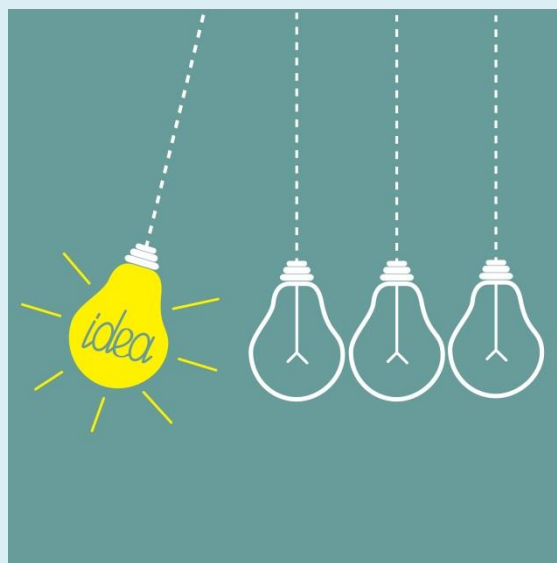


A Guide to Integrating Social Innovation into Higher Education Institution Curricula



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Introduction

The purpose of this guide is to provide educators with a detailed manual on how to integrate social innovation into designing modules for different learning programmes.

Rationale: This guide is a product of semi-structured interviews with educators (senior lecturers, course leader and academic practitioners) in the field of Business, Education, Healthcare and Acting/Performance at the University of Northampton (Please see Appendix A and B for further information). Educators at the University of Northampton, who have been involved with the Changemaker values, shared their experiences of incorporating social innovation into their teaching and mentoring practices. We share their experiences with you, in this guidebook.

Target group: Educators, lecturers, mentors and facilitators in Higher Education Institutions.

The scope: This guide addresses the following four areas –

- How to define social innovation in your higher education institution
- How engaging with social innovation can create opportunity for students
- Practical considerations when incorporating social innovation into higher education course curriculars
- How to embed social innovation into higher education curriculars
- Teaching and learning activities for curricula/faculty teams

Table 1 - The aim of integrating social innovation into Higher Education Institution curriculars



Foreword

One size does not fit all

As with most things - one size does not fit all. While there is undoubtedly much to learn and reflect on from others, embedding the theoretical and practical importance of social innovation into course curricula requires a more focused and individual approach. For example, could it be as straightforward embedding social innovation into a Podiatry course where students engage with work-based practical learning, as it would be to integrate social innovation into an Acting course where student predominantly learn a skill/discipline? Applying social innovation into course curricula involves collegial thinking, lateral thinking and social awareness both in and outside of the classroom.

Keep the wheel turning

Good practice ought to be celebrated and shared, integrating social innovation into course curricula is not necessarily about re-inventing the wheel but about steering it in the right direction. In moving towards incorporating social innovation in course curricula, it is important to consider socially innovative approaches that may already be part of the curricula – can minor adjustments be made? For example, are there learning objectives or outcomes already present in a course curricula content that could be amended to incorporate social innovation learning and development, and as a result, enrich the student experience?

Collaborative learning institution-wide

Working towards a joint goal - that of integrating social innovation in Higher Education Institutions is about perspective-taking and creating a supportive learning environment. Working together with a range of educators for example - teachers, mentors and various stakeholders from a variety of backgrounds is important for fostering a collaborative and positive ethos institution-wide. In sharing good practice and approaching social innovation integration in a collegial manner, social innovation begins.

“This notion of social innovation ... needs to be lived” (Senior Lecturer, The University of Northampton).

i. Session One: Define social innovation in your Higher Education Institution

The purpose of this section is to address the importance of defining social innovation in higher education curricula. Having a clear definition of social innovation as an institution, means that the concept can be more easily related to others in various disciplines and exciting multidisciplinary conversations can begin. Importantly, in defining social innovation as an institution, educators can then consider how this relates to their course curricula.



Below are some examples of defining social innovation in Higher Education:

*“One of the things I am interested in is a sort of enlightened interest of business in to **embrace its role in society and blended solutions** ...How do we bring together different agents in a blended solution to address those issues in a way that business will understand and charities will understand... So it is about **bringing dialogue** between the two” (Senior Lecturer and Course Leader, The University of Northampton).*

*“Social innovation for me is in that space of how we **bring different agents together** to address the growing, immediate social problems that austerity has created” (Senior Lecturer and Course Leader, The University of Northampton).*

*Sometimes it is not about something brand new but connecting up resources... It is pushing the next stage, not a brand new idea but **a solution** (Course Leader, The University of Northampton).*

