PARALLEL SESSION 2

TUESDAY 27TH JUNE 2023

European EFYE

FIRST YEAR EXPERIENCE
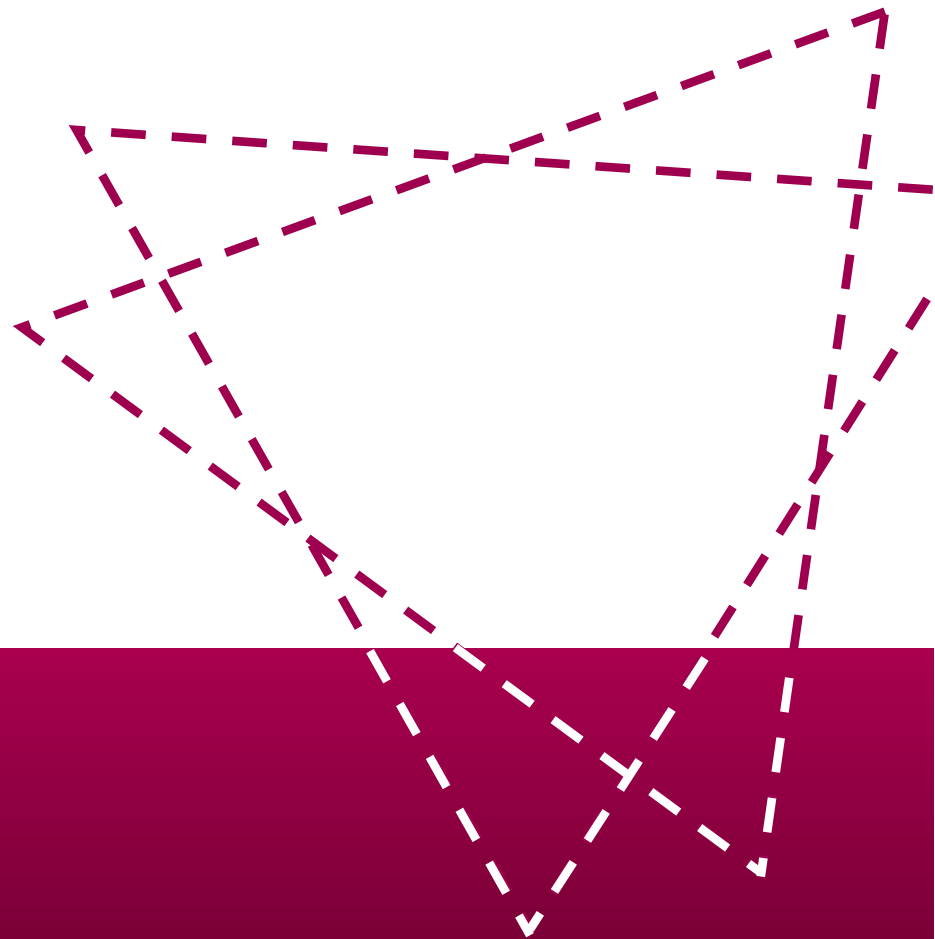
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Parallel 2.1 (Show and Tell), Room 3508

PERSONALISING SUPPORT THROUGH STUDENT SUCCESS OFFICERS

👤 SPEAKERS

Brooke Ireland, Abertay University, Scotland

Brooke Ireland is a Student Success Officer within the School of Business, Law, and Social Science Division at Abertay University. She graduated from Abertay University in 2021 with a BA in Sociology and undertook an Erasmus study abroad placement at the University of Amsterdam. Her interests include supporting students to succeed and the international higher education sector.

Lee Hutchison, Abertay University, Scotland

Lee Hutchison finished school in 2014 and attended a series of Art & Design courses at Fife College before enrolling at Abertay University to study BA (Hons) Computer Arts as a direct entry student. A student of Abertay for three years, Peer Mentor and Student Helper, he graduated in 2021. Hutchison is now currently hired as a Student Success Officer at Abertay University for the School of Design and Informatics.

Kenny Mcmonagle, Abertay University, Scotland

💬 PROGRAMME SUMMARY

Abertay's Student Success Officers (SSO) are recent graduates who have first-hand experience of being a student, of Faculty and of the student facing processes of the University. The primary responsibility is to provide proactive, tailored interventions to students that encourage them to make positive learning decsions. We will share details of Abertay's SSO model as well as feedback from its staff and students.

📄 PROGRAMME ABSTRACT

Abertay University is proud to welcome a vast range of diverse students however we also recognise the importance of retaining students, especially those in their first year of study. This session will explain the purpose of the Student Success Officer role and how we are beneficial to the university. We will highlight case studies and how we make positive student interventions. We ensure students feel 'seen' by the institution and feel part of the Abertay learning community. It is important to recognise that every student faces unique challenges and so we focus on personalising our approach by creating a supportive environment to enhance their success.

The SSO role provides students with a recognisable face, one that is similar in age. We have experience in navigating university systems and working with members of staff within our respective academic Schools and the wider University. We understand the challenges students may face because we too faced them. Also, we have utilised the wide range of support services Abertay has to offer. We also work closely alongside our School's Academic Advisor. This close relationship allows us to provide the best outcomes for

students, by referring students to our School Academic Advisor they can receive specialist support.

Data is triangulated from a variety of sources to highlight students who may need support. Using learner analytics systems and information from academic staff, we can readily identify students who may be showing early signs that they need support. Students who may have previously 'fallen through the cracks' are contacted and are offered support which is tailored to them. With our inclusion, students receive the support and guidance that they need. We work cross-departmentally and through the training we received we now work alongside professional services and academic staff, allowing us to seamlessly integrate within existing University systems.

We conclude that the SSO role has been an asset to both the student body and the staff population within Abertay University. It has contributed towards student success. Most importantly, it has encouraged a vast number of students to reach out for the support that they may need to make positive decisions to continue their learning journey.

UCC SKILLS CENTRE: AN INTRODUCTION TO OUR 'ACADEMIC COACHING' SERVICE

👤 SPEAKERS

Kathy Bradley, University College Cork, Ireland

Kathy Bradley is Head of the Skills Centre at University College Cork which provides an active and responsive learning space for students seeking to unlock their potential. A UCC law graduate, with a Certificate in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education and a Higher Diploma in Executive Coaching, Kathy facilitates peer-to-peer and interdepartmental engagement with academic and student communities.

