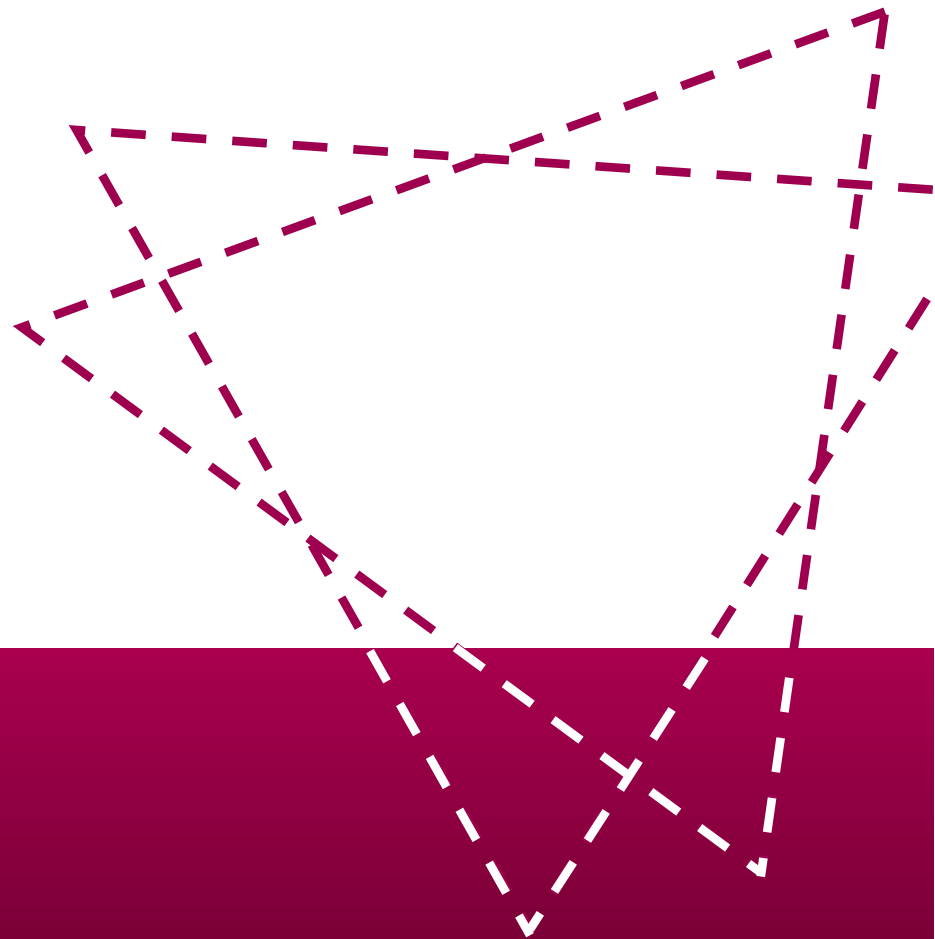


# PARALLEL SESSION 1

TUESDAY 27<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2023



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## Parallel 1.1 (Show and Tell), Room 3508

### DESIGNING STUDENT ONBOARDING EVENTS: "CHECK-IN" AT ETH ZÜRICH, SWITZERLAND



#### SPEAKER

*Daniel Köchli, ETH Zurich, Switzerland*

Dr. Daniel Köchli is a student coach and counsellor at ETH Zürich, Switzerland, since 2014. He supports pupils in their study programme choice as well as enrolled students in their daily student life.



#### PROGRAMME SUMMARY

Not only the transition from secondary school to university is a challenge, but also entering a university as a new MSc-student. At ETH Zurich we offer a so called "Check-in" to all freshly enrolled MSc-students. In this Show & Tell we discuss event design and its potential effects on student's academic success.



#### PROGRAMME ABSTRACT

Not only the transition from secondary school to university is a challenge, but also entering ETH Zurich as a new MSc-student. We offer so called "Prestudy-Events" (PSEs) to all freshly enrolled BSc-students (see poster session) and a "Check-in" event to (non-Swiss) MSc-students. In this Show & Tell we will discuss event design and its potential effects on students' academic success.

We know that our events for BSc-students strongly support them in their onboarding challenge: Compared to First Year Students who did not attend a PSE, attendees have a larger network, are better informed and take their personal responsibilities more seriously.

However, concerning our Check-in event for MSc-students, our data is still scarce. We do have a fair knowledge about the issues newcomers struggle with, however, we are uncertain as of how to address them.

Leading question: how can we effectively and cost-efficiently address onboarding issues new MSc-students struggle with?

## WORKING WITH WIDENING PARTICIPATION (WP) TEAMS TO SUPPORT UNDERREPRESENTED STUDENTS WITH A SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION TO UNIVERSITY.



### SPEAKERS

*Charlotte Wisson, University of Derby, England*

Charlotte has experience in the Widening Access team for over 5 years and managing the the Student Engagement and Enhancement team at the University of Derby. She is a qualified primary school teacher and a fellow of the Higher Education Academy.

*Ryan Davidson, University of Derby, England*

Ryan is a MA Music Production and BSc (Hons) Information Technology graduate and currently works in Student Engagement and Enhancement at the University of Derby. Ryan has 4 years of experience in student voice and insight and is passionate about embedding equality and inclusion.



### PROGRAMME SUMMARY

This Show and Tell will share the University of Derby's collaborative approach to supporting underrepresented students with the transition to university. The session will share the Widening Access and Student Engagement team's theory of change, highlighting the post-16 activities underpinned by theory, designed to support pre-arrival transition skills.



### PROGRAMME ABSTRACT

Creating a sense of belonging supports students in making a successful transition to university, and subsequently benefits student retention. This Show and Tell will highlight the importance of early interventions with outreach and widening participation (WP) teams to help underrepresented students develop the critical skills for a successful transition well before they arrive at university.

As highlighted in the QAA Transition Skills and Strategies report (Cheng, 2023), self-efficacy, self-management of expectations, critical thinking, and sense of belonging are skills needed throughout the key transition stages. WP students need additional support to build these skills before starting university. The needs of underrepresented groups of students are often accounted for less (Farenga, 2018). As a result, WP students often have more difficult transitions, leading to higher rates of withdrawal.

Before students arrive at university, they often have mixed feelings of excitement and apprehension (Cheng, 2023). Many students who are the first in their family to go to university often have done well compared to their peers in school and have high levels of academic confidence (WONKHE, 2022). However, these self-efficacy beliefs can be damaged by the transition to university without scaffolding. Students need the confidence, competence, and resilience to see university as a challenge, rather than a threat (Chemers et al, 2001).