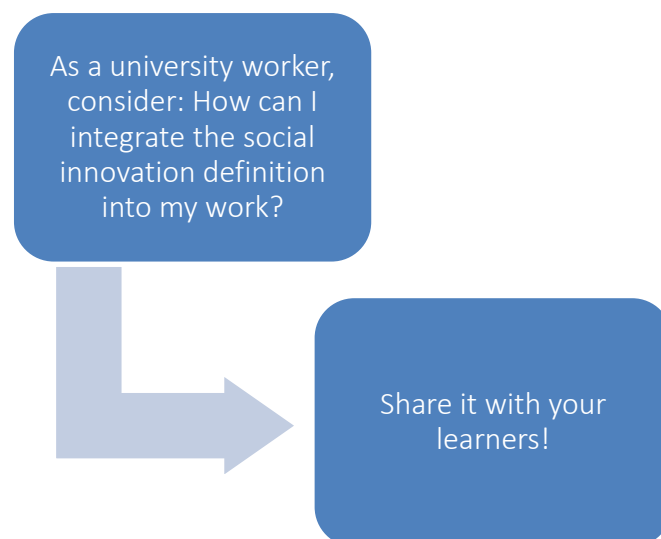
i.i. Integrate social innovation into the curricula:

Once social innovation has been defined institution-wide, this definition can serve as a blueprint for considering the day-to-day practicalities of incorporating social innovation into teaching and learning. By clearly articulating social innovation and its relationship to course content, learners can be introduced to the concept. Social enterprises provide and create many job opportunities and therefore

embedding social innovation into the course curricula is not only valuable for educational purposes and widening student perspectives, but for students' future career prospects. As educators in Higher Education Institutions, it is important to integrate social innovation into course curricula for the purpose of preparing students for future work and greater awareness of the changing political climate.

In communities there is often a level of unmet social need. By recognising and addressing this unmet need by creating student opportunities to develop work-based skills, students develop a much richer understanding of the value of their course while making positive social impact and giving back to

society. By identifying social need in the local community and providing students with opportunity to make a difference to the lives of others, staff can embed social innovation as a core value in their teaching and learning curricula.



Below are practical examples of integrating social innovation in Higher Education curricula:

*Looking at new ways and **responding to society's needs** in the widest sense of the word. It is also about accessibility and reaching isolated areas of the community and **new ways of doing things in a more efficient and useful/successful way** - often with less resources (Course Leader and Practitioner, The University of Northampton).*

*We try to bust myths [for example]... [SI] is about problem-solving and looking at different ways. It is about ... **social and moral responsibilities** (Course Leader, The University of Northampton).*

*What we say to our students is we are **about doing, not just talking** (Course Leader, The University of Northampton).*

***We're looking at future leaders and managers**, who initially want to have graduate employees and graduate level job but they also want to aspire I think to be leaders, managers,*

*entrepreneurs - **what type of leaders, managers and entrepreneurs can we generate for the future?** (Senior Lecturer, The University of Northampton).*

i.ii. Summary of Session One

Educators and mentors need to have a clear definition of SI and its relevance in today's society.

It is important to incorporate the learning and teaching of SI into relevant course information.

SI is an evolving and current topic of debate, curriculas need to take account of this

Students need to understand what SI is, and its relevance to their learning/course.

Educators need to consider the role of SI outside of the classroom for example, the role of SI in students' futures.

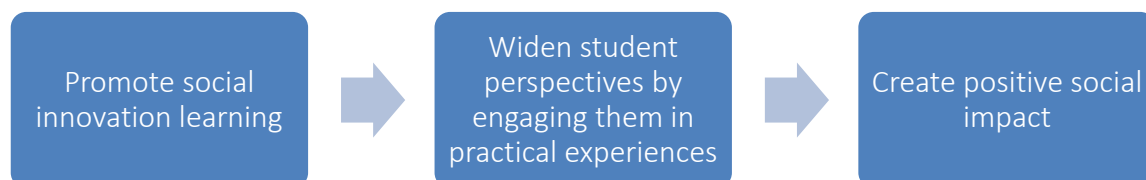
ii. Session Two: Create student opportunities

Creating both extra and in-curricula opportunities for students during their time in Higher Education Institutions is valuable in a number of ways. Knowledge of social innovation is a key component of this. Students have the potential to become future managers, workers and leaders in a variety of fields including creating positive changes for society. As a result, incorporating social innovation into teaching practices and creating opportunities for students to learn more about the value of social innovation, transpires as vitally important.

For some courses, it may be clear how to develop student opportunities around social innovation learning as they might be in work-based programmes working with the local community in a variety of

ways. For example, those studying education may work with local schools and minority groups; those learning about Health care may already be working with health providers and so on.

For others, in taught disciplines like Acting or Music Performance, creating student opportunity to become involved with social innovation may require creative thinking. For example, a music performance could be tailored to a specific local audience to promote inclusivity and awareness, or an Acting workshop could be run with a local group to tackle key issues: homelessness, ethnicity, disability etc.



Below are practical examples of how integrating social innovation in Higher Education curriculas can create opportunity for students:

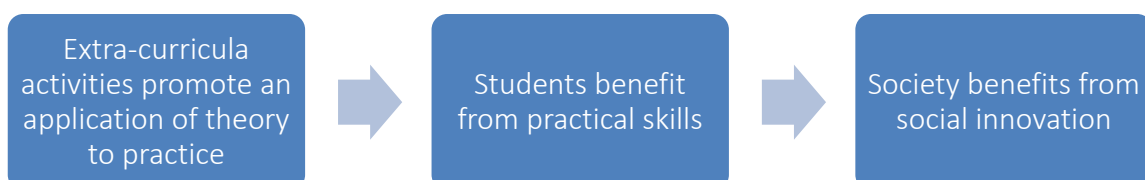
[Social innovation] is an important aspect for consideration especially in relation to students' future employment (Course Leader and Senior Lecturer, The University of Northampton).

