

What is an effective induction (within an academic context) and how do you implement it across the whole university or college?

Michael Hill Action on Access

Structure and Aims

- Provide an overview of the findings from the first phase of the 'What Works?' programme about improving the induction process
- Discuss the interventions that discipline teams are implementing as part of the change programme (the second phase of 'What Works?')
- Encourage participants to design and critique a discipline-specific induction activity
- Identify suitable evaluation indicators
- Consider the institutional support to enable academic teams to implement an effective induction

Sharing experiences

In groups of four, introduce yourselves and:

- Discuss your experiences of first year induction programmes that you have been involved at both central or at discipline level
- On post-its, write down keywords which describe the challenges of delivering, sustaining and evaluating the programmes
- Stick the post-its on the flip chart

Defining retention in England

The ‘completion rate’ – the proportion of starters in a year who continue their studies until they obtain their qualification, with no more than one consecutive year out of higher education. As higher education courses take years to complete, an expected completion rate is calculated by the Higher Education Statistics Agency

A more immediate measure of retention is the proportion of an institution’s intake which is enrolled in higher education in the year following their first entry to higher education. This is the **‘continuation rate’**.” (NAO, 2007, p5).

Non-continuation, completion and thinking about leaving

- The average non-continuation rate was 8.4% for entrants to English higher education institutions in 2009-10;
- Non-continuation rates varied between English institutions between 1.2% and 21.4% in 2009-10;
- The average completion rate for students entering institutions in England in 2009-10 was projected to be 78.4%; and
- Completion rates were projected to vary between institutions between 53.8% and 97.2% in 2009-10.
- Between 33% (1/3) and 42% (2/5) of students think about withdrawing from HE.**

What works? Student retention and success programme

- NAO (2007) and PAC (2008): Lack of progress and lack of evidence about what works
- £1 million (Paul Hamlyn Foundation and HEFCE) to support 7 projects involving 22 HEIs to identify, evaluate and disseminate effective practice
- The primary purpose of the programme was to generate robust, evidence-based analysis and evaluation about the most effective practices to ensure high continuation and completion rates.

Key message 1

- At the heart of student retention and success is a **strong sense of belonging in HE for all students**. This is most effectively nurtured through mainstream activities that all students participate in

Key message 2

- The **academic sphere is the most important site** for nurturing participation of the type which engenders a sense of belonging

Key message 3

- Specific interventions cannot be recommended over and above each other. Rather **the institution, department, programme and module** should all **nurture a culture of belonging** through the way they function and relate to people