Éadaoin Regan, University College Cork, Ireland

Dr Éadaoin Regan has been a tutor in the UCC Skills Centre for three years and has been involved in planning and collaboration of bespoke sessions to meet student needs across various colleges in University College Cork. Éadaoin completed her PhD in the Department of English (UCC) in 2022 and is currently continuing in her role in the Skills Centre, meeting with students and lecturing staff to provide further opportunities to identify supports most valuable to each student and course we engage with.

💬 PROGRAMME SUMMARY

In the UCC Skills Centre, our team recognises that all students organise their time management, study skills, lecture preparation, and deadlines in various different ways. All students learn differently, and the planning of studies can be stressful and elusive. Our 30 minute academic study coaching sessions acknowledge the personal approach required to suit each student's needs in their planning and delivery of all aspects of their education.

📄 PROGRAMME ABSTRACT

In the UCC Skills Centre, our team recognises that all students organise their time management, study skills, lecture preparation, and deadlines in various different ways. All students learn differently, and the planning of studies can be stressful and elusive. Our academic study coaching sessions acknowledge the personal approach required to suit a student's needs in their planning and delivery of all aspects of their education. These peer-to-peer 30 min slots allow for a student to meet with one of our Postgraduate Tutors to discuss a SMART approach to studies in a way that suits their learning styles, individual needs, time commitments, and personal life. We ask: what is it that you do well? What is blocking you from achieving your goals? Together, student and tutor can develop a detailed, personalised plan to help tackle the academic workload, begin to work out what works well for them, and identify potential pitfalls and hazards.

Underpinned by the pedagogy of kindness and using coaching approaches our approach to Academic Coaching is grounded in inclusivity. The UCC Skills Centre is a place where all students are welcome, where peer-to-peer engagement with our team provides students with a toolkit, fostering an ethos of embracing learning rather than focusing exclusively on grades. We strive to foster a love of lifelong learning in our students by helping them know

themselves as learners, exploring strategies that shapes how they learn, study, and manage their time so they can successfully learn more deeply and efficiently.

YOU'VE GOT THIS! PROVIDING FIRST YEAR STUDENTS WITH TOOLS FOR COPING WITH FEAR OF FAILURE WHILE STARTING IN HIGHER EDUCATION: A 6 WEEK GROUP TRAINING PROGRAM

SPEAKERS

Katrien Vanderstappen, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium

Katrien Vanderstappen is a study psychologist (Ma Psychology) at Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB) since 2011. Her expertise is on fear of failure, stress and motivation. She provides individual and group guidance for students during all the stages of studying in higher education.

Debbi de Caluwe, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium

Debbi de Caluwé is a study psychologist (Ma Psychology) at Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB) since 2011. Her expertise is on fear of failure, stress and motivation. She provides individual and group guidance for students during all the stages of studying in higher education.

PROGRAMME SUMMARY

Fear of failure is a main reason for students to seek help from a psychologist at VUB. The existing training did not always meet first-year student's needs. Therefore a new program with a focus on both dealing with fear of failure and on social and academic integrations has been developed.

PROGRAMME ABSTRACT

The Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB) believes it is important not only to support students during their academic path, but also for students to feel good in their role as a student and as a part of the university community. The VUB Study Guidance Team provides students with coaching for both goals. Therefore, in addition to the guidance from study advisors and study path counselors, students can also turn to a team of study psychologists, who provide help for students on topics that impact study and student well-being. The goal is to help students maximize their chances at success and making sure they feel good during their studies.

Different guidance options are available: Students have access to infographics and online tips and tricks, workshops and group trainings on study skills and mental health related themes are organized frequently, and individual guidance is also a possibility for students with more profound questions. All guidance is offered free for students.

One of the most common themes for students to reach out to a study psychologist is dealing with fear of failure. For more than 15 years, study psychologists at VUB have offered group trainings for students around coping with fear of failure. These trainings are traditionally focused primarily on students who already have some experience in their program and in higher education, and less on first-year students with a vulnerability for fear of failure. Over time, VUB Study Guidance perceived an increased need for first-year students on a community of support on this theme as well. While more experienced

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students find connection and strategies for dealing with fear of failure in sharing their process with peers during the traditional group training, our first-year students noticed that their lack of similar experiences made it more difficult to connect and benefit from the training. Peer to peer interaction to build connectiveness is a missing factor for them.

To meet these demands, we developed a training, specifically for first-year students, with a focus on both dealing with fear of failure and on social and academic integration. We consciously choose to develop a group training rather than focusing on individual counseling, precisely because students who show good connectedness with their educational institution and their peers are twice as buffered against the development of mental illness (Graber et al., 2016; Lester et al., 2013; Ueno, 2004; Whitlock et al., 2012).

During the show and tell, we will elaborate on the program of the six week group training for first-year students. We will show how the training program is structured and discuss the different topics and exercises that are addressed. Experiences of both students and study psychologists on this training program will also be shared.

Key discussion question(s) which we would like to discuss with delegates are: 1. Which topics are relevant for a fear of training for first-year students; 2. Is there a difference between first-year and senior years in terms of fear of failure counselling 3. How to reach out to first-year students?

Parallel 2.2 (Show and Tell), Room 3011

SKILLS ACQUISITION IN YEAR 1 PSYCHOLOGY & BUSINESS UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

👤 SPEAKERS

Pauldy Otermans, Brunel University London, England

Dr Pauldy Otermans is a Senior Lecturer in Psychology at Brunel. She is the Deputy Division Lead for Psychology, and Employability Lead for the Division of Psychology, a Recognised Programme Developer, Academic Professional Development Unit Panel Advisor, and Fellow of the Brunel Academy for the Transformation of Teaching. Dr Otermans' research focuses on Innovative Teaching & Learning in Higher Education; Student Success and EDI; Employability & Student Outcomes; Student Experience and Student Satisfaction; Assessment and Feedback; and Student Engagement.