Outreach teams also play role in helping students to manage their expectations of university. For example, understanding how they will have opportunities to find people

with similar identities. Or how much time will be spent in lectures and studying independently. Students also need an awareness of the new demands that come with transitioning to university and the ability to self-reflect (Cheng, 2023). Students who can reflect on their skillset are more likely to be able to understand and cope with the new demands of the university environment.

Whilst students may not fully feel they belong at university until they arrive, steps can still be taken to support students to understand what a university is. Students need to access, understand, and readily participate in the culture of HE to create a new student identity (Lizzio, 2006). Students who may not have had the opportunity to visit their university pre-arrival may struggle to develop their identity and feel like they fit in. Induction weeks at university can often overwhelm students with a myriad of activities and opportunities to get involved in. Supporting students with expectations during these weeks can support students in participating in relevant social and academic activities linked to forming their new 'student identity'.

The session will share the Widening Access and Student Engagement team's collaborative theory of change. It will showcase their post-16 activities in schools, which are underpinned by theory, designed to support students with the transition skills for university.



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## MAKING THE SWITCH THROUGH STUDENT VOICES



### SPEAKERS

*Manushan Nesari, UCLL University of Applied Sciences, Belgium*

Manu Nesari is team lead of the student services at UCLL. Student services are responsible for everything concerning the student life (housing, food, social services, mental health, culture, sports, mobility,...). Student participation is also one of the domains of this student life. In cooperation with the participation coaches at UCLL he tries to optimize student participation. A long time ago he himself was a student representative.

*Yasmine Goossens, UCLL University of Applied Sciences, Belgium*

UC Leuven-Limburg offers a wide variety of profession-oriented graduate and bachelor degrees. As a policy expert Yasmine is building expertise on first generation students, diversity and inclusion. She's responsible for projects about talent mining and social integration. Yasmine is also researcher in an E+ project about inclusive student engagement at professional higher education.



### PROGRAMME SUMMARY

An updated charter for student hazings and welcome activities was made in Leuven (Belgium), in co-creation with different partners and the student associations themselves after running an inspiration process.



### PROGRAMME ABSTRACT

We had a great experience working with different organizations to enhance the policy on student hazings and welcome activities in Leuven, Belgium. The partners involved were the city of Leuven, the local police department, umbrella student organization LOKO, and higher education institutions. Our aim was to create a more inclusive and culturally sensitive approach to welcome activities and hazings.

We worked on three key elements: a trajectory to inspire student associations, a renewed and professional charter for student hazings and welcome activities, and an optimized procedure for signing the charter and application process. We did not impose any compulsory path or activity, but rather offered a tailor-made trajectory that allowed for reflection and sharing of personal experiences.

The trajectory involved three sessions: a reflection session, an intervision/inspiration session, and an interactive session on a renewed charter. The students were the drivers of the process, and the partners ensured that the right questions and topics were addressed. This approach ensured a systemic, sustainable change within the student associations, supported by almost all student associations in Leuven.

We believe this kind of collaboration between different organizations is essential in building strong communities and creating positive experiences for students. It would be interesting to discuss how to coordinate such cooperation between organizations and how to engage students in this process.

After our 5-minute presentation, we would like to discuss the following questions with the delegates: How can we ensure that welcome activities and hazings are inclusive and culturally sensitive? How can we effectively collaborate between different organizations to create systemic change? How can we engage students in the community building process?

## Parallel 1.2 (Show and Tell), Room 3011

### REFLECTION TOOL FOR STUDENTS TO ENCOURAGE STUDY EFFICIENCY



#### SPEAKERS

*Kelly Van Bellingen, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium*

Kelly Van Bellingen is a student psychologist at Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB). After earning her Masters in Clinical Psychology at VUB, she started working at the Study Guidance center of the university. As a student psychologist, she's committed to help every student achieve feelings of well-being and student success.

*Romy Demol, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium*

Romy Demol is a study path counselor at Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB), which she started in 2010 after studying Clinical Psychology at VUB. In her job she informs, advises and guides students during their study career.



#### PROGRAMME SUMMARY

Students at Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB) can be refused to re-enroll if they don't meet a minimum of study efficiency. After the first exam period, first year students at risk can use the Reflection tool of Study Guidance to explore how they can increase their study efficiency.



#### PROGRAMME ABSTRACT

At the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB) students must achieve at least 60% of the credits they have enrolled for. In case of a lower study efficiency, students receive "binding conditions": the next academic year they must achieve at least 75% of their credit amount. If a student doesn't meet this requirement, re-enrolment for that study programme will be refused by the examination board. From academic year 2023-2024 first year students must obtain at least 30% of their credit amount in their first year to avoid an immediate refusal from their programme.

Students aren't alone at VUB. Study Guidance is one of the services providing support to students during their academic journey. Our primary objective is to help students maximize their chances for success and well-being. To help students avoid binding conditions or an immediate refusal and to encourage them to take ownership of their studies, we developed a 'Reflection tool'. If first-year students fail to achieve 60% of their credit amount after the first exam session, they are considered "at risk" and are contacted by email. In this email, we explain our study progress rules and their consequences. We advise and encourage students to use the 'Reflection tool' to analyze their study approach and to explore how they can increase their study efficiency. Based on the student's situation and approach during the first semester, the tool provides a personal study advice. The topics considered are study choice, study and exam planning, study method, exam skills, emotional and mental well-being, stress management, academic language, social and academic integration, and exceptional circumstances. Based on a solution-focused approach, the tool asks students to rate each of these topics in a positive way: what went well last semester? In this way, students think about their strengths and challenges.



Students are also asked in which topics they would like to improve to increase their study efficiency. For each of the chosen topics, the student receives a helpful study advice. This can be the suggestion to reorient, a specific infographic with tips and tricks, information about workshops or trainings provided by Study Guidance and details on how to make an appointment for individual guidance.

During the show & tell we will explain and demonstrate how the 'Reflection tool' works. We will discuss the response rate of academic year 2022-2023, present our challenges and invite suggestions from the audience.

## INTRODUCING THE LEAPS TRANSITIONS COURSE



### SPEAKERS

*Alice Smith, LEAPS (based at the University of Edinburgh), Scotland*

LEAPS Assistant Director with responsibility for the LEAPS Transitions Course. Widening participation practitioner c20 years, inc. coordinating/teaching preparatory transitions and academic skills courses. Fellow of Advance HE and mentors on the Edinburgh Teaching Award. Sits on SCAPP's (Scotland's Community of Access and Participation Practitioners) Steering Group; chairs Learning/Development group, including piloting a new Professional Accreditation Scheme.

