

An unexpected journey: Which students engage with an extracurricular undergraduate research conference and what do the students present?

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AIM

- To discuss which students engaged in an extra-curricular undergraduate research (UR) conference.
- To highlight the significant points concerning what they chose to present.

BENEFITS OF UR

UR has been found to:

- Develop discipline specific skills [1, 2].
- Empower students as independent producers of knowledge [3].
- Give insight into, and appreciation of, staff practices [4, 5].
- Provide a liminal, transformative space to explore disciplinary [6].

THE CONFERENCE

The *JADE Student Learning Undergraduate Conference* (JSLUG), 1st June 2016.

- Unthemed, non-assessed conference open to all undergraduate students.
- No primary/empirical research required.
- Abstracts and posters published in *Keele's Journal of Academic Development and Education* (JADE).

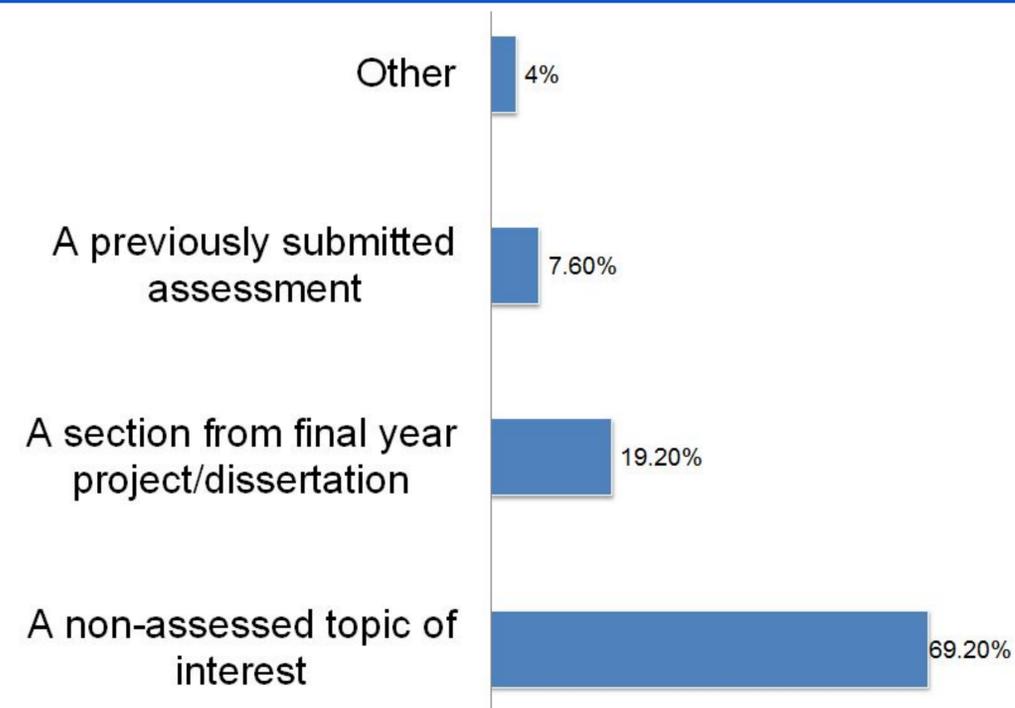
WHO PRESENTED AT JSLUG?

A total of 75 students attended JSLUG, either as presenters or audience members.

Key attendee demographics:

- 81.5% were from Levels 3, 4 and 5.
- 69% were female.
- 42% were from a BME background.
- 38% were mature students.
- 30% were non-EU international students.
- 29% disclosed a learning disability.
- 13.5% were from POLAR Quintile 1.

WHAT DID STUDENTS PRESENT?



Only 26.8% of presenters chose to present a piece of work previously used for assessment purposes.

KEY FINDINGS

- This UR conference was an effective vehicle in engaging underrepresented groups above institutional benchmarks.
- 73% of all student presentations were on non-assessed topics. Only 27% of presenters re-used something previously assessed (dissertation, for example).
- JSLUG dispelled the researcher's expectation that this event would be primarily populated by dissertation students, as only 18.5% of all attendees were from Level 6.
- 94% of all audience members were from Level 3, 4 or 5.

CONCLUSIONS

This investigation acknowledges the published findings around the value of UR opportunities such as JSLUG.

Additionally, this project found that UR conferences can:

- Recruit 'hard to reach' students at disproportionate levels.
- Enable students to explore disciplines beyond summative assessments.

REFERENCES

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