

Want to know more ?  
Do you want to play in the TEA Sandpit?

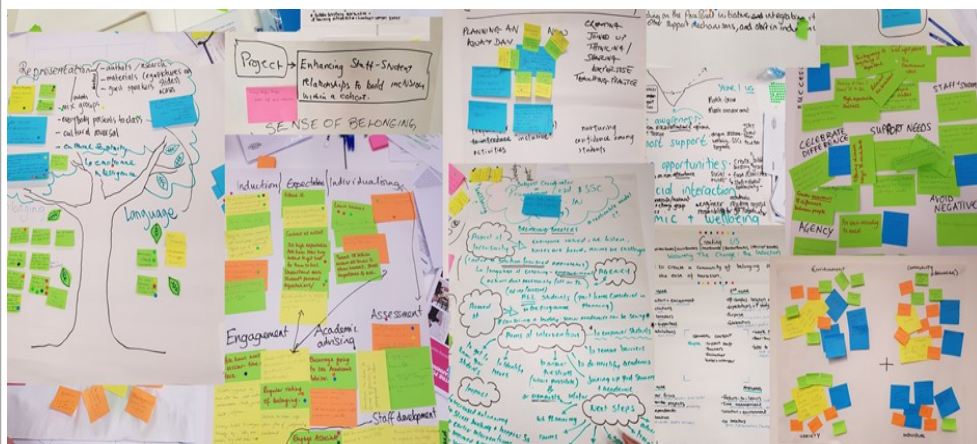
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*'Some sectors set aside the tortoise approach to design a long time ago. In fashion, businesses and consumers have been reaping the benefits of fast cycle design for many years. But fast cycle design for higher education? Aren't we different – not slow but appropriately thoughtful about what education programme design requires? At the original TEA Sandpit, inter-disciplinary teams did just that: designing largely complete programmes in just 24 hours.'*

[www.unialliance.ac.uk/teaching-excellence-alliance/sandpit/](http://www.unialliance.ac.uk/teaching-excellence-alliance/sandpit/)

UA University Alliance

Teaching Excellence Alliance



The TEA Sandpit

Intensive discussion forums where free thinking is encouraged, enabling staff and students to delve into wicked problems on the institutional agenda and uncover innovative solutions . . .

**. . . in a safe, collaborative space where creativity is key . . .**

. . . working together, teams search for answers to a particular question or problem area, finding a number of quick-win, proposals that are high-impact and easy to implement, before crafting longer term solutions.

An outcome-focused design intensive which supports universities' sense of strategic urgency around educational priorities through rapid and effective generation of ideas, delivering concrete outcomes on a single day.

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# THE TEA SANDPIT

The UA Teaching Excellence Alliance have created the **TEA Sandpit** innovation - outcome-focused design intensives which support universities' sense of strategic urgency around educational priorities through rapid and effective generation of ideas, delivering concrete outcomes on a single day. The TEA Sandpit, named for its characteristic as a vibrant, safe, and collegiate space to work creatively, enables collaboration with like-minded but very contextually different HEIs and facilitates intra, and inter community cross-institutional 'fast cycle design'. The TEA Sandpit utilises educational development expertise to generate strategic impact, foster relationships and communities and sustainable culture change in a non-hierarchical and inclusive environment.

Maximum impact is gained from the quick-win identification and the sustainable, low-cost model of intensive CPD for 30–45 staff in one event.



Facilitator pre-meeting	Morning session:	Afternoon session:	After the event:
Briefing on roles and scope	Rapid SLT Scene setting	Scan the sector—good practice	Report back to Senior Team in HEI
Builds confidence in process	Mind the Gap starter	Strategic Planning	Including 'barriers and challenges identified and 'if I had a Magic Wand' wish-list.
	Quick Wins: High Impact easy to implement	Poster votes and awards for best ideas	

Feedback from all Sandpits has been overwhelmingly positive with individuals and institutions viewing it as *'a process, not just a one-off'*. Events are designed so impact can be felt very quickly and the approach, once facilitators have been trained, can be rolled out to other contexts within the institution.

... the challenge with any special event, is to translate resulting energy and enthusiasm into impact, replicating the model to deliver the benefits within the institution ... Sandpit hosts receive full reports back to senior managers with ongoing support for institutional roll-out. *'Penny and Graham provide the common thread to TEA Sandpit planning, evaluation and dissemination'* (Vanessa Wilson CEO UA).

*'The first sandpit was hosted at NTU and was hugely successful. I have observed workshop-style course development models before, but none as effective as this. It was a truly immersive experience and the outputs were of very high quality. The course designs were genuinely innovative, and some were articulated so well that they could have gone direct to a validation panel for approval. I attribute this success to three factors: effective activity design, excellent facilitation, and the mix of disciplines and professions within teams. The sandpit provided inspiration for us in the redesign of our own course development approach – and the evidence to convince our colleagues that we should do it.'*  
**Jane McNeil, Exec. Dean of L&T at Nottingham Trent**

*'It is possible to tell how valuable and effective an educational development is by the degree to which it 'catches' on. In a sector in which development often moves carefully in a risk-averse environment, the Sandpit has been taken up with enthusiasm by institutions keen to speed the pace of action and to tackle 'wicked' problems effectively. Sandpits bring together colleagues working at implementation and strategic level (often cross-sector) with a clear focus on action rather than dissemination. Since the first Sandpit they have gained a momentum of their own and their reputation well has reached beyond Alliance Universities. I recommend this initiative to you strongly.'*

**Dr Sal Jarvis, PVC at Univ. of Hertfordshire and Director of the TEA Programme**