*Kirsty Wadsley, LEAPS (based at the University of Edinburgh), Scotland*

LEAPS Director



### PROGRAMME SUMMARY

Our Show & Tell will introduce the LEAPS Transitions Course - how we are supporting the successful transitions of school students from South-East Scotland into first year study. We will outline core objectives, our partnerships, practise, and how we strive to support the development of positive academic identities.



### PROGRAMME ABSTRACT

Introducing the LEAPS Transitions Course

The LEAPS Transitions course is designed to give S6 (final year) LEAPS-eligible school students the skills and experience required to make a positive transition from school to university. [LEAPS](#) is a widening participation programme which aims to encourage and advise students who are traditionally under-represented in higher education. The course introduces students to a range of practical learning strategies and academic conventions, with the focus on acquiring knowledge and tools to be a successful undergraduate student. Set in an authentic and supportive academic environment, students are encouraged to experiment with new ways of thinking whilst also getting the chance to engage and react to valuable feedback to take with them into their future studies. Ultimately, students are supported in the process of becoming successful, autonomous learners.

The Show & Tell will introduce: the course structure and assessment; how we designed such a course from a cross-institutional partnership-based context; the practicalities of offering this to final-year school students across numerous secondary schools; and the importance of securing Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework ([SCQF](#)) credits and admissions agreements from Scottish Higher Education Institutions to recognise student attainment. Conceived prior to the Covid-19 lockdowns, but then delivered during and since, the course team have had to employ a variety of digital solutions in order to continue to work with students at a critical point in their education. The team will also introduce the experience of putting in place a blended approach to learning and teaching, and hybrid technologies, which have been tested in order to combat disadvantage due to rurality. Finally, the challenges of longitudinal evaluation, the

importance of the student voice, and the development of a peer group and peer-support will be considered.

We will also demonstrate how the team strive to support the development of positive academic identities, which are crucial in successful student transitions (MacFarlane, 2018).

Key questions for discussion:

1. The course meets particular needs in the Scottish context around transitions into 1<sup>st</sup> year from secondary school – have others identified a need to support transitions elsewhere in Europe, and if yes, how does it look?
2. This is one model of how to approach this challenge – what other models could be used (whilst still supporting positive academic identities)?
3. LEAPS developed a framework of key ‘ingredients’ to guide this work – what would you see vital ingredients in you were to build something similar?



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## SELF-STUDY PROGRAM AND TRAINING THE TRAINERS: THE LINK BETWEEN PRE-BOARDING AND ONBOARDING



### SPEAKERS

*Stephanie Franzen Rothmar, University College Copenhagen, Denmark*

Consultant with speciality in educating peers and student collaboration

*Ida Marie Møller Nielsen, University College Copenhagen, Denmark*

Student counsellor with speciality in first year experience

*Aksel Herlev Rasmussen, University College Copenhagen, Denmark*

Student counsellor with speciality in first year experience



### PROGRAMME SUMMARY

As an attempt to increase the experience of coherency between pre-boarding and onboarding we have developed an online self-study pre-boarding program and a tutor training program build on and desinged to adress the same principples: sense of belonging, self-fficacy and perception of curriculum. The combination of the two initiatives create a much needed link between pre-boarding and onboarding.



### PROGRAMME ABSTRACT

University College Copenhagen has focused on and developed two key initiatives or projects as an attempt to smooth the students transitioning to our study programs and to life as a student in general even before they set foot on campus. One initiative is a digital study start program and the other is a tutor training program. The two initiatives have different target groups and focusses on different parts of the first-year experience, but essentially work towards the same goal of elevating student well-being, motivation and fundamentally completion rates.

The digital study start program is a self-study navigation tool available for all new students when starting one of our bachelor programs. New students are introduced to the program just hours after enrolling and we are therefore taking advantage of them being eager to get started on their new life as a student. The purpose of the program is to provide support and offer the students tools to successfully enter their new study program and new life as a student at a higher educational institution by aligning expectations. The study start program addresses topics such as becoming a student, study habits, motivation, and how to engage in professional communities with their peers. It is an online learning path and contains videos, text, assignments, reflection questions, discussion forum and much more all designed to kick start the process of becoming a student and prepare them for what's coming.

The tutor training program is (for now an optional) two-day course for all tutors across our 21 bachelor programs developed for and with the tutors. Due to their unique position as fellow students and peers, the tutors can to a large extent be co-creators of a study start based on equality and sense of belonging. The aim of the program is to provide the tutors with the necessary skills and knowledge to be able to integrate the

new students into the existing student communities, focusing on the transition from being an outsider to having a sense of belonging.

We have initiated this project of training the trainers because we believe that being relationally competent is a cornerstone of being a University College. To be co-creators of working communities between students characterized by mutual curiosity and a desire to understand each other's perspectives and motivations, is what we believe will bring students meaningfulness, motivation, and confidence when entering a university college.

The two abovementioned initiatives serve as a pre-boarding project and contribute to the very early part of the first-year experience before the students officially begin their study programs at University College Copenhagen.

# UNLOCKING POTENTIAL: PROMOTING TALENT MINING AND SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION



## SPEAKERS

*Yasmine Goossens, UCLL University of Applied Sciences, Belgium*

UC Leuven-Limburg offers a wide variety of profession-oriented graduate and bachelor degrees. As a policy expert Yasmine is building expertise on first generation students, diversity and inclusion. She's responsible for projects about talent mining and social integration. Yasmine is also researcher in an E+ project about inclusive student engagement at professional higher education.

*Ine Geerts, UCLL University of Applied Sciences, Belgium*

Over the past 15 years, Ine Geerts has gained a lot of expertise on diversity and inclusive education, both within the university college's policy and within the expertise research unit on inclusive society. For the past three years, she has been working as team coordinator student policy.



## PROGRAMME SUMMARY

This show-and-tell session by the University of Applied Sciences UC Leuven-Limburg (Belgium) focuses on the 'Talent Mining' project developed to address challenges faced by first-generation students, students from low-income backgrounds, those with learning difficulties, etc. in accessing quality education and support in higher education. The session aims to showcase various strategies and tools, including talent identification and assessment, personalized coaching and mentoring, for 'unlocking potential' in our students. The project aims to identify and promote the talents and potential of students to help them succeed in their academic and social integration. The show-and-tell session hopes to inspire and inform educators, policymakers, and stakeholders about the importance of promoting skills and support for students in higher education.



