning and teaching across the University. We espouse a commitment to student-centred learning, but what does that mean in practice? The term appears frequently in strategy papers, external-facing documents, such as our ELIR Reflective Analysis, in validation and review documents, and in discussions between colleagues.

This paper seeks to articulate what a student-centred approach means in the QMU context. We have a broad understanding that being student-centred means that we try to design and facilitate educational experiences around what the students need, rather than just, for example, what we want to teach. The paper drills down to the particular learning and teaching methods and activities this involves. While the concepts used in the framework below can all be referenced in the literature, the paper does not attempt to cover the theoretical basis of our approach, but, rather, to identify the implications for learning and teaching.

Why a QMU L&T Framework?

Why should we attempt to write down our QMU L&T framework? Arguably, it is a shared value which is so implicit that it needs no articulation. But there are some advantages to a written statement:

- it gives us a common reference point when discussing our approach at different levels and for different purposes, both internally and externally (Eg for ELIR or for Validation and Review).
- new colleagues can be introduced to the framework at induction, and don't need to guess at how we expect L&T to be done.

- a version of the L&T framework could help students understand how, and why, we put effort into teaching them in certain ways.
- our academic development work (such as staff development workshops) can be framed around the framework.
- resource decisions can be informed by the framework: see illustrations of implications for learning and technologies (Figure 2) and planning of learning spaces (Figure 3) below. The circular, connected nature of aspects of the framework means that prioritisation of, for example, learning and technologies, would require follow-up discussions. However, the framework provides guidance on such priorities.

So the framework gives us a language for discussing learning and teaching, which can provide underpinning for curriculum design, staff development, and infrastructure planning.

The Framework

Student-centredness is at the centre of our thinking and practices (see Figure 1), and has many different facets. The QMU take on this could be characterised by five key aspects¹:

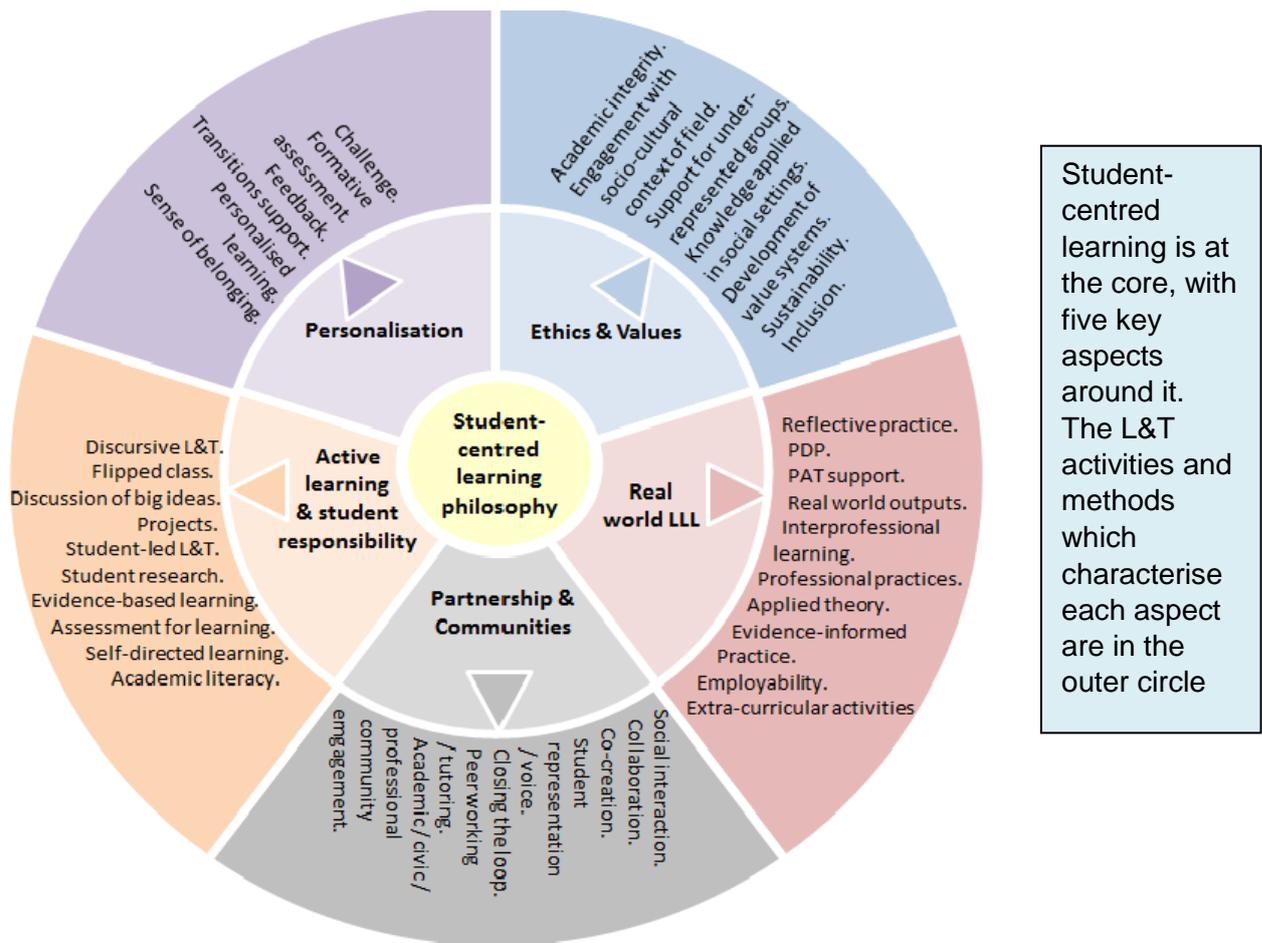
1. Ethics & Values
2. Active learning & student responsibility
3. Partnership & Communities
4. Real world Life-Long Learning (LLL)
5. Personalisation.