Stephanie Baines, Brunel University London, England

Dr Stephanie Baines is a Lecturer in Psychology at Brunel. She is the Psychology UG Programme Lead. Previously she worked as a Lecturer in Psychology at Bangor University and the University of Manchester and as a Teaching Fellow at University College London. Dr Baines' research focuses on Innovation in Teaching & Learning in Higher Education; Graduate outcomes & Employability; Student Engagement and Experience; EDI and Student Success; and Assessment and Feedback.

Morweena Carr, Brunel University London, England

Dr Mowenna Carr is a Senior Lecturer in Business Education and the Director of BERGH (Business Education Research & Guidance Hub). Part of the Student Experience Team at Brunel Business School, most of my role is focused on students and caring for them. We work to ensure that students get the support they need. Her academic education research looks at compassion in teaching, the role of community, and co-creation to support academic transition.

💬 PROGRAMME SUMMARY

The Skills Acquisition in Year 1 Psychology & Business Undergraduate Students study investigates how our first year students understand and prioritise their skill development, particularly in relation to their expectations of their course and previous educational experiences.

📄 PROGRAMME ABSTRACT

The Skills Acquisition in Year 1 Psychology & Business Undergraduate Students study investigates how our first year students understand and prioritise their skill development, particularly in relation to their expectations of their course and previous educational experiences. This study uses a online survey using a combination of quantitative and qualitative questions. The presentation will briefly discuss the study design and rationale for Business and Psychology students. Preliminary findings highlight an interesting picture

of the skills development of students in their first year and their confidence levels in a variety of skills. Future interventions and solutions will be discussed to enhance the skills development and transition to university for our students.

THE RISKY-SAFE-SPACE: USING REFLECTIVE APPROACHES AND VALUES TO SUPPORT WRITING DEVELOPMENT IN WORK BASED LEARNING

SPEAKERS

Vic Boyd, Glasgow Caledonian University, Scotland

Vic is a member of the academic team in the Institute for University to Business Education at Glasgow Caledonian University. Her research and practice interests lie in mutable student identities and the role of technology in facilitating learner agency and experimental selfhood.

Colin Wilson, Glasgow Caledonian University, Scotland

Colin works as an academic development tutor at Glasgow Caledonian University, supporting UK and transnational work-based learners studying railway operations management programmes. His research interests include academic writing practices, academic literacies, English for specific purposes and transnational education.

PROGRAMME SUMMARY

The risky-safe-space, whilst seemingly contradictory, provides scope for experimental, yet structured, writing development practices. In the context of Work Based Learning (WBL) the reflexivity that is so crucial to learning and assessment design is used to encourage depth of learner self-awareness and autonomy.

PROGRAMME ABSTRACT

This session will share an account of taking an embedded approach to supporting the development of academic literacies amongst work-based learners in one UK HEI. In particular, it will consider the use of reflective pedagogical tools and values in supporting work-based learners to become confident and adaptable writers. The session will consider how work-based pedagogies and approaches may have far-reaching relevance in a post-pandemic landscape, where reskilling and professional agility are likely to become more prolific aspects of education and work. Writing itself is framed as an integrated communication practice that encompasses literature retrieval, reading, evaluation, synthesis and articulation of argument.

Work Based Learning (WBL) principles consider the relationship between and requirements of the workplace and the learner as opposed to being entirely subject driven (Boud and Solomon, 2001). As such, experiential and reflective modes of learning inform learning design in a way that encourages and engages learners to not only assume responsibility but to challenge, disrupt and develop. Students are encouraged to adopt responsibility, pursue inquiry and develop self-direction to become heutagogical, agentic learners (Canning, 2010; Blaschke, 2012), taking risky steps to examine their professional selves.

Ruth Helyer (2015) argued that a postmodern, critical approach to WBL encourages a reflective perspective that focuses not just on existing experience, but on what is being and will be learned; to 'question the "correct" order of things' (p. 21) and to remove boundaries, "safety" and to introduce an element of fear (Helyer, 2007). Helyer (2015) also

acknowledged the importance of trust and a supportive tutor-student and peer community in encouraging students to surface critical observations and reflections.

In the Insitute for University to Business Education (IU2B) at Glasgow Caledonian University, we operationalise these values in the provision of an exploratory risky-safe-space. We provide our work based learners with access to 'testbed' spaces, such as virtual writing retreats, to 'low stakes' opportunities to write for specific purposes and audiences, and offer feedforward on aspects of written communication, use of evidence and approach to structure.

This session will offer an overview of practices and invite colleagues to consider, with us:

- Are there other contexts than WBL where the risky-safe-space might make a contribution?
- How do we capture impact of the risky-safe-space on writing confidence?
- What examples from practice can we learn from in adapting the risky-safe-space for the future of WBL?

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MYSUCCESS MICROCREDENTIALS: A CASE STUDY EXPLORING THE SUCCESS OF MINI-MODULES IN FIRST YEAR WHILST USING COLLABORATION AND TECHNOLOGY TO ENHANCE THE SUCCESS OF STUDENTS.

👤 SPEAKERS

Olivia Morgan, Abertay University, Scotland

My name is Olivia, and I am a graduate applied biomedical science student. I have been working as a module assistant since 2021, and have been lucky enough to meet some wonderful students and staff whilst learning along the way. The modules I have been involved with are: ABE101; ABE105; ABE108, ABE217 and ABE107.

Darcie *Lawson, Abertay University, Scotland*

Hello! My name is Darcie, and I am a soon to be graduate of Forensic Sciences. I have been working as a module assistant since 2022. This opportunity has provided me with plenty of chances to work with some wonderful likeminded students and staff members. The modules I have helped to support include ABE102: and ABE104: Dundee and me

Sushmita Mago, Abertay University, Scotland

Hi, my name is Sushmita Mago and I have been a module assistant since 2021. I also am a Biomedical Science student. I have been involved in ABE108; 107 and ABE217.

💬 PROGRAMME SUMMARY

This show and tell task will explore the role of the MySuccess modules in the first year experience, along with undertaking practical activities exploring how to boost student engagement in first year modules.