## PROGRAMME ABSTRACT

In today's fast-paced and rapidly changing world, the importance of education and skill development cannot be overstated. However, for many students in higher education, such as first-generation students, students from low-income backgrounds or those with learning difficulties, access to quality education and support can be a challenge.

Within our university of applied sciences, we have seen the diversity in our student body increase in recent years. What strikes us in the data is that in the regional province of Limburg (Belgium) around 45% of our students are first generation students. This can partly be explained by the large working class, due to the many factories in the area, and the history of mining: many Italian, Moroccan and Turkish migrant workers were hired to work in Belgian mines, after which many of them stayed in Limburg and started their family.

An analysis of the data regarding the inflow and outflow of first generation students shows that this group forms a very large part of our student population and that there are several

diversity characteristics within this group of students. Unfortunately we're also finding evidence that these students have a remarkably larger dropout rate.

The 'Talent Mining' project is developed to address these challenges by identifying and promoting the talents and potential of students, and providing them with the necessary support and resources to succeed in their academic and social integration.

In this session, we will showcase the various strategies and tools used in the 'Talent Mining' project, including talent identification and assessment, personalized coaching and mentoring, and innovative learning approaches.

Through this show-and-tell session, we hope to inspire and inform educators, policymakers, and other stakeholders about the importance of promoting skills and support for students in higher education.

## Parallel 1.3 (20 Minute Presentations), Room 3511

### THE PREPARE ENTRY GUIDE AND ITS EVALUATION AN EXAMPLE OF UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING



#### SPEAKERS

*Julie O' Donovan, Munster Technological University, Ireland*

Julie is an Occupational Therapist (OT) with a background working in community mental health. Prior to training as an OT Julie worked in the print media industry. Julie studied OT, at Canterbury Christ Church University, UK (2006) and is an MTU graduate with a Diploma in Design for Printing (1997).

*Rebekah Brennan, University College Cork, Ireland*

Dr Brennan is the lead researcher on the SOAR project (UCC). Rebekah holds a BA (Hons) in addiction counselling and a PhD by research in drug sociology from Waterford Institute of Technology (2018). Rebekah lectures on the Substance Use and Addiction Studies Diploma (Adult Continuing Education) at University College Cork.



#### PROGRAMME SUMMARY

The Munster Technological University (MTU) Enabling Transitions Project developed a unique resource "Prepare Entry Guide" to support autistic students as they enter university and designed specifically for their needs. The effectiveness and impact of the guide was evaluated by the SOAR Project which captured the students' voices.



#### PROGRAMME ABSTRACT

The Prepare Entry Guide is an example of the Munster Technological University (MTU) Disability Support Service actioning Universal Design for Learning (UDL). A user centered design framework was used to structure the communication on this learning experience. The guide is one output of the MTU Enabling Transitions Project whose aim is to improve access to university education for students with autism. It is a workstream funded by the SOAR Project ([www.soarforaccess.ie](http://www.soarforaccess.ie)) a national access initiative for under-represented groups. We aim to present the design process for the Prepare Entry Guide and the learnings from evaluative research conducted with students and staff.

In the initial stages of the project, it was discovered that more in-depth thinking was needed in terms of UDL, the learning environment and shaping students' activities as they enter the university environment. Thus, a primary focus of the work was to spend time with autistic students while supporting them in their first year at university through a mentoring programme in order to gain a fuller insight into their needs.

The MTU Disability Support Service (DSS) has a unique perspective on the first stage of a third level student's education. At the beginning of each academic year we are part of a student's transition - supporting them to navigate environmental and learning challenges. Each student who speaks with us about what they need to function and learn in this learning environment helps us to become aware of the usefulness of existing and potential



supports. These listening-focused conversations, alongside consultations with a local/regional Autistic Support Service, assisted us in increasing our understanding of a student's needs.

We learned that 'feeling prepared' was identified as a very important need for students and could support readiness to manage the transition into first year of university. As we explored the needs of autistic students we became aware of the importance of communication as a tool to support access to higher education. As a result, we aimed to provide clear written entry information with visuals that were descriptive as well as concise. This formed the basis of the Prepare Entry Guide.

In creating our entry support, we aimed to stay focused on accessibility as the guiding quality of the Prepare Entry Guide. Three elements were integral to putting our ideas into action. 1. Learning about design guidelines for the reader with autism. 2. Connecting with another university that was open to the idea of us building on their work. Through this connection we learnt about relevant detail, content and writing style for students with autism that already had been proven effective. Finally, 3, Creativity!

Dr Rebekah Brennan, the SOAR Project lead researcher, evaluated the effectiveness of the Prepare Entry Guide as a resource for first year autistic students using a mixed method approach: survey, focus groups and interviews. The results helped to inform future iterations of the Guide through examining what worked, what could have worked better, and identifying opportunities for development more generally in supporting autistic students using a whole university approach.

# STUDENTS' ACADEMIC ENGAGEMENT – A FOUNDATION STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVE



## SPEAKERS

*Alison Loddick, The University of Northampton, England*

Alison Loddick is a Learning Development Tutor in Mathematics and Statistics and a PhD student in Education. Alison has a keen interest in understanding how to engage students in academic learning and will be presenting some of her PhD to understand the factors leading to student engagement.



## PROGRAMME SUMMARY

This research presents the findings of a PhD case study exploring what Foundation students within a post-1992 university perceive academic engagement to be and what they would like to be improved to enhance their engagement.



## PROGRAMME ABSTRACT

Research by Loddick and Coulson (2021) showed that just under 10 per cent of student assessments at the University of Northampton were not submitted. Exploring this, 54.9 per cent of Foundation students and 32.5 per cent of first-year students did not submit at least one assignment/exam. Research is therefore required to understand what leads to students not submitting assignments. One approach to understanding this issue is to explore what leads to student engagement and disengagement. Student engagement and disengagement have been shown to link to student success (Klem and Connel, 2004; Shernoff and Schmidt, 2007; Appleton, Christenson and Furlong, 2008) and retention (Klem and Connel, 2004; Finn, 2016; Khademi Ashkzari, Piryaeei and Kamelifar, 2018). It is therefore expected that Attrition and non-submission will reduce if we can better understand and foster engagement. Engagement combines the student's holistic mentality with their physical and intellectual ability. According to Lay et al. (2021), 'student involvement is the glue, or mediator, that links important contexts' such as student's home lives, university, peers, and community to student success'.