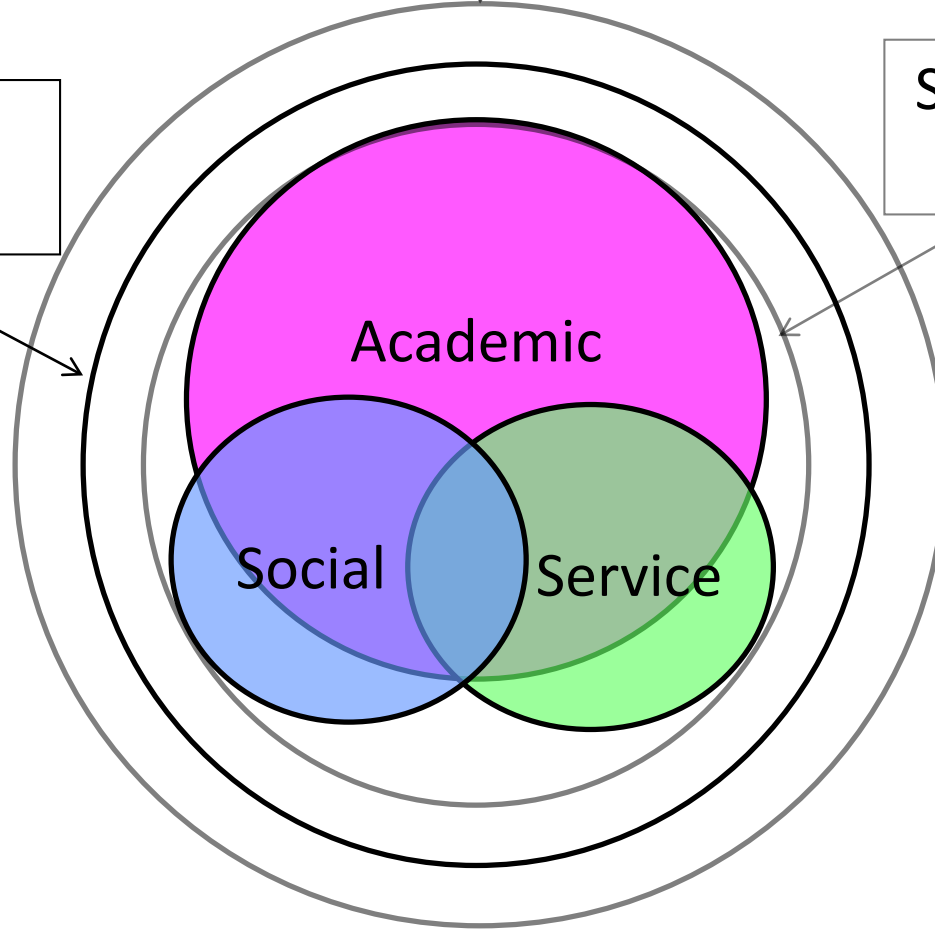
Key message 4

- **Student belonging is an outcome of:**
 - Supportive **peer relations**.
 - Meaningful **interaction between staff and students**.
 - Developing **knowledge, confidence and identity** as successful HE learners.
 - An HE experience which is **relevant to interests and future goals**.

