Hello and welcome to a Season Two trailer and special episode of the Learning and Teaching at Newcastle University podcast.

My name is Ben Steel, and I'll be quickly introducing this episode for you.

Next week, we will see the return of the Learning and Teaching at Newcastle University podcast.

This season, we have some great content around our Dean of Digital Education, authentic assessment, the Learning and Teaching Conference that's coming soon.

We also have episodes about sustainability, accessibility and the pedagogy of canvas, alongside many more.

You'll also notice that this year we're moving from a fortnight schedule to a monthly schedule.

But remember, just to like and subscribe, and you should see that episode drop whenever it's ready.

In this episode today, though,

we have a return from a Season One guest. Ragda will be taking you through an update on learning analytics here at Newcastle University.

It's just a quick episode, so enjoy, and I'll be back at the end.

Hello and welcome to another episode from the Learning and Teaching Development Service podcast at Newcastle University.

This episode introduces the University's approach to engaging students and learning analytics.

This year, we have engaged more than 70 students undertaking a Data Science course at the School of Computing to explore

the science and develop learning analytics solutions from their perspective and within data science approaches,

tools and techniques introduced to them throughout the semester. We speak to Dr. Matthew Forshaw,

Senior Lecturer in Data Science in the School of Computing at Newcastle University and the National School's Lead to the Alan Turing Institute.

Matt is also a key member in the Learning Analytics Task and Finish Group.

I asked Matt what is the aim of Data Science innovation project in your module

and how does this link with the learning analytics project at Newcastle University?

So we have large and growing programmes in Data Science and AI,

largely drawing from learners from computing backgrounds, statistics backgrounds as well as further afield.

And I think really to complement the technical training that we deliver,

we see it being really important to give people the opportunity to collaborate with learners on

live projects that have a significant impact and also to develop experience working with stakeholders.

What we typically see of graduates coming off similar programmes is very strong technical competence,

but sometimes a lack of experience in terms of framing an opportunity around a data

driven product in a way that the stakeholder can appreciate and get buy in from.

So really these live embedded opportunities for colleagues to work together and work with stakeholders are really

important in giving people that experience on the degree programme before they head out into the job market.

It's been fascinating setting our students off on a project in the area of learning analytics because I think our students,

more than most probably have a strong appreciation and awareness of the opportunity of data solutions,

but also especially with their prior education probably spanning the pandemic,

they've probably got a keener sense than ever around the sorts of digital footprints

they leave as learners and the importance of online engagement in terms of their learning.

So I think it's been really nice supporting learners technical work as well as

self-reflection in terms of these technologies in an education context.

And I think learning analytics is a fantastic subject area where there are a wide range of stakeholders who

would be impacted by technology solutions in this space and being within the university they're never too far away.

But what we've really tried to do is embed principles of responsible research and innovation,

I suppose, through the way that they've developed their projects. So that's saying that these technologies can have a great power for good,

but they might also, if not applied in the best way, underserve particular groups.

So really, what we've tried to instil here is to take a proactive and a pre-emptive approach

for people to engage with the sorts of stakeholders who would be impacted by

the introduction of these systems and maybe to try and take that stakeholder

feedback on board at the point that they're developing out their solutions.

We also speak to Dr Huizhi Liang, Senior Lecturer in Data Science in the School of Computing at Newcastle University,

who led the Data Science module this semester.

I asked Elly how you engage students in innovation projects and what dataset the students use to explore learning analytics?

So for engaging students, for this module, we set up student demonstrators,

have lecturers to help them, and they have individual contact hours with each group.

So we basically divided the students into groups so they can collaborate with each other.

It's also a better simulation of a real life team project-based scenario. So we normally setup like five to six students per each group,

and each group has a demonstrator who normally is a Ph.D. student of the school that assigns help to have one to one contact hours.

So this course runs two weeks, so it's relatively short. The demonstrators meet each group for 30 minutes on Monday, Wednesday and Friday,

and then the problem owners will join on the first meeting and also in the middle to help students understand the problem,

and also give some comments to their solutions.

So, Newcastle University learning analytics actually is interested to learn more about how University of Newcastle students engage and its performance.

But there is some data privacy protection issues because we needed to protect the personal data of the students.

So then we found that there is an open dataset provided by Open University,

so they are very similar, they have students accessing the online learning environment and also

that data that was published in Nature Data Papers so it's of good quality

and also the data has a very detailed description of how they collect the data,

how they anonymised the data.

So this is also itself a good example for the students to read how they how they should protect personal data.

So that's why we chose the open data.

Thanks, Matt and Elly. We hope you enjoyed this episode and we look forward to hearing more about learning analytics in future episodes. Thank you.

Thank you very much for that, Ragda. And thank you very much for listening, everyone.

Like I said earlier, we will be back next week with our monthly episodes of the Learning and Teaching at Newcastle University podcast.

The next episode will be with our Dean of Digital Education, David Kennedy, talking to Sarah Graham,

Dean of Education in our HaSS faculty, to get an understanding about his role and what's coming up in the next year regarding Digital Education.

Thank you again and see you soon.