Numerous years of research have been conducted to develop education frameworks to describe student engagement (Fredricks et al., 2004; Kahu, 2013; Zepke, 2015). However, reviews of the models found that these models were incomplete (Zepke, 2015; Boekaerts, 2016; Kahu and Nelson, 2018; Bond et al., 2020) and Boeaerts (2016) concluded that authors needed to create their own definitions of engagement to conduct their research. A review by Kahu (2013, p.758) found that the engagement frameworks were inadequate as 'a key problem is the lack of distinction between the state of engagement, its antecedents and its consequences'.

My PhD uses a case study to explore what factors lead to academic student engagement and disengagement. The research is based on student interviews and focus groups to understand how students describe and experience student engagement and what motivates them or, on the opposite side, disengages them from their studies. An extensive research subgroup included nine foundation focus groups comprising 76 students. Each focus group consisted of students within their own subject area, and a wide range of

disciplines were represented, including engineering, psychology and law. Students were asked a set of open questions in relation to:

- the definitions of students' engagement and disengagement,
- what motivates their learning,
- how they perceived the university in terms of engagement, and
- what improvements could be made that would impact their engagement.

The presentation will share research findings, including a new framework for engagement, as well as share the students' perceptions on the topics above. This research will be important to both lecturers and universities in understanding student perceptions of their studies and what is important to enable them to engage.



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## Parallel 1.4 (20 Minute Presentations), Room 3510

### TRANSLANGUAGING AS A STRATEGY TO IMPROVE LEARNING EXPERIENCES OF BAME INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION



#### SPEAKERS

*Fortunate Madondo, University of Hertfordshire, England*

Dr Fortunate Madondo is a Senior Lecturer and Programme Leader for the BA (Hons) Early Childhood Education in the School of Sciences, Humanities and Education at the University of Hertfordshire, UK. Her research interests are in issues relating to e.g., curriculum development, storytelling, early literacy.



#### PROGRAMME SUMMARY

Students around the world converge in learning and teaching at institutions of higher learning in the UK. However, very little is known about how these encounters optimize the use of more than one linguistic repertoire for cross-cultural pollination and positive student learning experiences hence the need for conducting this study.



#### PROGRAMME ABSTRACT

Higher Education Institutions (HEI) are inundated with a mixture of students from diverse and multicultural backgrounds with some struggling to cope with their academic work. The degree of multilingualism among students varies from one institution to the other (Paradowski, 2010). As such HEI classrooms encounters are compounded by students speaking different world languages with some encountering English as an Additional Language (EAL). Among these are international Black, Asian, Minority and Ethnic (BAME) students who use EAL. This study explored some strategies which could be used to improve learning and teaching experiences for all students including international BAME students at a HEI in the United Kingdom (UK). A case study research design that considered interviews, focus group discussions and University league tables was used to gather data from 10 participants. Using the social constructivist theoretical perspective, findings revealed that some international students especially recent arrivals attending University in their first year struggled to achieve better grades in their assessments both written and spoken due to challenges such as proficiency in English and the education system in the UK which might also be significantly different, in terms of resources, access to technology, as well as the style of teaching. The study recommended that higher education institutions should increase students' teaching and learning experiences through implementing a strategy such as translanguaging to enhance students' learning and teaching experiences. Researchers in the fields of sociolinguistics and applied linguistics have extensively explored the concept translanguaging, a term that Williams (1996) first proposed as 'trawsieithu' in Welsh and more recently expanded as a theoretical and analytic concept in a wider context by Garcia (2009) and other scholars (Blackledge & Creese, 2010; Canagarajah, 2013; Creese & Blackledge, 2010; Li, 2011, among many others) mainly from people who use EAL. This study is therefore the first of its own kind to try and implement

translanguaging to enhance learning experiences at the current study context. Initially the researcher was motivated to conduct this study because of the results from informal interactions which occurred around the two campuses with international/BAME students who indicated that their challenges in academic performance basically revolved around the use of English as the medium of instruction in all their learning. Not only this, but the researcher was also inspired to conduct the study as a way of fulfilling the University's mission to transform communities and society through research and innovation. Thus, the study came in at the right time especially this year where the institution under study recruited a significant number of international BAME students in the 2022-23 academic year.

## JOIN THE WAVE OF SUPPORT WITH SURFY – SUPPORTING UNDER-REPRESENTED FIRST YEARS



### SPEAKERS

*Pieterjan Bonne, Artevelde University of Applied Sciences, Belgium*

Pieterjan Bonne is project coordinator of the Erasmus+ project Supporting Underrepresented First Years (SURFY). SURFY looks at how to increase access or participation and success of students from under-represented groups/disadvantaged backgrounds by evaluating and improving our support systems.

*Jara Van Wiele, Artevelde University of Applied Sciences, Belgium; Therese Fitzgerald, University College Dublin, Ireland; Bairbre Fleming, University College Dublin, Ireland; Tine Wåst Nielsen, University of Southern Denmark; Xenia Mejer Mattsson, University of Southern Denmark*

All presenter collaborate on the SURFY project.



### PROGRAMME SUMMARY

Wondering how to better serve students from under-represented groups/disadvantaged backgrounds in the transition to and first year of higher education? So are we. For the very first time, we share our initial findings of the Erasmus+ project SURFY. We present our process for system change, the database of collected practices and initial insights on transferability.



### PROGRAMME ABSTRACT

We are looking for an answer through a practitioner's approach to research. By mapping existing practices, appraising them with students and staff, and distilling policy recommendations, we want to support institutions to increase access, participation and success of these students and improve support systems to better serve them in the transition to and first year of higher education.

This session presents the first result: a database filled with good practices.

## Parallel 1.5 (20-Minute Presentations), Room 2522

### BESPOKE VERSUS GENERIC FYE PROGRAMMING: WHICH IS RIGHT FOR YOUR INSTITUTION?



#### SPEAKERS

*Steven Smith, Saint Mary's University, Canada*

Steven is a Professor of Psychology and former Associate Vice-President Academic & Enrolment Management, former Dean of Science, and a former Registrar. Dr. Smith has expertise in persuasion, health promotion, attitudes measurement, data analysis, and student success.

*Katelynn Cater-Rogers, St. Francis Xavier University, Canada*

Katelynn is an Assistant Professor at St. Francis Xavier University in the Gerald Schwartz School of Business in Indigenous Business. Katelynn is a highly skilled social science researcher and consultant with a decade of experience in advanced statistics, research design, student intervention and success, and attitudes measurement. Katelynn has more than 10 years' experience in research focused on barriers to success, interventions leading to successful transitions, and creating and evaluating inclusive practices within organizations for individuals who are from marginalized populations.

