Student focus groups on educational data

Group facilitators: _____

Learning analytics involves the collection of **educational data,** such as grades or number of accesses to online resources, to help us understand how students learn and engage in their studies. This **data** could be used by lecturers to improve course design and feedback, by student support services, or to develop an early alert system for those who may be at-risk of failing a course or dropping out. For example, analysis of Moodle data might indicate levels of student engagement on a course or module. If data analysis detects that a student's engagement has declined, it may alert their personal tutor to make contact and offer support. A learning analytics service ensures all students are included, and issues can be identified early.

As students will be one of the primary users of learning analytics, it is important that your opinions and expectations are accommodated into the design and implementation of any dashboards visualising your data. In the following interview, we will ask you a number of questions to understand your expectations and needs regarding a learning analytics service and the use of student educational data by TU Dublin. The interview will be recorded with audio devices for the purpose of subsequent analysis. It is important that we can link all comments that each person says (i.e. we can link a comment you make early in the session with a comment you make later in the session). Therefore your names will be used during the focus group discussions. However, when transcribing the audio recording to written text, all identifying information will be removed, and comments will be attributed to Student A, Student B etc. You will get a copy of this transcript to confirm it accurately reflects the discussion we had. Any uses of this data for publications will be strictly anonymous.

The audio recording we collect from you today will be stored securely on a college computer until it is converted to written transcript. It will then be destroyed (in approximately four weeks time). The anonymised written transcript will be kept for one year after the project ends.

The findings from this discussion will inform how future services are developed to ensure they reflect, and meet, student expectations and needs. It will also inform training students may need to engage with learning dashboards.

Before we start, are there any questions that you would like to ask?

Topics to be discussed:

Themes	Questions	Prompts
Transparency (5 mins)	Are you aware that your university has the ability to collect and analyse data about your actions in various learning environments (e.g., virtual learning environments, lecture attendance, library accesses)?	a. What kinds of data do you think the university has been collecting from you? Are you aware that at the moment of enrolment into the university, you consented to let the university use your data for reporting and quality assurance purposes? b. In your opinions, are there any types of data that the university should not have collected? c. Is there clear information available to you on how the university collects and analyses your data? d. Is there clear information available to you on the purposes of collecting your data? e. If guidance was available, in what ways would you expect it to be presented and accessed?
Purpose (5 mins)	What would be legitimate purposes for the university to use your data?	a. Should it be used to improve the university's service quality, such as resource allocation, teaching quality, curriculum design, etc.? b. Should it be used to improve the educational experience in a module/course/programme (e.g., identifying problems within a learning activity)? c. Should it be used to improve individual student's educational experience, e.g., identifying points of struggle or points of disengagement?
Educational Needs (10 mins)	Would you like the university to use your background and educational data to support you in areas that we just discussed?	*Explain: Background data include previous educational attainment, demographic information etc. Educational data include data collected from any physical or virtual learning activity. a. Do you see any way to use such data to support your learning? b. What do you think would be an inappropriate way to use such data to support your c. learning?
Feedback (10 mins)	How would you like to receive feedback from the analysis of your educational data?	a. Should it be in person (e.g., from your personal tutor)? b. Should it be in text (e.g., an email)? c. Should it be through visualisations (e.g., a dashboard)? d. What format (text, in person, visualisation) do you see as being the most useful for your own learning?

		e. How often would you like to receive feedback (e.g., every day, once a week)? f. Do you think there's a risk of having too much feedback? g. Should feedback present a comparison of your progress to your peers' progress
Intervention (10 mins)	How should teaching staff and tutors approach the analysis of your data?	a. Should they have an obligation to act if you are identified as being at-risk of failing or underperforming in a module? b. Should the university give students the option to refuse the support? c. Should any specific kind of training be given to teaching staff to understand the analysis of your educational data and to accommodate the results into your personalised feedback?
Concerns (10 mins)	Are there any concerns you would have towards the way the university uses your data?	a. Ethical and privacy concerns b. The accuracy of analytics results c. The quality of feedback (e.g., meaningful and understandable) d. The relevance to your own learning objectives
Training (10 mins)	Should the university provide you with training on data literacy?	a. Should you get training on how to interpret visual data from a dashboard? b. Should you get training on data protection an ethical uses of your personal data? i. Would you like training on GDPR covering *Consent and Ownership and Autonomy (as per points above in blue)* c. Should you get training on interpreting statistics or other numeric measurements derived from your personal data? d. Should you get training on Limitation of data analytics, and the dangers of reading too much into analytics results based on your digital footprint, which can never be the full story.

The following topics were in the SHEILA project template, but not needed for Daltai and this is now covered by GDPR. Instead, it makes more sense to explore how well rights under GDPR are understood. *Point b* under Training above aims to cover these topics from the perspective of training needs.

Consent and	*Do you consider there to*	*a. Are there any types of data that the university should obtain explicit consent from you for*

ownership	*be any ethical or legal issues with this collection and analysis of your data?*	*(e.g., religious views)?* *b. Under what circumstances do you think further consent from you is necessary when the university uses your data?* *c. Who do you think should be granted the right to view your data? Should you be made aware of it?* *d. Under what circumstance do you think the university can outsource your data to third party companies?* *e. Do you think the university should only keep your data for a certain period of time? How long would be an appropriate length of time?*
Autonomy	*Do you think the university should allow you to opt out of data collection at any time?*	*a. Why do you think so?* *b. Under what circumstances would you prefer to opt out of data collection?* *c. Under what circumstances would you prefer to opt in data collection?*