EXPOSING STUDENTS TO 'REAL-WORLD' POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

Collaborating with external organisations
to uncover policy implementation
within the local context

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Background/Module info

- Children, Young People and Social Policy

- Learning outcomes:
  - Appreciate the importance of social policy, how it impacts upon children and young people and practice with them
  - Identify key principles embedded within policy frameworks
  - Draw upon a broad range of evidence in order to critique and evaluate policy and practice
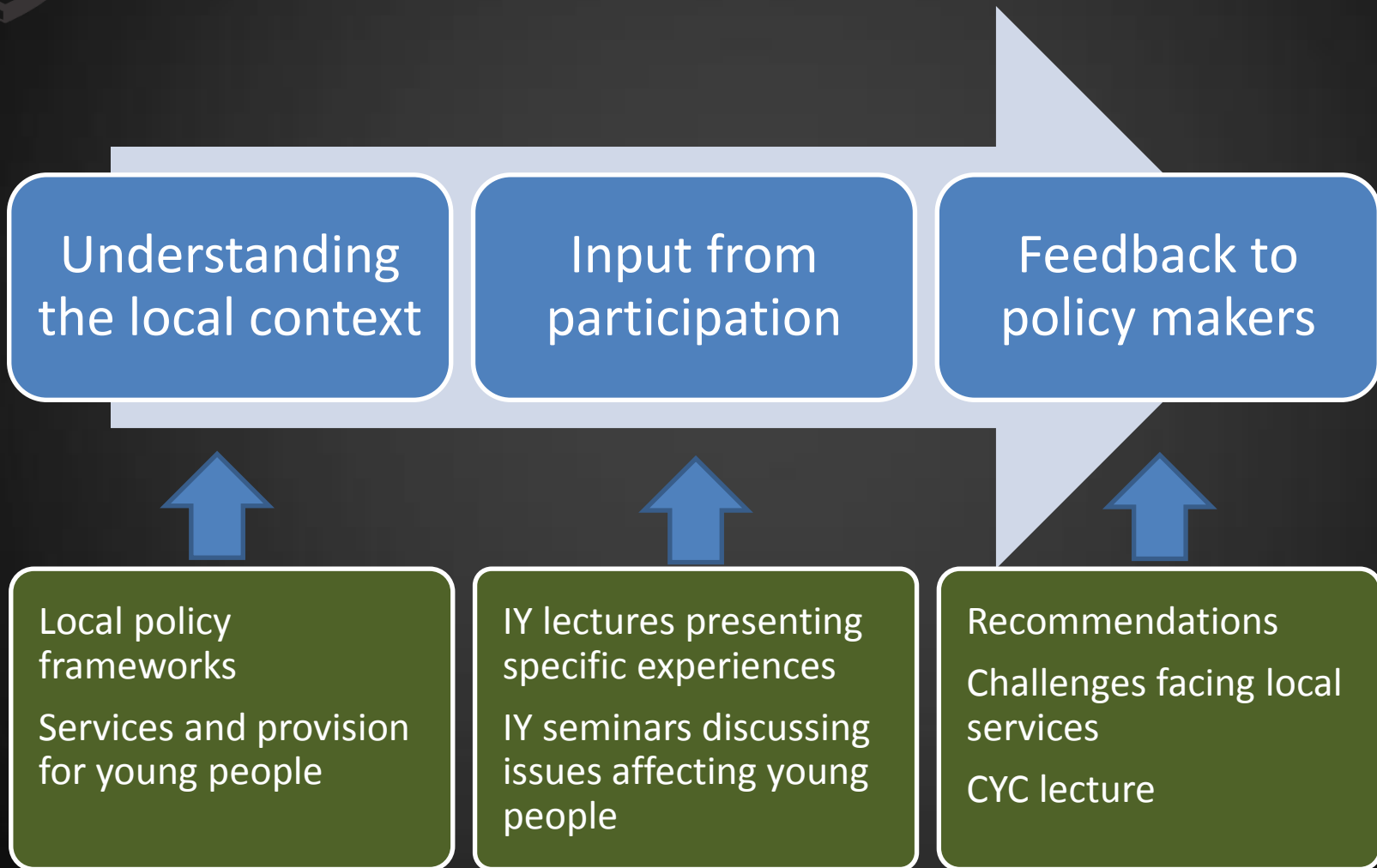
External partners

- Inspired Youth
- Bright Sparks
- City of York Council

Aims of collaboration

- How are social policies translated into practice at a local level?
    - Develop insight into issues affecting children and young people, using alternative resources
    - Provide experience of 'participation' with children and young people
    - Identify key messages/ recommendations for local policy makers

Learning process

Understanding the local context	Input from participation	Feedback to policy makers

Local policy frameworks Services and provision for young people	IY lectures presenting specific experiences IY seminars discussing issues affecting young people	Recommendations Challenges facing local services CYC lecture