*Verain Tabvuma, Saint Mary's University, Canada*

Vurain is the Sobey Professor in Management and an Associate Professor in the Sobey School of Business at Saint Mary's University. Vurain's research focuses on intrinsic motivation, employee and student onboarding, job satisfaction, organizational change, adaptation, student success, public service motivation, and pro-social motivation. His most recent research has investigated the impact of onboarding on student success.

*Emma Sylvester, Saint Mary's University, Canada*

Emma is a Learning Skills Strategist at Saint Mary's University where she provides academic support to students through evidence- and experience-based learning skills coaching and programming. Emma is passionate about connecting with ourselves and community to build a future in respect and authenticity.

*Tom Brophy, Saint Mary's University, Canada*

Tom Brophy is the Associate Vice-President Student Affairs and Services and is the Acting Chair of the Strategic Enrolment Management Committee at Saint Mary's University.

Tom's area of specialty are first-year experience, student retention, and student leadership.



#### PROGRAMME SUMMARY

We will present research investigating the difference in effectiveness between a bespoke and generic approach to FYE programming. Next, small groups will consider the

implications for their institutions in terms of readiness for such a program, and the benefits versus costs of bespoke versus programming for their institutions.



## PROGRAMME ABSTRACT

We will present research investigating whether there is a difference in effectiveness between two different approaches to FYE programming, a bespoke approach and a generic approach. The research is interested in finding out whether the bespoke FYE programming approach leads to greater feelings of belongingness and creates a more inclusive climate compared a generic approach that is supported by content from a FYE textbook. The rationale for this research is that whilst a large literature has shown that FYE programs, such as the FYE seminar or co-curricular FYE programs, have been shown to be greatly successful in improving first-year student success and experience, there is little to no research that investigates whether the degree of program customization plays a significant role in influencing the effectiveness of FYE programs. This is especially relevant in the case of higher education institutions that considering starting a new FYE program. Such institutions face a trade off in making the decision to go with a generic versus bespoke first-year experience program. They have the option of going with cheaper off-the-shelf generic FYE programs or making sizeable investments in developing a new custom FYE program. It is important to understand these trade-offs in depth. First, the student experience from a generic program is likely different from a bespoke FYE program. Second, it is important because understanding the impact of the type of FYE program on factors associated with student success, such as student academic performance, and feelings of belongingness. Third, the type of FYE program can have an impact on second, third and fourth year student attitudes, behaviours and retention.

We describe results from a longitudinal experimental design that was conducted in the Fall 2022 semester, at a mid-sized university in Canada. First-year students received a bespoke co-curricular first-year experience training as part of an introductory business management course. The control is another group of first-year students in a different cohort receiving programming based on a popular FYE textbook. Students in all sections (both treatment and control) were asked to fill out a survey at two time points within the semester, the first being within the first week of classes, and the last being at the end of the semester, making the experimental design also longitudinal in nature. To get an understanding of the students and their individual differences, the survey we constructed is adapted based on previous surveys used with university students across North America. These questionnaires were used to assess student engagement at the university and the student satisfaction with their university experience.

After presenting the results of our work, we will break attendees into small groups and have them consider the implications for similar programming at their institutions -- we will ask attendees to assess readiness for such a program, potential barriers, and the benefits versus costs of bespoke versus programming for their institutions.



# FROM CONSULTATION AND INVOLVEMENT OF STUDENTS TO REAL PARTICIPATION AND PARTNERSHIP BY STUDENTS: HOW THE NEW ORGANISATIONAL MODEL OF STUDENT SERVICES CREATED CHANCES FOR A REAL 'STUDENTS AS PARTNERS' PERSPECTIVE AT KU LEUVEN



## SPEAKERS

*Joke Vanhoudt, KU Leuven, Belgium*

Joke VANHOUDT, Master in educational sciences, was study counsellor at KU Leuven, Student services, since 1998. She was responsible for the study skills training and the support of the staff 'study counselling' in the faculties as regards study skills. Since 2021 she's the team coach of the new Stuvo Arenberg hub, where a team of 12 persons with different specializations work together (study coaches, study psychologists, disability officers, social workers, ...) to support students. Co-creation with the faculties and the student associations is an important goal for her and her team.

*Sofie Ooms, KU Leuven, Belgium*

I'm Sofie Ooms, a 22 year old Mathematics student currently doing my Masters. For as long as I can remember, I've volunteered and worked together with my educational institution to make the place better for the students. It started as a student representative in primary school, but has continued up until university. At KU Leuven I first started being involved as the head of the first-year committee; organizing events, giving them the necessary information as well as working together with the KU Leuven to be able to welcome the students to their new home. Afterwards I became Vice President of our student association, working together with our students, the KU Leuven and LOKO, 'the umbrella organization' for all students in Leuven. This sparked my interest in being a student representative in LOKO for Student Services KU Leuven.



## PROGRAMME SUMMARY

From Consultation and involvement of students to real participation and partnership by students in Student services. In this presentation, together (student representatives and colleagues from student services ), we will illustrate how the vision and priorities of the student associations and the new vision and organizational model and principles of Student services fit together.



## PROGRAMME ABSTRACT

In order to achieve equal educational opportunities in an inclusive manner, KU Leuven Student Services works according to the needs and requirements of the student population and the specific (campus) context. This sometimes also requires a tailor-made approach and a diversified approach, given the diversity in the student population (personal characteristics, social situation, education, age, language, family situation...) and the specificity of each study program and each campus. Together with students, Student Services KU Leuven (Stuvo) gives shape to this mission in the following slogan: "You study, we support, together we create opportunities". One of the leading principles in our

organization is using the strengths and diversity of the students and see students and students associations as partners.

LOKO is the 'umbrella' organization for all students in Leuven (Belgium), wherever they come from. They represent their interest, organize activities, support student unions, and offer an array of workshops and services. They work around different topics like diversity, sustainability, student services, culture, sport, international students etc.

Several terms have emerged to capture the work of student-staff collaboration in higher education, including 'co-creation', 'students as partners' etc. A widely cited definition is 'a collaborative, reciprocal process through which all participants have the opportunity to contribute equally, although not necessarily in the same ways, to curricular or pedagogical conceptualization, decision making, implementation, investigation or analysis'. (Cook-Sather, Bovill Felten 2012, pp 6-7). In the UK context, the work about this partnerships seems more focused on the learning and teaching or the subject-based research and inquiry. At KU Leuven, we tried to translate parts of this model to partnerships between Student Unions and Student services. (Healy M. & Healy R, HEA, 2019)

In this presentation, together (LOKO representatives and Stuvo-workers), we will illustrate how the vision and priorities of LOKO and the student associations and the new vision and organizational model and principles of Student services fit together. We illustrate the impact of our coöperation, e.g. how we try to look for a fit between the strengths of the students representatives and how to use this strengths in determining the policy of Stuvo, how we built up confidence into each other and experienced how we have the same goals and reach them together; how students can help Stuvo to organize a better support network for students and vice versa etc.; ... how the new local hubs helped in this process.