These five interlinked aspects (middle circle of Figure 1) are necessarily complex, with overlaps and possible tensions. They will manifest differently in different subject areas. Given these caveats, the overarching framework needs to be translated by programme teams into their particular context. Nonetheless, the five aspects will be present in all programmes.

What L&T behaviours do these five aspects of our L&T approach imply? This is depicted in the outer circle of Figure 1. If, for example, we aim to encourage Active Learning and Student Responsibility, the linked L&T activities or methods are likely to include, inter alia:

- a discursive approach to teaching
- projects
- student research
- problem-based learning (PBL).

¹ The five key aspects have been distilled from strategy documents, particularly the Student Experience Strategy (see Figure 4). The aspects are open to debate, but an attempt has been made to keep the number of aspects low.



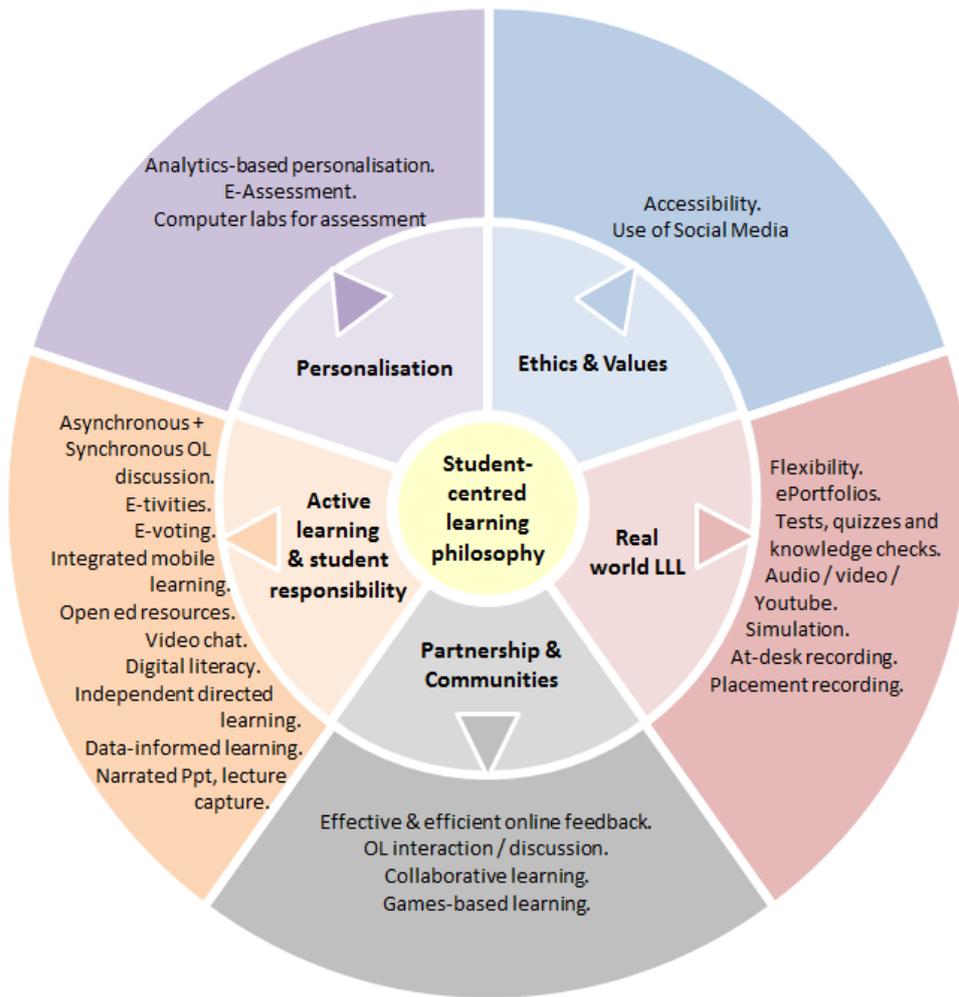
Student-centred learning is at the core, with five key aspects around it. The L&T activities and methods which characterise each aspect are in the outer circle

