

Dr.  
David  
Roberts

**ACADEMIC CONSULTANT**





# DAVID ROBERTS

## ACADEMIC CONSULTANT

I'm an academic in the UK. I've been teaching and researching for 25 years, mostly on peacebuilding and international relations. Then about 5 years ago, I shifted research into pedagogies, as it became clearer that the digital era was an opportunity to capitalize on multimedia learning that I wanted to lead.

The multimedia method, combining imagery and text, was so popular with students and staff, and yielded such high levels of engagement, learning, active learning and assessment outcomes that, after conducting and publishing peer-reviewed research, I created a consultancy to share the method, its universal pedagogic versatility and its importance and application to other areas like inclusivity and CPD.



# Consulting Services

## National Student Survey

Multimedia Learning (MML) approaches to teaching and learning increase student cognitive engagement and enjoyment by 40%-60%. When students complete the NSS, they will think about how their institution made their teaching experience this good. My consulting experience introduces and discusses MML theory, evidence and research methods, and facilitates interested academics to connect internal academic practice to external student experience and expectations.

## CPD

The application of such innovative learning and teaching sustains the pursuit of Continuous Professional Development. For those interested in it, I demonstrate how embracing MML can feed into Professional Standards Frameworks in HE and correspondingly support bids for multiple Fellowships at local, institutional and national levels. These normally relate to D1, D2 and D3 levels and categories A1-A5; K1-K6; V1-V4.

## Inclusivity

Inclusivity is on the HE agenda worldwide. The number of students reporting dyslexia has never been higher and continues to rise, according to [HESA data](#). MML methods are shown to enhance dyslexic students' learning experiences especially in large group lectures, where many traditionally have felt excluded and marginalised. I help academics become aware of why imagery works for dyslexic learners, and show them how to integrate imagery into their lecture practices.

## Student Job Interviews

Job interview panels are sick of 'Death by PowerPoint' presentations, but many applicants are yet to capitalize on MML as the emergent means of communication in the 21st Century's digital world. Careers Offices recruit me to prepare students in the basics of MML presentations, teach them basic design rules they can apply to all their interview slides, and show them how to captivate their audiences whilst their competitors drown them in text.

## Engagement

MML enhances engagement by stimulating attention and increasing active learning practices. It is also a proxy for learning. When this pedagogy is introduced, marks in these modules average higher than marks in most other same-level modules. I advise academics on how to redistribute text and find the right images to better balance cognitive load and improve academic performance.

## Aftercare

Depending on the type of consulting I undertake, I also provide the opportunity for free consults with me as clients take on board the use of the MML method. Everyone is entitled to membership of the Visionary Learning Community of Practice, gets free access to peer-reviewed publications that support the use of MML, and all the images on the Consultancy website are free to use for pedagogic purposes.



## Teaching

I have taught in HE for 25 years and have loved it. I am pioneering innovative multimedia learning methods intellectually rooted in the science of cognitive psychology that enhance engagement, active learning and inclusivity.

## Research

I trained as a field researcher in postconflict spaces like Cambodia, Viet Nam and Sierra Leone. I wrote 4 peer-reviewed books and more than 40 articles based in research methods I developed for extended stays in unstable places. I applied what I learned in that research process to the development of a MML approach to teaching large groups - often the bread and butter of university education - and have published an eBook and multiple peer-reviewed articles on increasing engagement and active learning and promoting pedagogic inclusivity.

## Communication and cooperation

My consulting work has led me to collaborate across institutions and national boundaries, traversing institutional and international cultures, from North America through Europe and the Middle East to Southeast Asia. My Nonviolent Communication (NVC) background guides me when I work across multiple and diverse cultures, priorities, hierarchies and agendas.



## Education and employment

My formal academic education has been in UK Higher Education Institutions. I learned about cooperation whilst working in postconflict spaces. I learned about Multimedia communication in the City of London and from my own research whilst at my current employer.

+ 2013-

### **Loughborough University**

An opportunity, encouraged by the institution, to finesse and disseminate the MML method I was evolving into a consultancy. The process helped me successfully bid to become a Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy.

+ 1999-2012

### **University of Ulster**

13 years in London/Derry, where I began reflecting professionally on how I was teaching and starting to investigate alternative pedagogic forms

+ 1997-1999

### **King's College, London**

Two years working with senior military officers from around the world at the Joint Services Command and Staff College.