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## Parallel 1.6 (20-Minute Presentations), Room 2521

### INCREASING STUDENT ENGAGEMENT THROUGH SUBJECT-SPECIFIC VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES



#### SPEAKERS

*Lynn Pickerell, University of Lincoln, England*

Dr Lynn Pickerell did her PhD on emotion regulation in primary school children. She has an interest in wellbeing in education and is researching how to enhance HE student engagement. She puts her research into practice through her role as senior tutor at the University of Lincoln.



#### PROGRAMME SUMMARY

Improving student engagement is a key factor in academic success. Each year the school of psychology (University of Lincoln) encourages students to volunteer in a week of research and public engagement with local families. This help development of transferable skills, academic learning and provide a valuable role in the school.



#### PROGRAMME ABSTRACT

Encouraging student participation in University events can be a challenge, particularly for first year undergraduate students who may take time to develop a sense of belonging with the academic community. Each summer, the school of psychology at the University of Lincoln runs a research-based event with families in the local community, this is called Summer Scientist week. During this week children are invited to take part in research projects run by our developmental psychologists. While the children are waiting for the studies they are entertained in the 'play-zone'. It is the vital role of the student volunteers to play with the children and provide information for parents and caregivers. Our student volunteers also have the opportunity to work alongside the researchers and gain valuable research assistant experience.

Working from the perspective of self-determination theory we provide autonomy, competence and relatedness. We work with students to negotiate their role and the activities that they would like to participate in; we provide them with training and outline the skills that will develop during the week; and we building a sense of belonging to the school and the wider community.

Feedback from first year students indicate they have gained confidence in their ability to conduct research, particularly with vulnerable groups; they have gained valuable experience in academic skills, such as data collection, which improves competence and employability and they have gained transferable skills such as communication, problem-solving and organisation. We, as organisers, have also been able to provide references for first year student volunteers. This has been invaluable for some who have an otherwise limited pool of potential referees.

A future area to develop from this project is to ensure that students take time to reflect on their experience and make use of the skills and knowledge that they have gained. This is a potential area of collaboration with our careers advisory service.

# EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF ONLINE AND HYBRID LEARNING ON THE FIRST YEAR STUDENT EXPERIENCE: A STUDENT-STAFF COLLABORATIVE PROJECT UTILISING CREATIVE DATA COLLECTION METHODS



## SPEAKERS

*Paula Miles, University of St Andrews, Scotland*

Paula is the Director of Teaching for Psychology & Neuroscience, University of St Andrews. Paula leads the University's Enhancement Theme and sits on the Mental Health Task Force and Student Experience Strategic Management Group. Paula's research area is educational psychology, particularly focusing on factors impacting the student experience at university.

*Nicole Cizauskas, University of St Andrews, Scotland*

Nicole Cizauskas graduated from St Andrews in 2022 with BSc Neuroscience. She is currently completing MSc Health Data Analytics and Machine Learning, Imperial College London. Nicole is passionate about improving the quality of the student experience for marginalized groups and using creative data collection and analysis methods to accomplish this.

*Hitanshi Badani, University of St Andrews, Scotland*

Hitanshi Badani is a third-year undergraduate student at St Andrews studying Psychology and International Relations. She has always been passionate about representing student voices at learning institutions. Hitanshi would love to explore some of the creative ways that we can facilitate inclusive environments at universities.



## PROGRAMME SUMMARY

Our presentation will outline ongoing student-led projects researching online and hybrid learning experiences. We will describe the creative research methods adopted in this project, explore the first year student opinion of online and hybrid learning experiences, and showcase the effect of student-staff collaboration on strengthening the learning environment at university.



## PROGRAMME ABSTRACT

During the shift to online and hybrid learning during the pandemic, the student body experienced new teaching-related digital technologies. As education continues its transition to a 'new normal' post-covid, it is important to decide which of these digital technologies should be kept and whether any particular student cohorts were differentially impacted (either positively or negatively) by these changes in teaching delivery. To determine this, we conducted research on the first year student experience, within different learning environments, utilising a student-staff collaboration to ensure we kept the student voice at the heart of our work.

Initially, questionnaires were distributed to the full student body, asking students to report on the impact of these new teaching environments on their learning experiences, their social experiences, and their wellbeing. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected. Next, to broaden the range of student voices we heard from, we considered

other methods that would help alleviate issues such as selection bias and survey fatigue. We decided to include two additional data collection methodologies in our longitudinal study: illustrative storytelling and analyses of anonymous student posts on social media. For our illustrative storytelling approach, students used drawings to represent their experiences at six key points across the semester (e.g. Start of Semester, Weeks 1-5, Independent Learning Week, Weeks 7-11, Revision Week and Exam Period). In our social media study, we searched for key terms related to online/hybrid learning on public Facebook groups for students at our institution. In both cases, data were analysed to identify themes present in the visual stories and unsolicited Facebook posts.

Overall, our multi-method study, conducted during a period of unprecedented change to teaching and learning, significantly advanced our understanding of the student experience in different learning environments. For example, data from the questionnaires and social media posts demonstrated that students valued and wished to retain recorded lectures. Of note, neurodivergent student cohorts reported benefitting greatly from recorded lectures, acknowledging the control and ownership of their own learning that these recordings helped facilitate. These findings contributed to a significant change in University policy; it is now compulsory to record lectures. Results from the storytelling study demonstrated that wellbeing decreased across the semester, indicating that it may be beneficial to provide additional support in the second half of the semester. An interesting methodological observation was that students were highly responsive to novel creative methods of data collection, such as storytelling. We believe that these methods provide an important and currently underutilised way of assessing the student experience. In addition, we believe that having a student-led, staff-supported research approach greatly contributed to the success of this study. One of the most rewarding aspects of this project was the strong and lasting collaboration that has been fostered between students and staff.

## Parallel 1.7 (20-Minute Presentations), Room 2517

### LIFE TOOLS ONLINE: EXPLORING STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES OF THE ADAPTATION OF A LEARNER-DIRECTED PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME TO ONLINE PROVISION



#### SPEAKERS

*Alana James, University of Reading, England*

Dr Alana James is an Associate Professor in Psychology. She researches the support for the transition into and out of university, particularly for students with mental health conditions and/or autism. At Reading she is Co-Chair of the Committee on Student Experience and Development and a School Director of Academic Tutoring.