📄 PROGRAMME ABSTRACT

This show and tell session will explore the MySuccess modules along with the role of the module assistants themselves, and how this has evolved over time. The purpose of this show and tell session is to provide evidence-based strategies of which facilitated first year student success at Abertay University, whilst also learning about ways that this role can be improved. Problems were raised about the fragmentation between curriculums at Abertay and the elective modules provided to first and second year students, so in 2021, the MySuccess Modules were launched. These microcredentials seeks to build academic and social foundations for student success. The role of module assistant was created in 2021 to facilitate student learning and to encourage student success through the provision of educational activities and regular communication with students. Over this time, the module assistants have undertaken various activities, such as pizza nights, drop in sessions and even tours around the local area, and have become well versed in effective strategies to engage and assist students. We have found that the most effective learning strategies involve a lot of trial and error, however primarily encompass: regular communication; providing a more timetabled approach to completion of resources; engaging with students prior to their studies; enabling cross collaboration between departments at university to facilitate the provision of resources deemed helpful to students; along with trialling

different forms of digital platforms to improve the flexibility of support on offer for students. Despite the diversity in learning strategies, the progression and engagement of students has been lacking across these modules. We will look at the conclusions of module assistants upon testing various learning practices, and explore how to enhance the effectiveness of engagement strategies through question based activities. The questions used in this activity are as follows:

What are your thoughts around first year student engagement with modules?

Have you observed any challenges to student engagement before? If so, what was the general situation and how did you go about confronting these challenges?

How would you approach this situation: Initiating progression through the module early ensures that students would have enough time to balance life commitments with university work, therefore it is important to ensure students start their studies as early as possible. To ensure that students expand their own academic achievements with life balance, facilitating early engagement with students is essential. However, within the ABE modules, there are many students are failing to progress through the module until weeks before the assessment deadline. This puts stress on the students, and means that some students may struggle to achieve what they wished to within the module. How would you go about boosting early engagement within these modules?

The ABE modules are looking to differentiate the academic activities taking place within each module in order to make a more exciting programme of activities for students to diversify the curriculum. This can include outdoor activities; field trips; treasure hunts around the local area/geocaching. Are there any activities that may boost the engagement of students? How would these benefit the learning and engagement side of these modules?

Parallel 2.3 (20-Minute Presentation), Room 3511

THE VALUE OF ENGAGING WITH STAFF DEVELOPMENT TO ENHANCE STUDENT ENGAGEMENT, BELONGING AND SUCCESS

SPEAKER

Conor Naughton, Nottingham Trent University, England

Conor is an educational developer responsible for a portfolio of educational development services at scale with stakeholders across NTU. Specialising in student engagement and transition he has extensive experience in the area both at NTU and in the wider sector including as a prominent former student leader.

PROGRAMME SUMMARY

How do we successfully engage our students if we can't even engage staff? This session will share the positive engagement of academic and professional service staff with institutional development workshops on the subject of enhancing student engagement and transition highlighting how positive engagement can lead to successful outcomes for students.

PROGRAMME ABSTRACT

Managing student engagement has always been challenging (Lowe, 2020), and these challenges have been further exacerbated by the global pandemic (Attree, 2021; Kelly & Kanu, 2021; McKay et. al., 2021; Taylor & Watson, 2021). As a result of this, the importance of staff engaging with training and development that gives them the latest evidence, insight and solutions to create the right environment for academic and social student success is vital. However, with increasing demands on staff and subsequent competing priorities this engagement can often be overlooked across the sector.

As an educational developer, I am responsible for the professional staff development package at Nottingham Trent University that includes fostering a strengthened sense of student belonging on their course, re-engaging low-engaged students and building inclusive and successful induction offers. These workshops provide a forum to discuss prevalent issues surrounding the area and provide a supported, collaborative opportunity to generate shared solutions. Since the 2022/23 academic year I have run 25 of these workshops with over 200 attendees.

The offer has faced challenges with initial attendance and buy-in including academics' hesitance to engage with an educational developer who is not a 'pure academic' given my position in the 'third space' across both academic and professional services. Apprehension to engage as a result of me being early in my career and reluctance that the offer is not worth their time commitment/would not meet the needs of their course/school were all early challenges.

To solve this, I met staff halfway bringing my development offer to them including bespoke sessions and guidance documents. Once I began to gain staff buy-in the benefits they

found from the content and how the workshop allowed staff to share their insights led to invaluable word-of-mouth feedback that spread leading to higher attendance and greater results for students. Vitally, as more staff engaged the ability for safe sharing of challenges, success and methods to improve student success emerged. Additionally, I flipped academics view of me being early in my career as a positive, drawing on my expertise, passion and closeness to the area as a recent graduate, committee member of RAISE and former Students' Union President.

Evaluation of the workshops is on-going however, as a result, staff have reported greater engagement with student representatives, increased confidence of student mentors and those they tutor and a marked increase in students utilising support systems e.g. hardship funding. Examples include:

Of 160 attendees to complete the post-workshop feedback form:

- 97% Stated they will utilise the knowledge and skills they developed through the session in the next six months
- 95% Rated the workshop offer as very engaging
- 95% Noted the workshop met their needs

In summary, this presentation will detail through my lens as an early career educational developer and former Students' Union President (2020 – 2022) the wealth of qualitative and quantitative insight I have gained and proven approaches in my practice. It will take attendees on a journey through staff challenges and successes including overcoming barriers to engagement and the benefits of cross-discipline sharing and the impact it can have on driving up engagement across year groups, most notably first-year students.

TRANSITIONS AT MTU: HOW CAN €500 TRANSFORM TRANSITIONS?

SPEAKERS

Róisín O'Grady, Munster Technological University, Ireland

Róisín O'Grady is Student Engagement Officer in AnSEO – The Student Engagement Office and oversees the planning and delivery of a range of student engagement programmes. Róisín has a background in Guidance and Counselling, Coaching and Human Resource Management and has worked extensively across the higher education sector and industry.

Sandra Power, Munster Technological University, Ireland

Sandra Power is project officer on the Transitions programme and Le Chéile programme in AnSEO-The Student Engagement Office at Munster Technological University. Sandra has a background in psychology and has worked in primary, community and the higher education sector.

PROGRAMME SUMMARY

Transitions at MTU works collaboratively with staff in the development and funding of projects that support students at key points in the university cycle by creating belonging, peer-to-peer mentorship opportunities and staff/student collaborations. Collaborative approaches, opportunities for dialogue and the impact for students and staff will be discussed.