I always ask staff how we can involve the students - I always ask the staff the ask themselves: 1. Is it going to add to our income? 2. Is it going to raise our [university] reputation/profile? 3. Is it going to add to the student experience? So that is how we approach things (Course Leader and Practitioner, The University of Northampton).

ii.i. The importance of extra-curricular activities to promote learning

In creating social innovation opportunities for learners, it is important for teaching staff at Higher Education Institutions to have external contacts with businesses, employers, various sectors (private, public, voluntary) and local communities and sharing them with learners. In this way, theory and practice can be integrated. This relationship between learners and external contacts can be mutually beneficial; learners can apply theory from the classroom into practice; and external contacts can share their experiences and develop a greater understanding of the relevance of theory and practice.

Extra-curricular activities add value to the student experience by helping students to think about their own futures, develop skills, consider their social impact and their ability to create socially innovative business solutions. By engaging students in social innovation both inside and outside of the classroom a win-win situation is created: students benefit from extra experience and knowledge, while society can benefit from socially-led innovation.



Below are practical examples of how Higher education staff can enhance the student experience by promoting extra-curricular opportunities for students:

*For the last 15 years we provide external consultancy to [external] universities; to their sports students. We have three consultancies with football teams. The other things: involvement with police forces. We're going into a primary school to talk about the profession... We've aligned that to their curricula. **There is lots of ways we work - prevention and awareness is very important** (Course Leader and Practitioner, The University of Northampton).*

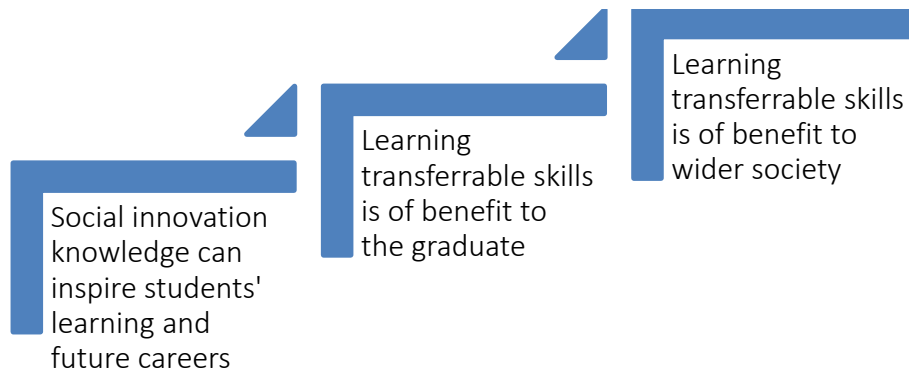
*We are **very fortunate that within our team** we have someone who runs a community interest company, another a creative therapy business – a social enterprise (Course Leader, The University of Northampton).*

*Through our students going on work-based learning **we have more than 125 contacts. Really as a university [it is about] being more philanthropic** (Course Leader, The University of Northampton).*

*We try to convey to our students life is not all about making money, it is about the bigger picture and... **putting something back and about being able to help society** (Course Leader and Practitioner, The University of Northampton).*

ii.ii. Student career opportunities

Social innovation in business is increasingly important, both as a more transparent and inclusive approach to business and a more accountable approach to profit distribution. As a result, there is great value in teaching students transferable skills for future employment opportunities. Following exposure to socially innovative practices, students may be able to secure employment in such sectors while becoming more socially aware in general.