*Alicia Pena Bizama, University of Reading, England*

Dr Alicia Pena Bizama is a Chartered Counselling Psychologist, an Occupational Psychologist, and a Consultant working with schools, colleges and universities. She is the Manager of the Life Tools Programme at the University of Reading, which supports students with the transition into university and across their degree journey.

*Denis Persichini, University of Reading, England*

Denis Persichini is a recent BSc Psychology graduate from University of Reading. During his degree he was a student researcher for the Life Tools programme, as well as a Wellbeing Champion with the Students' Union. Denis completed a year-long professional placement working on student wellbeing initiatives in the Psychology department.



#### PROGRAMME SUMMARY

An evaluation of the online adaptation of a learner-directed, universal support programme (Life Tools) for students' personal development is presented. Students' self-rated impact on key outcome areas and qualitative experiences of online delivery are reported. We reflect upon benefits associated with online support provision and practice points for effective delivery.



#### PROGRAMME ABSTRACT

Background:

University can be a time of personal growth, but also of personal challenge. Targeted support services, such as counselling, can benefit students experiencing particular difficulties however there is also a place for universal forms of support with potential benefits for all students. Engagement in learner-directed support programmes has been found to promote academic development, motivation, and ability to cope with anxiety (Theobald, 2021). During the pandemic universities needed to adapt to online delivery, which created opportunities for considering the potential benefits of digital provision of support programmes.

Aims:

University students' experiences of the adaptation of a learner-directed, universal support programme to online delivery were evaluated. The Life Tools Programme, University of Reading, supports students' transition into university and across their degree, with evidence-based content in personal development and wellbeing.

#### Participants:

Students were recruited between December 2020 and February 2021 and had attended on average 4 programme webinars. Forty-six students completed a survey, with 13 participating in semi-structured interviews and focus groups. Over half (68%) were accessing the programme whilst living off-campus.

#### Methods:

A small-scale, mixed-methods evaluation was designed and conducted by student researchers in partnership with staff. The survey assessed general adaptability (Martin et al., 2012) and levels of motivation, organisation, resilience, connectedness and university transition experience, as well as self-perceived impact of the Life Tools programme in these outcome areas. Interviews and focus groups were thematically analysed to generate key themes in programme experiences.

#### Findings:

Participants' mean scores on adaptability, motivation, organisation, resilience, and transition experience were moderately high, however connectedness was at the mid-point. Students' ratings of the extent to which the online Life Tools programme had positively impacted their development were moderately high across all outcome areas, with perceived impact higher for students who had attended a greater number of webinars.

Qualitative themes generated covered motivations to attend, programme perceptions, benefits, and development areas. Motivations included the range of topics covered, links to exam success, and the possibility of gaining a programme certificate. Notable programme features perceived were its evidence-based, scientific nature and the responsiveness of the coordinator. Central benefits were the flexibility and accessibility of online delivery, and support for transition into the new academic year. Potential developments included enhancing webinar interactivity and raising further awareness of programme benefits.

#### Discussion:

The adaptation of a learner-directed personal development programme to online delivery was perceived by students to have positive impact in key outcome areas as well as benefits specifically associated with digital provision. Positive impact increased with greater attendance, and advertising the potential benefits may be crucial for engagement in such universal, self-regulated support programmes. The need to create effective forms of interactivity for webinars was identified, indicating that what works well in-person may not translate to online delivery.

This evaluation used mixed-methods to provide an in-depth look at students' experiences, but was limited to a small-scale, single time-point study. Further evidence is needed on the impact of learner-directed, universal support programmes in universities, and to identify the key mechanisms involved in their effective implementation.



# GRADUATE ATTRIBUTE AUDITS, SKILLS WALLETS AND PERSONAL BEST – HOW TO USE PERSONALISATION TO HELP STUDENTS TAKE OWNERSHIP OF THEIR LEARNING JOURNEY



## SPEAKERS

*Norbert Morawetz, Henley Business School (University of Reading), England*

Norbert is Prof. for Entrepreneurship and Digital Innovation at Henley Business School. He is a National Teaching Fellow, and academic innovator.

*Trevor Bezzina, Potential.ly, England*



## PROGRAMME SUMMARY

This session shares lessons learned from working with three universities on designing and implementing a technology solution to enhance and scaffold first year student experience journeys.



## PROGRAMME ABSTRACT

First year student experiences face at least three fundamental challenges:

Firstly, how can we effectively support students when they first arrive to university? How can we reduce complexity/chaos and feelings of being overwhelmed? How can we familiarise them effectively with the new university environment (including systems and support services), help them make friends and help them settle into university life quickly – at scale?

Secondly, how can we personalise the first-year experience in such a way, that students will take ownership of their development journey throughout their degree? How can we build a growth mindset/ habit of lifelong learning in students that will lead them to continuously engage not just with curricular but also co-curricular learning opportunities throughout their degree, improving student success and graduate outcomes?

Thirdly, how can (re-) design curricular and co-curricular learning journeys in such a way that gives students a feeling of continuous progression of competency development, beyond merely completing one module after the other on their course.

This presentation will share best practice case studies from three UK universities who have embraced technology and clever pedagogical design to address the above challenges. We will report on how Loughborough University's 'Ready Set Loughborough' programme uses a combination of diagnostics, activities and resources to engage over 4,500 students per year to better understand and measure their strengths and challenges before providing a tailored scaffolding to build upon and strengthen their capabilities across 5 main themes.

We will then look at a case study from University College Cork, and their GAP Attributes and Values programme. A series of activities for all incoming students cultivates continuously life long and life wide learners, building curious cohort of students who play a part in UCC's dynamic and diverse community. The programme offers resources tailored to each college, school and discipline to adopt them and embed them explicitly into the curriculum, and for each Student Experience Unit to encompass and embed within extra-

curricular and co-curricular activities. One of the key activities is the GAP compass, a self assessment that provides students with a structure to understand their opportunities for growth around the five GAP values and activities.

Similar case studies at leading Irish university partners or internationally use the easy to build diagnostics, tailored learning journeys and rich data capture to not just deliver highly scaled up programmes like these but to measure and report on the impact.

Finally, we will look at first lessons learned from the University of Westminster and University of Reading on piloting a new skills wallet, that helps students articulate the competencies acquired through curricular and co-curricular learning.