PROGRAMME ABSTRACT

The Transitions at MTU programme evolved from international research on student progression and success in higher education and the importance of induction and orientation programmes into university. The transition from secondary school to third level education is significant (Kuh et al., 2011). What happens to students during their first year in higher education has a powerful impact on whether they continue in higher education. The more a student is 'embedded', both from an academic and social aspect, the more likely they are to succeed (Mayhew et al., 2010). Early engagement is essential to promote belonging and for this to continue across the student life cycle.

The Transitions at MTU programme works collaboratively with staff in the development and funding of projects that support students throughout university. The first year 'into' MTU transition experience integrates classroom experiences with co-curricular and extra-curricular activities to fully engage students in learning, promote student belonging and opportunities for peer-to-peer mentorship and staff/student collaboration. From seed funding, engagement in the programme has expanded its reach and impact and has elevated the student experience. In 2022, the Transitions programme funded 70 projects across 8 departments, impacting more than 2000 students at MTU. Examples of projects include:

1) Team building activities, educational trips and site visits
2) Breakfast mornings with students and staff
3) Meet and Greet events between new students and later year groups
4) Role model seminars

The theme of dialogue in the context of the Transitions programme will be discussed in the following way:

1) Collaborative approaches:

   a. Relationship Development: Building trust and relationships with staff and how through the establishment of rapport, trust, mentorship and coaching of project leads, meaningful engagement grew

   b. Distributed Leadership: Empowering staff in the form of distributed leadership which in turn has created a significant multiplier-effect for engagement in the Transitions programme

   c. Awareness: Through dialogue, awareness has developed of other student engagement services and the development of opportunities for staff/student co-creation projects

2) Impact on staff and students with case study examples

   a. Staff engagement – how staff engagement evolved and impacted partnership with students and the teaching and learning experience

   b. Student engagement – the student voice and the impact on belonging and engagement in their studies

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Parallel 2.4 (20-Minute Presentations), Room 3510

BRIDGING THE GAP FOR NON-TRADITIONAL FIRST YEAR STUDENTS IN A DISTANCE EDUCATION SETTING

👤 SPEAKERS

Andre Biederbeck, FernUniversität in Hagen, Germany

Dr André Biederbeck is a member of the management board at the Centre for Learning and Innovation and Coordinator of the university-wide studyFIT programme comprising over 40 different services addressing general and subject-related academic competences. Previously he worked at different campus universities focusing on the design of the freshman year.

Prue Goredema, FernUniversität in Hagen, Germany

Dr Prue Goredema is the Project Manager of the English Learning Support service at the FernUniversität's Centre for Learning and Innovation. She has research and teaching experience in Second Language Acquisition, Materials Development and Adult Education. Previously, she was the Coordinator of TESOL at the Chemnitz University of Technology.

Christina Gelinski, FernUniversität in Hagen, Germany

Dr Christina Gelinski is a lawyer who specialises in labour law alongside her post at the FernUniversität's Faculty of Law. She also serves as a Research Associate at the Centre for Learning and Innovation, where she has established study workshops and an advisory service for prospective and first-year law students.

💬 PROGRAMME SUMMARY

How do you make 12000 adults fit for the first year of uni? Keep in mind that they have divergent life trajectories, and they are scattered across the country. In this presentation we show three digital interventions: workshops for budding legal eagles, language bridging courses and a peer-to-peer programme for developing academic writing skills.

📄 PROGRAMME ABSTRACT

Whilst in the majority of Germany's bricks and mortar universities first year students are typically school leavers with a relatively uniform skill set, the FernUniversität in Hagen as the country's largest university and sole public distance learning institution caters to a much more diverse student body. The average age of enrolled students stands at 38,1; 75% are employed and 51% have already attained at least one degree. Ascertaining incoming students' preparedness is therefore no easy feat in terms of both subject-specific competencies and overall personal disposition.

At the Centre for Learning and Innovation (ZLI) of the FernUniversität, a division has been instated to complement first year orientation: studyFIT. In devising support services for the annual intake of 12 000 students, three broad categories have been identified, namely: students who have dropped out of an on-campus programme and now seek a flexible

setting in which to complete their degree; students who completed their secondary education under outdated curricula (for example before English or Stochastics were compulsory school subjects); and, students who possess vocational training or work experience in lieu of a formal university entrance qualification. However, as Heublein, Richter and Schmelzer (2020) articulate in an assessment of the German university landscape, higher student enrolments in the past two decades have been accompanied not by increased graduation rates, but by a constant drop-out rate. Real and perceived subject difficulty and lack of motivation are the top reasons that German students fail to complete their studies (Berthold (2017, p. 15). Furthermore, in a comparative study based on data from the German Educational Panel Study (NEPS-SC6), Tieben (2020) found that instead of transferring to a manageable degree programme, after an academic set back students who hold vocational qualifications are more likely to drop out of higher education altogether.

That's why studyFIT offers multiple support services based on the Blended Learning Model of FernUniversität, specifically addressing non-traditional students.

The tripartite case study showcases the co-option of digital resources to support student success in the three aforementioned target groups. For students returning to the Bachelor of Laws degree there are curriculum linked workshops which cover subject- oriented academic enculturation, language competence, learning techniques and self-management. In a newly established self-organised learning environment for English language learning, a web app is complemented by discipline specific bridging courses and synchronous, online meet-ups with students enrolled at external international universities to foster oral and intercultural competences. Finally, students can also avail themselves of the Writing Centre, which includes student-led peer-to-peer-formats bridging the gap between vocational writing experiences and academic writing. The impact of the interventions is continuously evaluated through comparative data on subsequent test scores and attrition; surveys and interviews with the student users; and, direct feedback from the lecturers and faculty administrators.

The case study is likely to be of interest to prospective distance learners, curriculum developers, student advisory services and university administrators who wish to curb the tide of attrition.

DISTANCE NOT DISTANT – AN EXPLORATION OF THE IMPACT OF SUPPORT OFFERED BY PERSONAL ACADEMIC TUTORS FOR INDEPENDENT DISTANCE LEARNING TRAINEE TEACHERS

👤 SPEAKER

Dionne Ross, University of Sunderland, England

I am the Associate Head of School for International Initial Teacher Training (IITT). Having led a distance learning PGCE course for several years, my role is to now lead IITT developments in the School of Education at the University of Sunderland.