Alternative learning resources

- Personal experience videos

- Awareness campaigns

- Complex, multi-process projects

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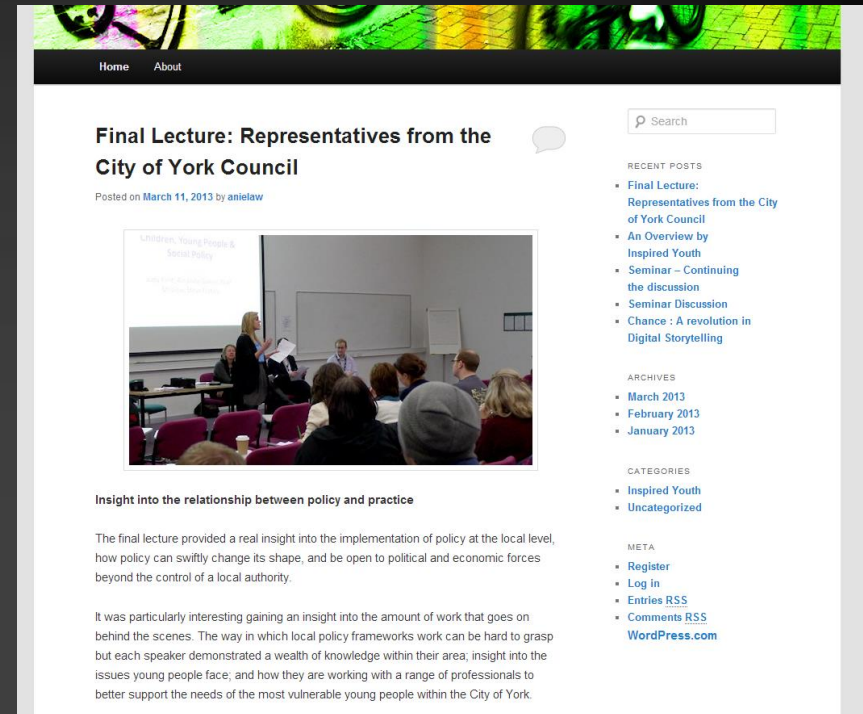
Alternative learning resources

- Supporting students with resources
  - Lecture recording
  - Blog space
    - Contact point with Inspired Youth
    - YouTube videos
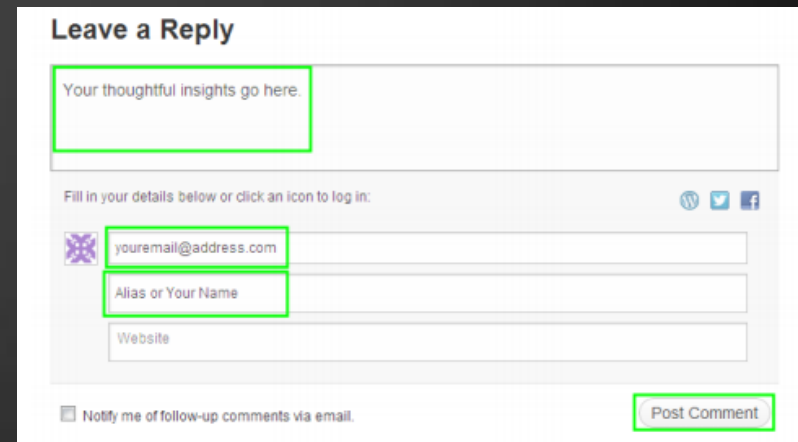   - Links to project websites

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Blog space

- Brief tech guide

- Advice on online identity

- Advice on acceptable comments

- Commenting approval process

- Rich resources

http://youngpeopleandsocialpolicy.wordpress.com/

Extract from blog guide

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Distinct ethical and professional considerations

- Working with young people deemed 'vulnerable' or 'hard to reach'

- Representing the University in sessions and online

Distinct ethical and professional considerations

- Guidelines developed
  - Be especially welcoming and supportive to outside visitors
  - Everyone was expected to do their share of preparation and contribute to the success of the collaboration as a whole

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Distinct ethical and professional considerations

- Guidelines developed
  - Listen to others without interruptions
  - Treat others' contributions with respect
  - Maintain confidentiality of the young people, their stories and any other personal information about them
  - Establish ethical guidelines and ensure principles are adhered to [formed part of first seminar]

Student feedback: what worked well

- Provided valuable insight into local policy implementation
- Contextualised theoretical frameworks (Social Policy)
- Resources interactive/engaging
- "Hearing directly from young people/policy makers brought the classroom experience to life"
- "Meeting real people with real life experiences"
- "Final presentation (City of York Council Reps) brought everything together"
- "Unpolished version of real life"
- Helped consider career choices outside/beyond university

Student feedback: what could be improved

- It was very challenging for the students: "complex process" – too much/overloaded with information – key messages lost

- Disliked the WordPress blog – stated a preference for Facebook

- "More structure on features such as blogs – more focused topics of questions to start discussion"

- 'Inspired Youth's' resources were too complex for the students to navigate – again, simplicity is key

- Not enough time for key questions/recommendations to policy makers/practitioners at the end of project

Lessons learnt

- Technical issues
  - Structuring collaboration over 'long-thin'
  - Choice of online space
- Student engagement
  - Tools/activities to keep momentum
  - More face-to-face discussion

Lessons learnt

- Team teaching
  - Communication, planning and expectations
  - Large cohorts, more staff, needs early buy-in
- Collaborating with external, non-academic organisations
  - Identify and work towards a shared agenda
  - Ethical and academic considerations
  - Infrastructure and management support

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Outcomes

- Students showed a more sophisticated awareness of the policy and practice context

- They developed new skills valuable to their future careers

- The project widened collaborations with external organisations

- Time is required to match different agendas and clear outputs desired

- Plans did not always go to plan…..

- Learn from feedback… you may be surprised!

Questions / discussion

- Have you had similar experiences?

- What challenges would you face?

- What learning objectives would you try to meet with external involvement?