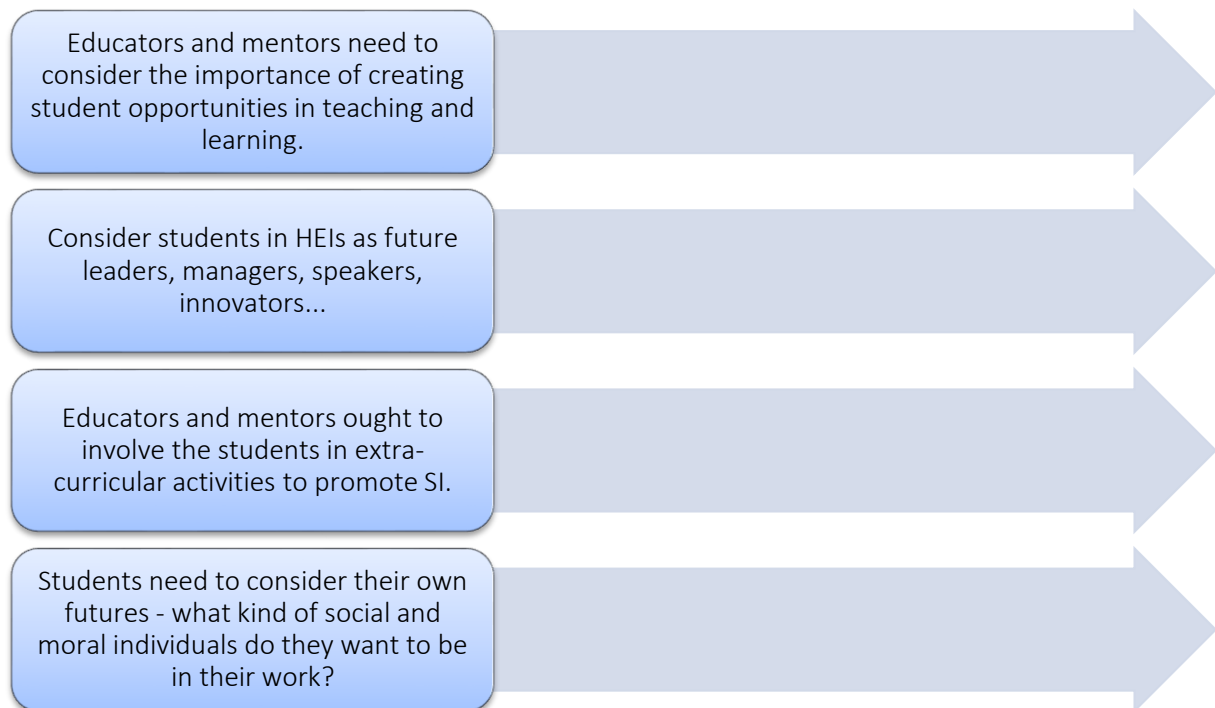
Below are practical examples of how extra-curricular activities can inspire student learning:

I try to raise student awareness, get them involved and get them to think how would they like to be managed and therefore how would they manage (Senior Lecturer, The University of Northampton).

*Several graduates have left and set up business around social enterprise, schools, behavioural units to support schools. **We have had a head start as our students have always been placed in those models of work** (Course Leader, The University of Northampton).*

*Business does not operate in a vacuum, it has to be conscious of external forces impacting on it and increasingly it has to be **conscious of its footprint in society** (Senior Lecturer, The University of Northampton).*

ii.iii. Summary of Session Two

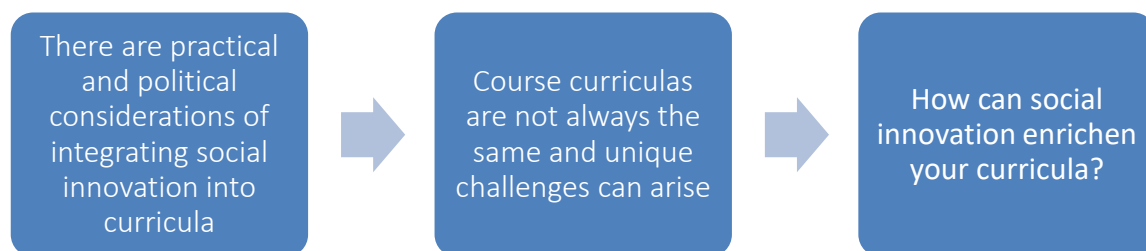


iii. Session Three: Practical and political considerations

Some degree courses at Higher Education Institutions are designed to teach students a discipline or a trade as their primary focus, for example, Plumbing, Electrical Engineering or Acting. As a result on first glance, social innovation is not a core focus. However, even in such cases where the purpose of a degree course is to teach a specific skill, teaching staff can find ways to embed the notion of social innovation given the value of social innovation for students' future employment opportunity and personal growth. Encouraging students to remain politically aware of how local, national and international policies could

affect their future work and life is deemed as crucial, given the changing landscape of jobs, opportunity and investment.

A further practical consideration relevant in several sectors are that cuts to sectors such as education and health, means that the leaders and workers of tomorrow need to think more broadly in terms of their future work opportunities. As a result, integrating social innovation into curricula can take many approaches - from teaching theory, practice, as well as a greater awareness of the changing political climate and how this affects the social world around us.



Below are practical examples of practical and political considerations in integrating social innovation into curricula:

*[Social innovation] **important aspect for consideration especially in relation to students' future employment** (Course Leader and Senior Lecturer, The University of Northampton).*

*So **business needs to find ways to support and address the social problems/ills** out there... that space is what I call in the broadest terms social innovation (Course Leader and Practitioner, The University of Northampton).*

*Responsible business or **good corporate citizenship** is a major theme in the way I teach (Course Leader, The University of Northampton).*

*Many of the local services that used to be run by local authorities or big institutions like **education service, have been cut, reduced or changed** ... So 7-8 years ago, we would not consider*



a students' ability to look and achieve funds ...now they have to do that (Course Leader, The University of Northampton).

iii.i. Summary of Session Three

SI is more easily integrated into some HEI courses than others.

Students at HEI are preparing for careers, therefore SI is relevant in terms of students future employment opportunities.

Students need to be aware of the political landscape for the purpose of opportunity spotting, SI and future work.

iv. Session Four: How to embed social innovation in education

There are many different approaches to integrating social innovation into education. Listed below are practical and examples of how some educators approach embedding social innovation into education curricula.