+ 1996-1997

### **Visual communication thorough PowerPoint**

Presentation creation and design for City of London clients, mainly at large international banks and legal agencies

+ 1992-1996

### **PhD, International Peacebuilding in Cambodia**

An examination of how consent to international peacekeepers is rooted in perceptions of impartiality by combatants. I worked with Chilean paratroopers, United Nations Unarmed Military Observers, the Royal Navy, the German Army, the Cambodian government, the Royalist Party and the Khmer Rouge guerrillas.

+ 1998-1991

### **International Relations and Politics**

AbrilliantlyexecutedandstaffeddegreeatStaffordshirePolytechnic,thenUniversity. I learned so much academically from the lecturers, who also demonstrated what a really good lecture looked, and felt, like.



## Higher Education Academy

The HEA... recognizes the innovative approach to the physiological match between how we learn and understand, on the one hand, and on the other, how we teach and communicate. The method is shown in the peer-reviewed press to increase audience engagement and to strengthen active learning practices where normally they are diminished



## University of Sussex

Thank you for the session. I really enjoyed it and will use some of the ideas to kick off some discussion when I run my session on using digital technology and accessibility.

LONDON  
SCHOOL of  
HYGIENE  
& TROPICAL  
MEDICINE



## LSHTM

Participants gave us really positive feedback on the session and... they are going to make... changes for maximum impact.



## Staff&Edu.DevelopmentAssoc.

I now have the theoretical knowledge to back up the use of imagery, and to help develop the use of it in teaching to support learning



## London School of Economics

It was superb and really helped colleagues see ways in which visual pedagogies can... create more meaningful and engaging lectures. It was very much appreciated by the audience, as was the more technical discussion that you led in response to the later questions.



## University of Surrey

Refreshing approach to presentations, feeling enthusiastic about this approach... he was a very good speaker... engaging and receptive to the audience... most engaging and kept attention. Aware of our reality in the classroom... Really liked that he was so open to engage in a critical discussion. The session was very helpful and interesting and immediately drew my attention to the power of using images... David's presenting style was very easy to follow and engage with... the presentation was very interesting and forward thinking, it gave me confidence to be braver



## PUBLICATIONS

I've been researching and publishing in this area for 6 years and continue with a nationwide research programme looking at student engagement across all disciplines. To the right are a few of my most recent works, all solo-authored.

I've also done blog posts and include a few here

- ⊕ **Brainjack: The Art of High Power Business Presentations.** [Amazon](#)
- ⊕ **The Ultimate Guide to Visual Lectures.** Amazon [Kindle](#)
- ⊕ **Active Learning Precursors in Multidisciplinary Large Lectures: A Longitudinal Trial on the Effect of Imagery in Higher Education Lectures.** [College Teaching](#) 66(4), 2018
- ⊕ **For lecturers, there is life beyond Death by PowerPoint.** [Times Higher Education](#) 2014
- ⊕ **The engagement agenda, multimedia learning and the use of images in higher education lecturing: or, how to end death by PowerPoint.** [Journal of Further and Higher Education](#) **42(7), 2018**
- ⊕ The power of images in teaching dyslexic [students](#)
- ⊕ The 'problem' with [PowerPoint](#)
- ⊕ Copyright and [images](#)
- ⊕ Relocating [text](#)



# Cover Letter

Pedagogic colleague

I'm a UK academic providing a consulting service that arose from a need to put an end to 'Death by PowerPoint' in my own lectures. I am now a published, peer-reviewed, acknowledged multimedia learning (MML) specialist concerned with embedding multimedia methods in teaching in the midst of the most visual era of human evolution, with a variety of Higher Education clientele in the UK, Europe and North America. I support the sector in turning MML to the support of the student engagement agenda, especially as it affects the annual National Student Survey; to enhancing continuing, organic Active Learning in large group lectures; to ensuring dyslexic students are taught more inclusively; and to helping colleagues apply MML teaching methods to their own Continuous Professional Development needs.

I work in a variety of modes, from on-site training visits supporting teaching staff to develop more evolved and cognitively-effective teaching approaches and enhance their CPD opportunities, through remote support for curriculum design, to academically-informed

Sincerely,



Dr. David Roberts, SFHEA



## Get In Touch

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