Figure 1: A QMU L&T framework

Is it, indeed, the case that staff at QMU teach, and students learn, within this paradigm? It would be unrealistic to assume that all modules in all programmes reflect this L&T framework. However, articulating what constitutes a QMU L&T framework may lead to greater consistency and more coherent curricula.

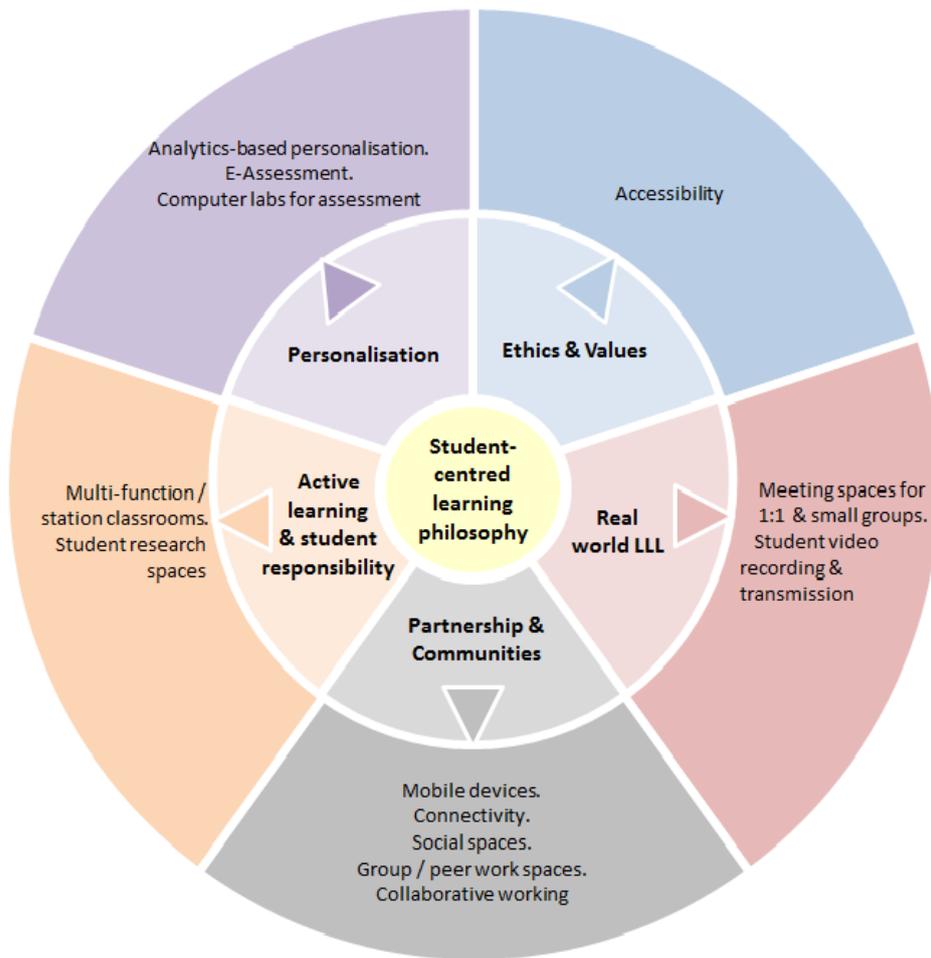
Next steps

1. Refer the framework to SABs.
2. Include the framework in appropriate documents.
3. Use to support curriculum development, eg validation and review, and also campus planning for learning and teaching.
4. Ask programme teams to use versions with students to help them understand the QMU approach to L&T, and what their learning process is likely to involve.