*There is a module [in Acting] in the third year module where **students do outreach work and work with a vulnerable group in society** – care homes, children, disabled, learning difficulties... (Course Leader and Senior Lecturer, The University of Northampton).*

*I don't teach [SI] in a formally or in such a structured way, **I try to weave it through everything** - it is always there in the background. Then in the third year or the masters I have sessions on business in society (Senior Lecturer, The University of Northampton).*

***It's a cross cutting theme: social innovation in the course.** Social innovation is core within the courses I teach (Senior Lecturer, The University of Northampton).*

***It is absolutely all about social innovation...**That is fantastic for our students and **gives our students a much richer experience** of the value of our profession and community and putting something back into society (Course Leader and Practitioner, (Senior Lecturer, The University of Northampton).*

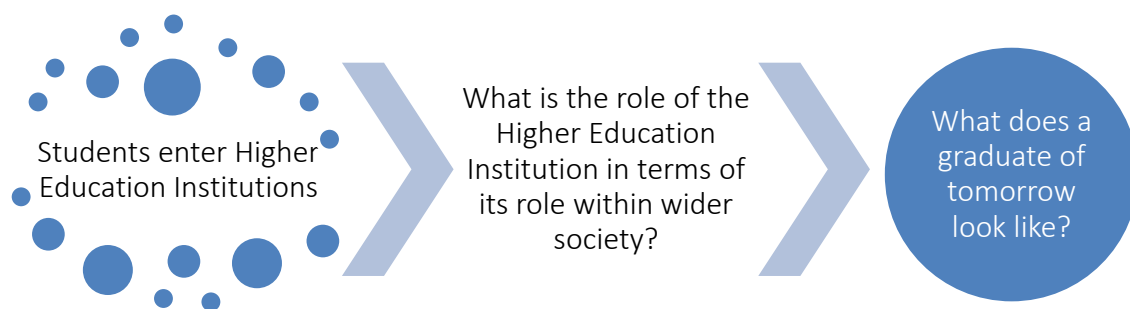
*We have a clinical studies module and those are the key points where [social innovation] would be embedded... **we look at widest sense of employability and helping needy areas of society and isolated areas...** So that is giving something back. It enriches our programme too (Course Leader and Practitioner, (Senior Lecturer, The University of Northampton).*

***We also look at taught aspects, so the taught theory of social innovation:** Theory of sustainable communities, theories of change... We look at terms like: Impactful. We are very realistic to our students to say it might not change the world but if it changes something for the better (Course Leader, (Senior Lecturer, The University of Northampton).*

*Our course is saying to students; **we value you and you have to impact society positively.** The change in the students is amazing (Course Leader, (Senior Lecturer, The University of Northampton).*

iv.i. Social innovation as a learning outcome:

Students are capable, multifaceted individuals who have the possibility of making positive social impact. A consideration for Higher Education Institutions is to reflect on their position as facilitators of education, developers of student opportunity and promoters of social and political awareness throughout the learning and teaching experience.



Listed below are practical examples of considering social innovation as a valuable learning outcome in Higher Education Institutions.

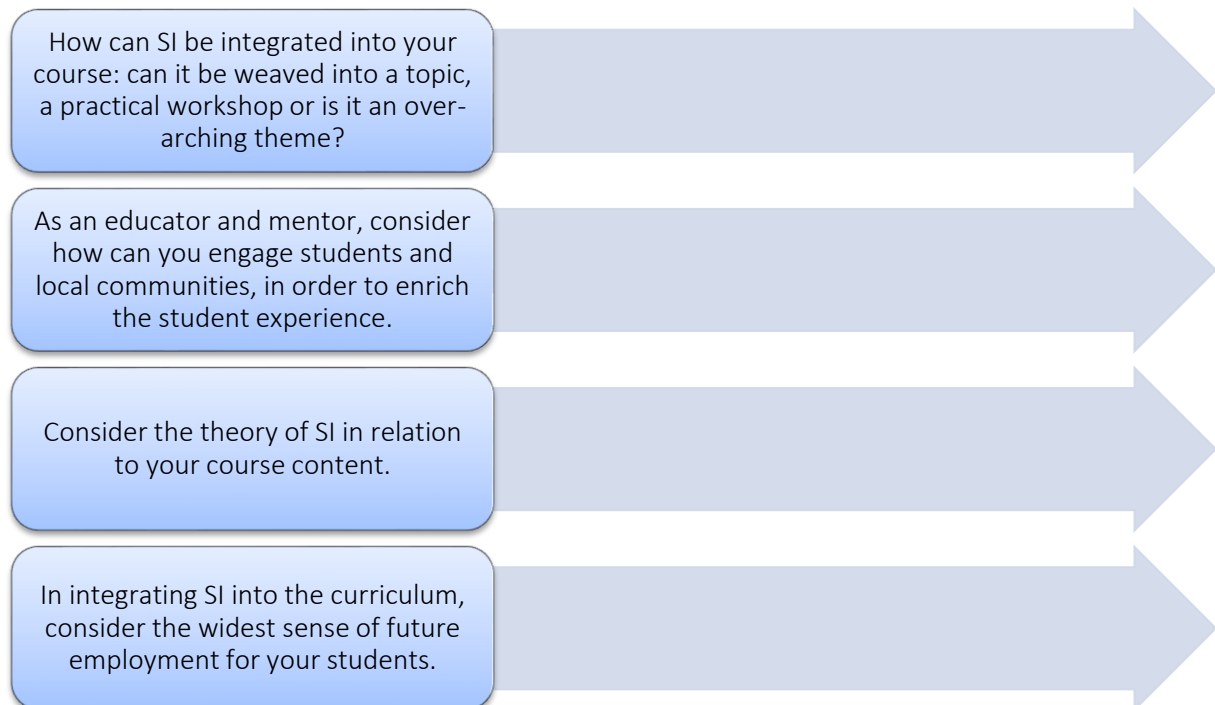
*[Social innovation] it an individual thing and it is not necessarily measured outright. Our measures are individual students' CVs and **their employability afterwards** and whether the degree course has inspired and motivated students a lot of that is choosing the right students at the point of entry (Course Leader and Practitioner, The University of Northampton).*

