Talking Mats and Transitions

The [Careers and Employability Service](http://www.stir.ac.uk/careers/) at University of Stirling have worked in collaboration with the social enterprise [Talking Mats](http://www.talkingmats.com/) to develop a transition tool for students either preparing for going into work or reflecting on their experience of transitioning out of work. The work-based learning mat helps facilitate a structured conversation with students focussed on both abstract and tangible issues surrounding transition

*“Talking Mats is an interactive resource that uses three sets of picture communication symbols – topics, options and a visual scale – and a space on which to display them. This can either be a physical, textured mat, or a digital space, for example a tablet, smart board or computer screen for which we have created one of the best apps for communication disability”* (*Talking Mats website “How Talking Mats works”* [*http://www.talkingmats.com/about-talking-mats/*](http://www.talkingmats.com/about-talking-mats/)*)*

This series of short talking heads with Elaine Watson, Employability & Skills Officer, Faculty of Arts and Humanities, illustrates the thinking behind this work-based learning tool. The films address the following questions:

* What is Talking Mats?
* What does the work-based TM consist of?
* How does it help students in transition (in and out of work)?
* What has been the feedback from students using it?
* How is it being used sustainably now?

**What does a Talking Mat for Work-based learning look like?**

Below, this picture illustrates how the work-based learning mat is used with visual topic cards to help students consider and reflect on and discuss their experiences. 