💬 PROGRAMME SUMMARY

This research uses focus groups to explore the perceptions of students on the impact of personal academic tutors, from their own experiences. Emerging answers as to the value of characteristics of Personal Academic Tutors on success are explored with a look to replicate.

📄 PROGRAMME ABSTRACT

This paper follows the case study completed by the author in 2021 examining the range of support mechanisms behind a successful distance learning programme at a Post 92 university in the North East of England. This subsequent research uses focus groups to explore the perceptions of students on the impact of personal academic tutors, from their personal experiences. The discovery of what makes the relationship successful between a student and a Personal Academic Tutor (PAT) may lead to greater success for students if the characteristics of a successful PAT can be drawn out and replicated. The term 'distance education' is used to describe education delivered to distant or remote locations "via print, audio, video (live or pre-recorded) and/or computer technologies, including both synchronous and asynchronous instruction" (Cain et al. 2003, p. 42). The phrase distance not distant depicts the level of support which the university team strive to provide to trainees entering the teaching profession. Working in over 65 countries two PGCE courses welcome students from diverse cultural backgrounds who benefit from the support services dedicated to their success.

The previous study explored the experiences of the students and their views of the support that they received whilst being a student on an independent distance learning programme in preparation for entering the teaching profession. The results reinforced the earlier findings from a study by the author in 2016. Within the 2016 study interviews were conducted with students and the level of support from peers was the main reason for students opting to study at the university which was the focus for the research. The research in 2021 highlighted that the students found the role of their personal academic tutors as instrumental in the support whilst studying. The participants recognised the role programme leaders and module leaders had, however it was the role of their personal tutors that was invaluable. The personal approach offered by PATs taking students through each module from the beginning to graduation of the programme, providing both pastoral and academic support has contributed to high completion and low attrition rates.

This paper will discuss the findings from the focus groups and explores in greater depth the views of students specifically on the role of their personal academic tutors and how important the personal approach to support is to success. Evaluation of the strategy and style of successful and valued PATs has been evaluated with valued characteristics drawn from the findings.

PARTICIPATION, COMMUNITY, AND BECOMING AS MODES OF CREATING SENSE OF BELONGING FOR EQUITABLE CAMPUS ENVIRONMENTS IN THE FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE

SPEAKERS

Dallin George Young, University of Georgia, USA

Dallin is an assistant professor in the Counseling and Human Development department at the University of Georgia and an Affiliate Scholar at the National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition

Jennifer Keup, National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition, USA

Jennifer is Executive Director of the National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition and affiliate faculty in Higher Education and Student Affairs at the University of South Carolina.

Bryce Bunting, Brigham Young University, USA

Bryce is Assistant Dean for Undergraduate Education and Director of the First-Year Experience at Brigham Young University and an Affiliate Scholar with the National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition.

PROGRAMME SUMMARY

In this session we will present new approaches for considering college student transitions toward building academic communities that improve students' sense of belonging. By combining transitions-as-becoming, situated learning, and the campus racial climate model, participants can understand how campus environments can improve or inhibit student sense of belonging.

PROGRAMME ABSTRACT

The first year is a crucial period in the undergraduate experience, as it sets the stage for long-term student success. It presents a rich opportunity for institutions of higher education to provide environments aimed at supporting favorable outcomes for first-year students. The first year is a period where students become acculturated to the institution's educational ethos, social milieu, and means of operating. The ways in which an institution responds presents challenges and opportunities for educators concerned with supporting student success throughout students' time in college.

In this session we will present new approaches for considering college student transitions toward building academic communities that improve students' sense of belonging. We argue that successful transitions are inseparable from both learning and becoming and that transitions occur as students both acquire the knowledge and skill they need to navigate their various communities and, more importantly, participate in these

communities and become learners. Further, the educational environment in which transition happens is critical to advancing goals of access, inclusion, diversity, and equity. "Any conversation about transition is inherently a conversation about access and equity" (Young & Bunting, 2019, p. 2). Thus, it is important to acknowledge that when there are systemic forces within academic communities of practice that impede the development of a sense of belonging and undermine new members' ability to contribute, the community of practice does not operate at an optimal level.

Our presentation combines elements of two models for scholarship and practice in higher education that address issues of belonging and connection for first-year students. The first is situated learning and legitimate peripheral participation (LPP) – which was first introduced by Lave and Wenger (1991) and adapted to higher education and FYE by scholars including O'Donnell and Tobbell (2007) – and later expanded upon by adding perspectives around "becoming" by Young and Bunting (in press). The second is the campus racial climate model (CRCM) that was first developed and championed by Hurtado et al. (1998, 1999) and expanded by several researchers.

When combined with perspectives on transitions as becoming and situated learning, the campus racial climate model offers a way of understanding and organizing the various forces that facilitate or hinder students' sense of belonging in the first year of college, affect momentum toward full participation within FYE as a community of practice, and create marginalization (see Keup & Fountain, 2022). CRCM identifies campus climate as a multidimensional phenomenon that is shaped by the interaction of internal and external forces: (a) historical (legacy of inclusion/exclusion), (b) organizational and structural, (c) compositional, (d) behavioral, and (e) psychological. It is important to note that these dimensions are not discrete but rather connected constructs due to the interrelated nature of climate. We will use these constructs to illustrate a holistic, systemic, and inclusive approach to understanding the role of sense of belonging in the first college year. These five forces individually or in some combination may further or hinder participation; contributions to the community; issues of membership, ownership, and becoming; and sense of belonging.

START AS YOU MEAN TO GO ON: A PHILOSOPHY FOR THE FIRST YEAR EXPERIENCE

👤 SPEAKER

James Moir, Abertay University, Scotland

James Moir is Professor of Language and Professional Communication. His research is in the field of discourse studies with a particular interest in how people talk about professional work and practice. This has ranged over various professional groups as well as well as practices within higher education.

💬 PROGRAMME SUMMARY

This paper considers the first year experience by re-examining the concept of community of practice in relation to the first year experience by drawing upon the later philosophical work of Ludwig Wittgenstein (1958/2010). I argue that the first year consists of an initiation of practices that can be acquired through training.