*The test is: **what do our students give back to society and how do they seek to work in ways that are socially innovative** (Course Leader and Practitioner, The University of Northampton).*

*In year one, students develop a NEET opportunity. They link that to a project around health. So it might be looking at: cycle safety. By the point they get to year three, **they look at sustainable models, models of change** and make a bid (Course Leader, The University of Northampton).*

*I mean, I can see it through assignments. **I still get students who are driven by money and that's fine, we all want healthy bank accounts, but is that the only thing?** (Senior Lecturer, The University of Northampton).*

iv.ii. Summary of Session Four



v. Teaching and learning activities for curricula/faculty teams

Over to you: Defining social innovation

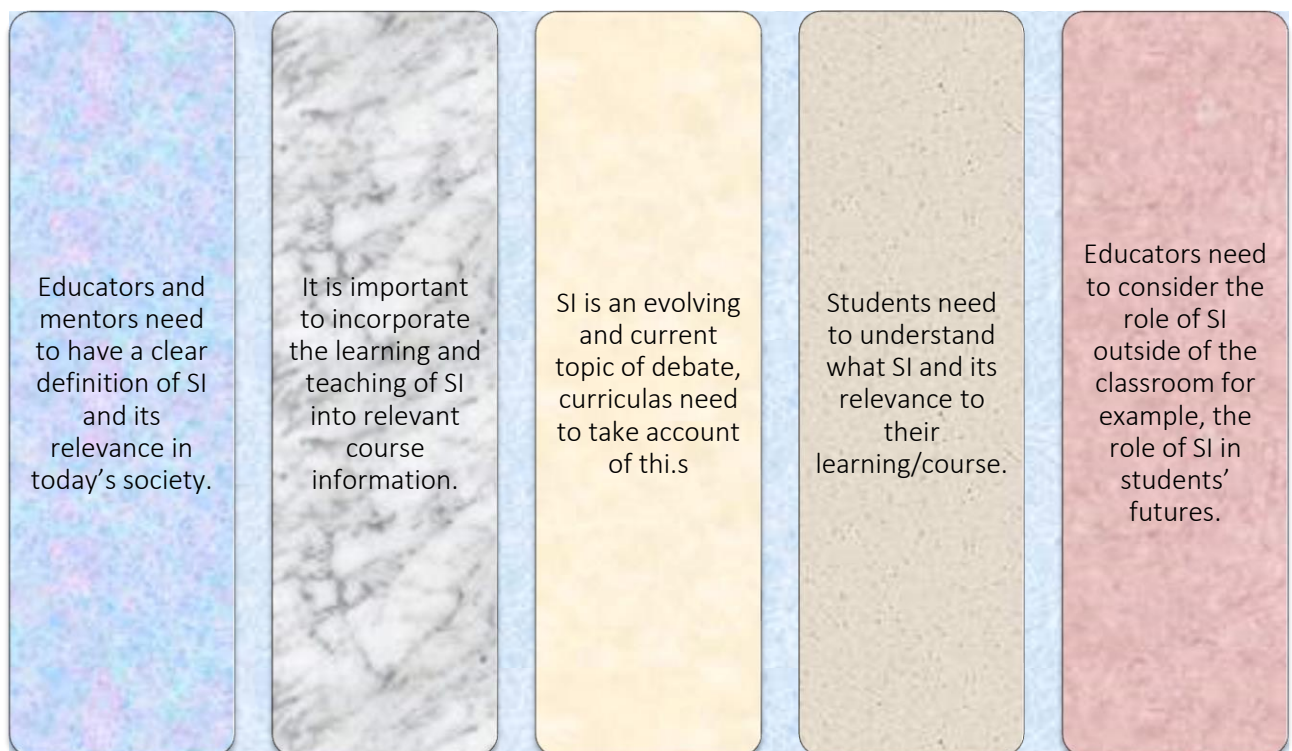
TASK 1: In your groups please discuss the issues below, you have five minutes on each one. Then make notes of your discussions.