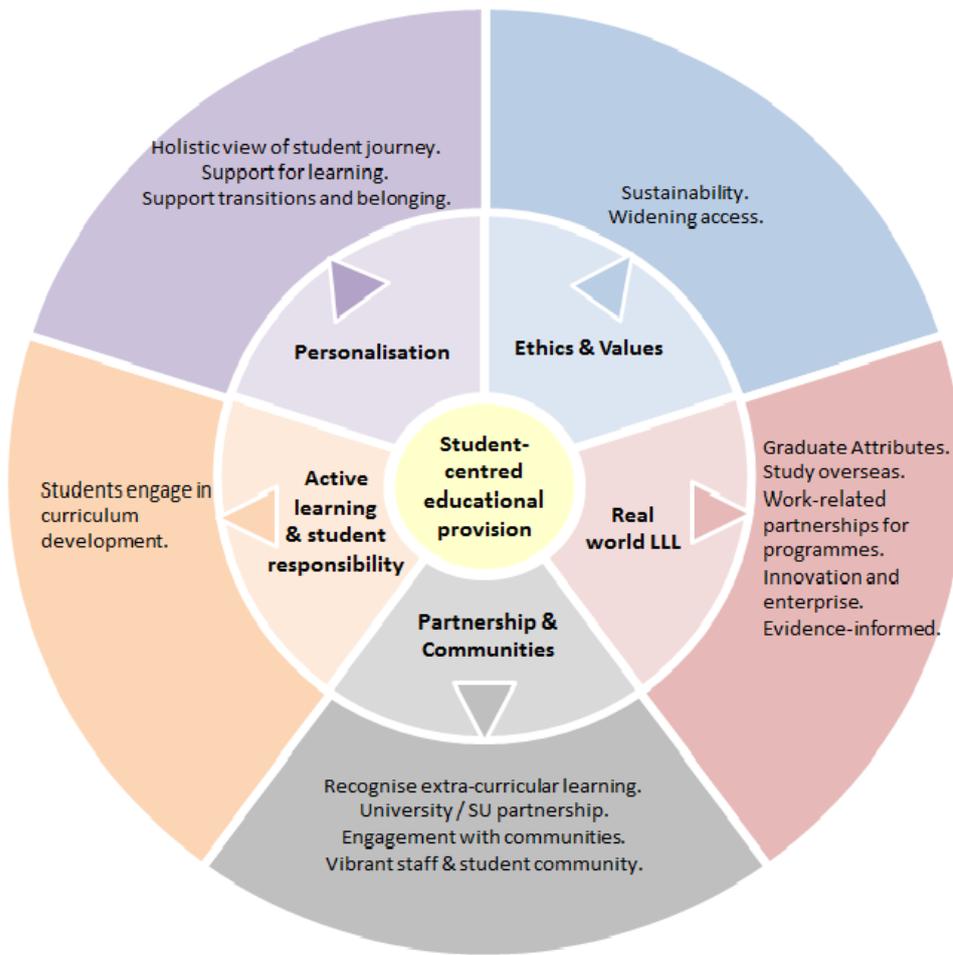
To explore the implications of our L&T approach for learning and technologies, the L&T behaviours in the outer circle have been replaced by a small sample of technology-enhanced learning activities

Figure 2: QMU L&T framework and learning technologies



To explore our L&T approach in relation to the development of learning spaces, the L&T behaviours in the outer circle have been replaced by a small sample of learning space implications

Figure 3: QMU L&T framework and Learning Spaces



To show links to the QMU Student Experience Strategy, the L&T behaviours in the outer circle have been replaced by SES actions

Figure 4: Linking the L&T framework to our Student Experience Strategy

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