📄 PROGRAMME ABSTRACT

Roy Niblett, the first professor of higher education in the UK, published a paper in 1972 entitled 'The Survival of Higher Education' in which he argued that personal experiences and social values in higher education were not treated as important as the world of verifiable facts and laws (Niblett, 1972: 44). In the intervening half-a-century since then, higher education has come a long way in recognising personal experiences and social values. Indeed, in Scotland we have been at the forefront of this (r)evolution through our Enhancement Themes approach. However, in spite of our best efforts we are often still faced with a situation in which many first year students struggle to cope with the transition into university life, particularly in relation their initiation into the values and practices of being a student.

In this paper I offer a re-examination of the concept of community of practice in relation to the first year experience by drawing upon the later philosophical work of Ludwig Wittgenstein. In doing so, I take up Wittgenstein's maxim that our lives are focussed on doing, not thinking. This may seem an anathema to the world of higher education where thought is highly prized in our quest to ensure that students tread the path to being independent learners, capable of engaging their powers of analysis, synthesis and critical thinking. We want students to start as they mean to go on by being initiated into the values of higher education, and in also realising that their own personal experiences can be brought to bear upon what, and how, they learn. However, this is not an easy undertaking. With regard to the first year experience, we have been dogged by the question of how to aid our students to start as they mean to go on. It is at this point that I apply Wittgenstein's maxim about life as deeds and doings, and come back to perhaps a more unfashionable term: training. In the paper a look at how training as part of a community of practice serves as a useful way of considering how we learn to undertake practices and in some cases transform them. As Wittgenstein would have it we learn how to go on having learned the rules of the game. Nothing more is required. We learn practices principally by doing, by being part of the game, rather than through explicit instruction (Smeyers & Burbules,

2008). In this way understanding is something that is a demonstrable practice. As we engage in practices we must accept what the rules are, what actions count as correct procedures for engagement, and what counts as incorrect rule-following. Much of what is initially learned is therefore based on a practical-know-how, learned through training and emulation. After this initiation there may be scope for critical reflection about the practices in place. In this regard, the first year of higher education is therefore crucial in being trained how to go on, how to start as you mean to go on through being part of a community of practice.

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Parallel 2.6 (20-Minute Presentation), Room 2521

CHATBOTS FOR STUDENT LEARNING EXPERIENCE AND ENGAGEMENT

👤 SPEAKER

Nurun Nahar, University of Bolton, England

Nurun is an Assistant Teaching Professor and drives excellence in teaching as part of the University's Teaching Intensive Research Informed Agenda.

💬 PROGRAMME SUMMARY

Teachers are bound by time and space. This paper aims to answer 'can chatbots offer new ways to extend a teacher's presence and knowledge availability to learners?' The scope to use interactive resources such as chatbots within and beyond classrooms, shall be explored by taking an evidenced based approach.

📄 PROGRAMME ABSTRACT

Providing an enriched learning experience to students is an aim of almost every higher education institution. Universities are increasingly embedding various technological solutions including those that are driven my machine intelligence to support this strategy and bring innovation in the process. In a world where Artificial intelligence (AI) and its use is rapidly growing, the higher education sector is not lagging behind in determining provisions of its effective use from providing fast faced services to students such as handling general enquiries to experimenting with their use at more granular level such as during teaching and curriculum delivery. When used in a teaching and learning context chatbots have been known to enhance dialogic learning as it is used on a communicative exchange between the bot and the student (Sandu and Gide, 2019). According to Kuhail et al., (2022), ''chatbots hold the promise of revolutionising education by engaging learners, personalising learning activities, supporting educators and developing deep insight into learners' behaviour''. A chatbot platform can also be used as an actively developing knowledge repository (Knobloch et al., 2018) to deliver contents on demand (Perez, Daradoumis and Puig, 2020). It has the potential to lower participating barriers (Quaye, Harper and Pendakur, 2019), lower dropout rates (Willner, 2020) and increase the rate of academic success (Quin, 2016).

This research study will present data from two point in time (i) at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic and (ii) post-pandemic, when a chatbot was implemented at subject level on various programmes ranging from Post graduate to Undergraduate first year subjects, to evaluate the usage of a personalised chatbot service in enhancing student learning experience and engagement. AskADA, a chatbot powered by IBM Watson was integrated into Moodle, a virtual learning system at a UK Higher Education University. The aim was to provide a common platform to students to receive response to module related enquiries anytime they wanted and use the platform as a digital tool for teaching and learning. By implementing a qualitative study design and a thematic analysis technique, findings from 3 sets of student focus groups (n=44) revealed that the chatbot service enabled students

to directly engage with lecture resources in a more efficient and time-saving manner. Students found it quite useful when preparing for assessments as the chatbot enabled quick access of materials through the 'keyword' search option thus improving learner's experience on the course. This paper will explore the potential pedagogical usefulness of chatbots in driving student success rates at module level and improve student engagement and experience in Higher Education. It will also focus on some key challenges that face institutions in using chatbots for teaching and learning.

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DIGITAL OPPORTUNITIES TO SUPPORT SENSE OF BELONGING

SPEAKERS

Hannne Søgaard, UCC University College Copenhagen, Denmark

At Copenhagen University of Copenhagen' courses, I work with didactic pedagogical development with a particular focus on digital technologies and the communication and collaboration opportunities it opens. My background is teaching, project and development tasks around both basic education (teacher and pedagogue, health bachelor's programs) and postgraduate and further education at diploma level.

Kristian Nohr Jensen, UCC University College Copenhagen, Denmark

Building competencies in higher education sets extraordinary demands for collaboration across the organization. During the last 11 years I have built extensive expertise in this field with a focus on digital competencies and capacity building in various educational settings. My most important skill has been in connecting learning theory with technical issues in large organization, often in collaboration with key stakeholders.

PROGRAMME SUMMARY

"Digital theme days" are a unique way to use digital opportunities to support a sense of belonging in higher education. By creating themed virtual events and activities, students connect and engage in different ways then the traditional education, promoting a sense of community and connection.