[See pages 4-5 for more information and guidance]

Feedback your key points to the bigger group.

Extension: If you have time in your group you could try and put the issues in order of importance, with the most important at the top.

Figure 1- Discussion cards- can be put on to card and cut out



Over to you: Creating student opportunities

TASK 2: In your groups read the issues raised in the creating student opportunities diagram below.

In your group discuss how each of them could be supported in your HEI 😊

In your group discuss how each of them could be undermined in your HEI ☹

Write your key points on to post-it notes.

[See pages 6-8 for more information and guidance]

Place the Post-its from the whole group onto two boards one - 😊 and the other ☹

Have a look at the Post-its from the whole group.

Highlight similarities and differences across the larger group.

Brainstorm some solutions to the problems highlighted.

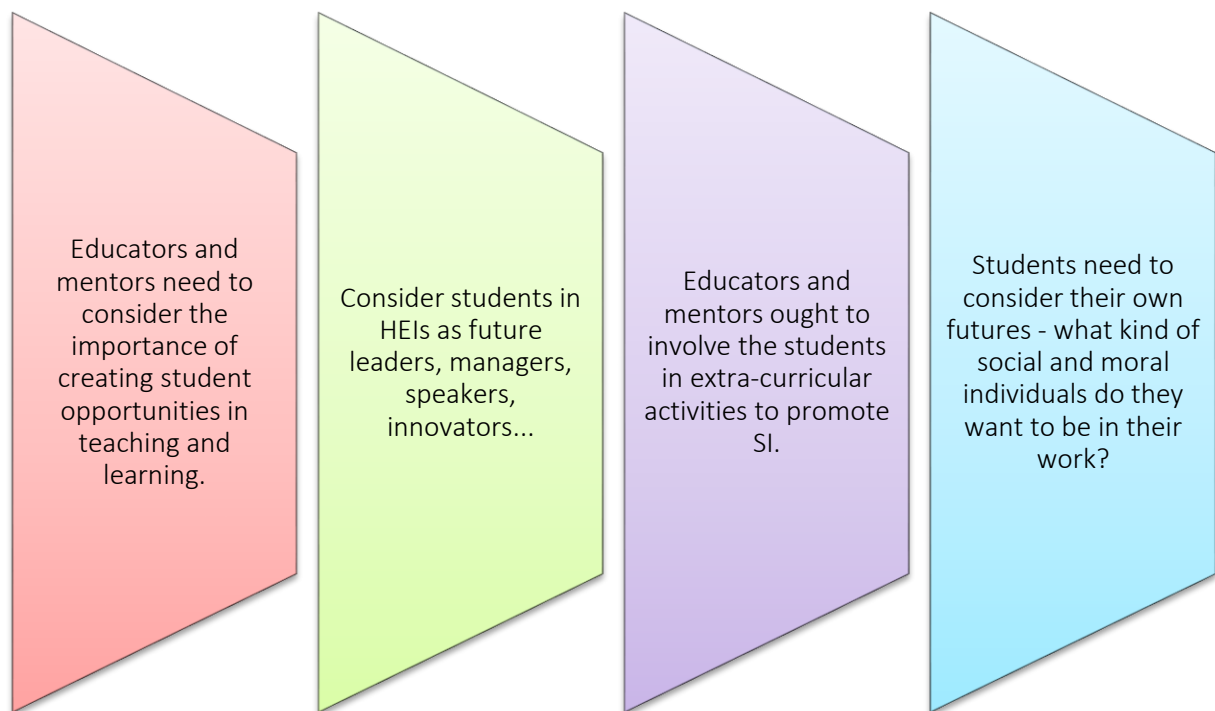


Figure 2- Creating student opportunities

Over to you: Practical and political considerations

TASK 3: In groups please discuss the issues below, you have ten minutes on each one. Then make notes of your discussions.

[See page 9 for more information and guidance]

Feedback your key points to the bigger group.

Extension: If you have time, in your group list all the departments in your university. Can you consider what departments it may be easier to integrate SI and what courses/departments it may be harder to integrate SI?

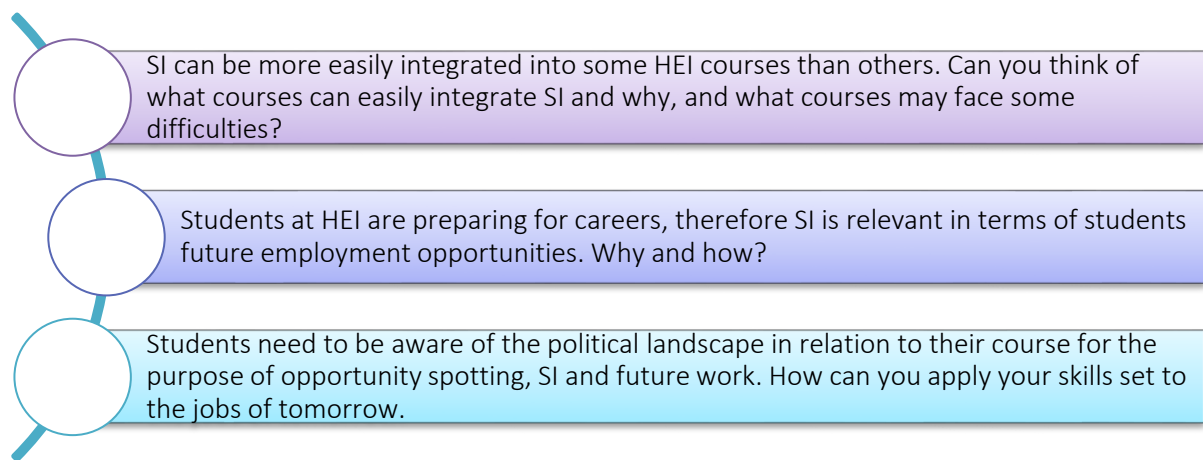


Figure 3- Practical and political considerations

Over to you: Embedding and measuring SI in

education

TASK 4: In groups select one course or department (for example - dentistry, medicine, physiotherapy, sports science, law, business and so on) for discussion. Spend twenty minutes brainstorming ideas/answers to the below four areas within your chosen department/course.

[See pages 10-11 for more information and guidance]

Feedback your answers to the rest of the group.

Extension: As individuals in your groups, select one card to research further. Take this card away and use resources (the internet, books, articles) to write a one page answer in bullet points to your chosen card/question.

Figure 4- Embedding and measuring SI in education – can be put on card and cut out

1. How can SI be integrated into your course: can it be weaved into a topic, a practical workshop or is it an over-arching theme?

2. As an educator and mentor, consider how can you engage students and local communities in SI, in order to enrich the student experience.

3. Consider the theory of SI in relation to your course content.

4. In integrating SI into the curricula, consider the widest sense of future employment for your students.

Appendix A – The research project

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with a number of the University of Northampton educators and mentors. The purpose of the interviews was to gather insight into how educators and mentors integrate Social Innovation (SI) into their work. The interviews were analysed using NVIVO software using Grounded Theory (GT) and Constant Comparative Method (CCM) analysis. Twenty-four 'units' were identified within the transcribed audio; thirteen 'categories' were identified (using CCM) and from these categories four 'themes' were identified. The following four main themes emerged from the data listed in Table 1 (For further information regarding the CCM analysis, please see Appendix A). These four themes will be explored in greater detail below in this document.

Table 1 – Emergent themes

Theme
1. Defining SI in HEIs
2. SI enabling student opportunities
3. Political landscape in the UK and practical considerations in embedding SI in HEIs
4. How to embed SI in HEIs

Appendix B – The research project analysis

CCM Analysis - 'Units' to 'Categories' to 'Themes'

	Nodes	Refs	Refs	Categories	Themes	Theme description
1	Defining SI	1	2	Defining SI	1	Defining SI in HEI
2	Defining SI in the curriculum	3	4	Defining SI	1	Defining SI in HEI
3	Developing knowledge of SE and SI	1	1	Knowledge of SI/SE	1	Defining SI in HEI
4	Education provided by social enterprise	1	1	Knowledge of SI/SE	1	Defining SI in HEI
5	Greater awareness of social enterprise	2	4	Knowledge of SI/SE	1	Defining SI in HEI
6	Creating SI opportunity for students	1	3	Opportunity for students	2	SI creating student opportunities
7	Extra curricular activity to support SI	1	1	Opportunity for students	2	SI creating student opportunities
8	Importance of contacts and connections in education	2	7	Opportunity for students	2	SI creating student opportunities
9	Multi-tasking in job	1	1	Opportunity for students	2	SI creating student opportunities
10	Opportunity and employment	3	5	Opportunity post HEI	2	SI creating student opportunities
11	Staff motivation towards SI	1	1	Opportunity for students	2	SI creating student opportunities
12	Student careers in SI post study	2	2	Opportunity post HEI	2	SI creating student opportunities
13	Thinking beyond classroom teaching	1	2	Opportunity for students	2	SI creating student opportunities
14	SI not core focus with all taught disciplines	1	2	Considerations for SI education	3	Practical and political considerations
15	Changing landscape of education towards SI	3	3	Changes in education	3	Practical and political considerations
16	Cuts in education services	1	1	Education cuts	3	Practical and political considerations
17	Cuts in healthcare services	1	2	Healthcare cuts	3	Practical and political considerations
18	Political landscape	1	2	Political landscape	3	Practical and political considerations
19	Embedding SI in the curriculum	4	10	Embedding SI in education	4	How to embed SI into HEI
20	Engaging with children and young people	1	1	Embedding SI in education	4	How to embed SI into HEI
21	Measuring SI as learning outcome	4	4	Embedding SI in education	4	How to embed SI into HEI
22	SI in the curriculum	1	1	Embedding SI in curriculums	4	How to embed SI into HEI
23	University commitment to SI	1	2	Embedding SI in HEIs	4	How to embed SI into HEI
24	Unmet need in the community	1	1	Embedding SI in HEI community	4	How to embed SI into HEI