PROGRAMME ABSTRACT

In this presentation, we will explore the carefully build e-learning material that tries to engage the student I different ways. The e-learning concepts consist of different types of learning activities from virtual peer feedback to online play groups, We will in the presentation discuss how these e-Learning concepts can be leveraged to create a sense of community and connection among students, . We will also address the challenges and considerations associated with using e-learning, such as accessibility and inclusion and exclusions.

The audience will leave with a better understanding of how to use digital learning components and learning technology to support a sense of belonging in higher education and will have the opportunity to share their own experiences and ideas.

Parallel 2.7 (20-Minute Presentation), Room 2517

DEVELOPING FEEDBACK LITERACY IN STAGE 1 STUDENTS USING THE TURNITIN PEERMARK RESOURCE

👤 SPEAKER

Alexandra Moores, The University of Kent, England

Lecturer in Microbiology in the School of Biociences, divisional lead for academic advising and academic skills development and lead coordinator for student success in the School of Biosciences.

💬 PROGRAMME SUMMARY

To support student understanding in assessment feedback literacy, an issue documented at both the University and nation level, we developed a formative Stage 1 peer review exercise using the digital resource Turnitin® PeerMark. This initiative positively supported the success of our student cohort to improve their assessment marks overall.

📄 PROGRAMME ABSTRACT

The National Student Survey (NSS) highlights that one of the themes with the lowest satisfaction score over the last 5 years for the School of Biosciences is Assessment and Feedback (average around 66%). In addition, we know many students do not engage with feedback and hence miss out on an opportunity to improve their work. To respond to this specific need, we designed a formative Stage 1 peer review exercise using the Turnitin® PeerMark resource that aimed to offer students a better understanding of what feedback is at higher education and how it can be used it to improve their work. This initiative recognises the diversity of our student intake (a wide range of different backgrounds and level-3 qualifications) to ensure that all students can acquire the skills around feedback literacy which are necessary in order for them to reach their full potential and support their success whilst studying at university.

A four-part exercise was strategically designed to encourage active participation of students in the marking process so they could achieve a better understanding of feedback literacy to drive success in future assessment. Students were tasked to write a short essay to be submitted to PeerMark, a digital peer review assignment tool provided by Turnitin, that enables the students to anonymously mark their peers work and receive and reflect on feedback gained on their own work. Students were encouraged to take action by making a list of modifications and submit a revised essay that was reviewed by their personal academic adviser. The exercise was built into the academic advising framework, a structure where students are supported in their academic development over the duration of their degree by an adviser that has subject specificity to complements the tutees course. Group academic advising tutorials ran in parallel with the exercise, which included a session dedicated with how to manage the negative emotions (often affecting mental health and resilience) that can result from receiving critical feedback. Wider discussions were also included how peer review is a normal process in science and used

to enhance quality of research grants, research papers, etc. The integration of the Peer review exercise into the academic advising framework ensured that all academic staff are involved in communicating with their tutees about the importance of feedback and what good feedback should look like. The overall outcomes for this exercise were to demonstrate how to benefit from feedback, make judgements on work created by themselves and their peers, reflect and manage affect and finally taking action within the first 10 weeks of their degree and prior to submission of assessed work.

The success of this exercise and the innovative use of a new piece of digital technology was judged by the high level of student engagement (83% completion) and positive feedback from both students and advisers. Additionally, we saw a marked improvement made to student's assessments after completing the exercise when compared to previous year cohorts in which the exercise did not run.

HANDING OVER THE POWER: A CO-CREATION APPROACH TO ASSESSMENT IN A FIRST-YEAR MODULE

SPEAKER

Sarah Gibbons, University of Limerick, Ireland

Sarah Gibbons is an Educational Developer in the Centre of Transformative Learning at the University of Limerick (UL), Ireland. Sarah is involved in the design and development of a range of transition, progression, and data-driven initiatives to improve the student experience within UL.

PROGRAMME SUMMARY

What is the impact of introducing a co-creation approach into the assessment of a first-year module? This presentation shares the practice of introducing co-creation into a first-year module, and the data generated from the process. This approach was undertaken with the intention of improving new students' experience, engagement levels, and academic results.

PROGRAMME ABSTRACT

This presentation shares a practice-based case study about a co-creation approach to assessment in a module for first year students. The central question to this presentation focuses on what impact a co-creation approach can have on new students' experience of a first-year module? The intention was that this new approach could contribute to improving new students' experience, engagement levels, and academic results for the module. Introducing a re-design of the assessment allocation took both a co-creation approach and re-distributed the power dynamic between students and teacher.

This co-creation activity was introduced to first-year students by explaining what co-creation represented, what its main attributes are, how it is developmental for students and teachers, and how it was going to be adopted in the module. There were six pieces of assessment in this module, five of which were aligned to their group project, and the sixth was attendance. In advance of students allocating scores to their assessment, each assessment component was explained to the student group, how they linked to each other and the overall module, and students were directed to the grading criteria for each piece.

Introducing this approach came as a result of a workshop facilitated by Mick and Ruth Healey based on their guide 'Student Engagement Through Partnership' (2019). A partnership approach to assessment was adopted to improve student engagement through the practice of student-staff collaboration, knowing that a co-creation approach takes staff and students 'out of our comfort zone and is a shift in control and power.' (Healey 2019, p.7). There is a heavy emphasis on the structure and role of assessment in Higher Education, as it is "…an important way of improving and promoting student learning…" (Sambell et al. 2013, p.3). By providing first-year students with the opportunity to allocate their module's percentage allocation there was an expectation that students would consider their contribution to their own learning.

As students were being asked to undertake a high-stakes exercise which most hadn't experienced before, each student was asked to complete and submit their individual preferences of assessment percentages. This happened between week one and week two of the module, and in the second week students were divided into project groups. In their project groups the students were asked to discuss the assessment components with their group members, and then as a group submit their preferred percentage breakdown. The final assessment allocation was taken from the group submission, and an average score was taken across the group allocations. The group scores and final allocations were made available to all students in the interests of transparency.

There are a number of sources of data to investigate if there was evidence of impact. There include in-class responses to how students felt about undertaking this co-creation approach; the assessment percentage breakdown chosen across the cohort; comparison across the cohort's final grades; and student evaluation of teaching (SET) reports. There are four years of data available for this module, two years where assessment allocation was pre-determined, and two years where students allocated.

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