Institutional management and
co-ordination

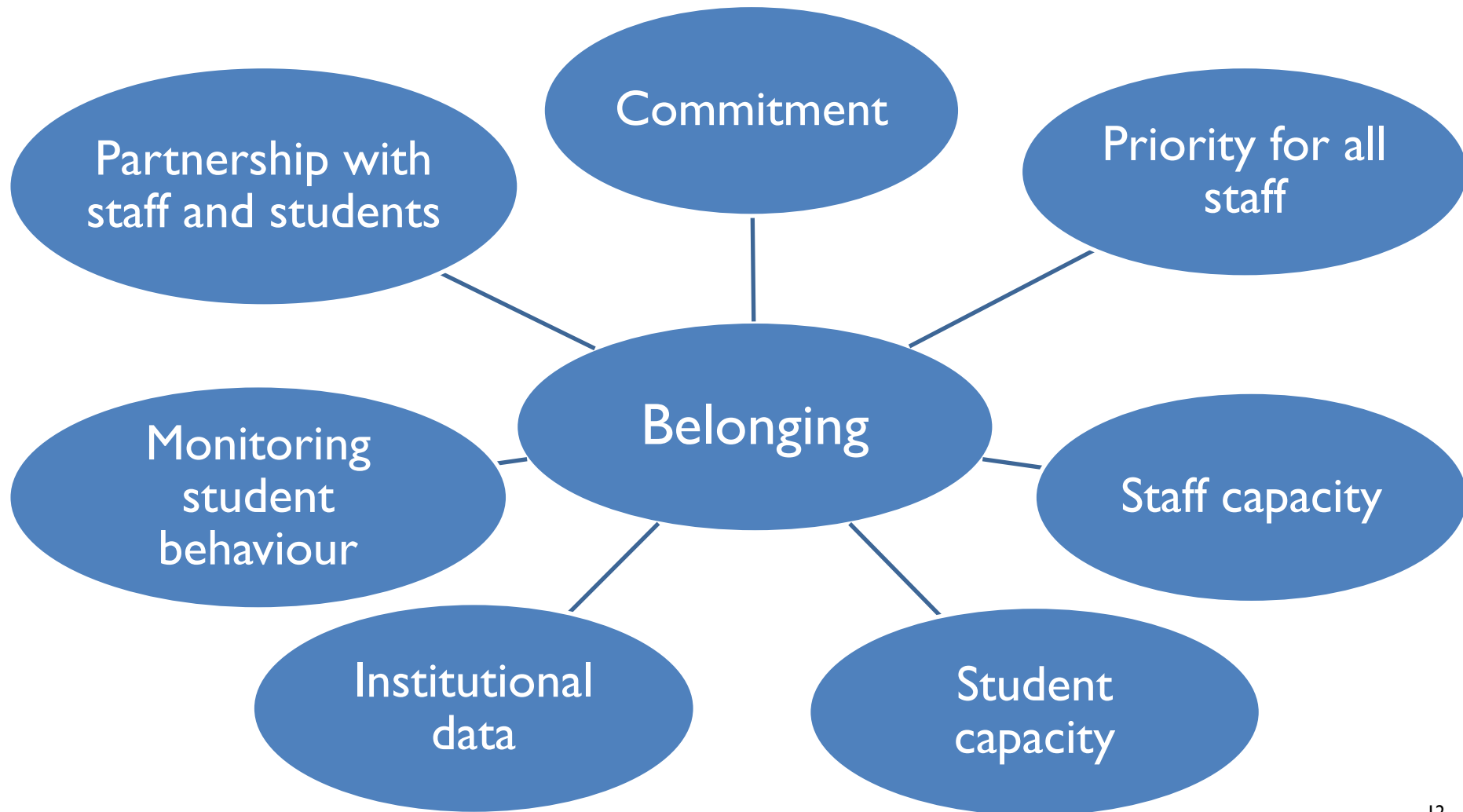
Staff capacity
building

Student capacity
building



Early engagement extends into HE and beyond

Strategic implications



Designing an induction intervention

- Using the **generic** and **induction specific** checklists and choosing a student vignette A or B or C....
- Discuss an intervention to be delivered within the vignette discipline during the first four weeks of the first year
- Describe the key features of the intervention on a flipchart

Designing induction evaluation indicators

The discipline team during the second phase of the What Works programme have focussed on the role of indicators relating to changes in attitudes and behaviours of students and staff

This has proved beneficial in confirming the valid nature of the intervention and identifying appropriate evaluation indicators

How does the induction activity change behaviour or attitudes of students or staff?

- Explain the logic of the activity to the rest of the group in the form of:
- **‘This induction activity is expected to change student/staff attitudes or behaviour in the following way..... and this is expected to improve student engagement and belonging.’**
- If this cannot be expressed, there may be a flaw in the logic which needs to be explored, and the activity may need to be revised or supplemented with an additional activity.

An example of an on-course intervention: Study skills seminars run by PG students

- ‘This activity is expected to change student/staff attitudes or behaviour in the following way...
- **by increased confidence and performance of students in their approach to tackling assessments, including meeting the learning outcomes and acting on previous feedback, particularly related to academic skills....**
- and this is expected to improve student engagement and belonging.’

An example of an on-course intervention: Study skills seminars run by PG students

- and this is expected to improve student engagement and belonging.'
- because of research findings

What Works Findings Stage One: “our analysis of effective approaches to improving retention and success demonstrates that student belonging is achieved through: **developing knowledge, confidence and identity as successful HE learners**”

The evaluation indicator

- Once the logic has been successfully explained, there needs to be a discussion about the indicator(s) relating to changed attitudes/behaviour, by considering the following questions:
- Does the indicator measure the expected change
- Is the indicator SMART, or can it be made SMARTER?
- Does the indicator utilise staff/student perspectives and how will these be collected?

SMART indicators

- Specific – Key indicators need to be specific and to relate to the conditions the activity seeks to change
- Measurable – Quantifiable indicators are preferred because they are precise, can be aggregated and allow further statistical analysis of the data. However, process indicators may be difficult to quantify, and qualitative indicators should also be used.
- Attainable – The indicator (or information) must be attainable at reasonable cost using an appropriate collection method.
- Relevant – Indicators should be relevant to the management information needs of the people who will use the data
- Timely – Information on an indicator needs to be collected and reported at the right time to influence many management decisions.

Study skills seminars run by PG students

....by increased confidence and performance of students in their approach to tackling assessments, including meeting the learning outcomes and acting on previous feedback, particularly related to academic skills....

What Works Findings Stage One: “our analysis of effective approaches to improving retention and success demonstrates that student belonging is achieved through: **developing knowledge, confidence and identity as successful HE learners**”

Study skills seminars run by PG students

Indicators:

Target students report an increase level of awareness in approach to tackling assessments (focus group or questionnaire - requires baseline data)

PG students report an increase in UG students' ability to describe and modify approaches to tackling assessments (focus group or questionnaire - requires baseline data)

Academic staff having marked assessments, report an improvement in student performance particularly relating to academic skills (focus group or analysis of feedback sheets – requires baseline data)

Activity

Referring to your induction plans, choose one intervention – evaluating the impact of which is challenging. Explain the logic of the intervention to the rest of the group in the form of:

‘This activity is expected to change student/staff attitudes or behaviour in the following way..... and this is expected to improve student engagement and belonging.’

Once the logic has been successfully explained, consider the following questions:

Does the indicator measure the expected change?

Is the indicator SMART, or can it be made SMARTER?

The role of the Centre - emerging issues

- Encouraging student capacity to engage
- Encouraging staff capacity to engage
- Ensuring avoidance of competing models of induction
- Providing support for rigorous evaluation especially provision of data
- Valuing the work – reward and recognition of staff

References

What works? Student retention and success change programme
(Phase 2: 2012-15)

http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/detail/retention/PHF/retention_and_success_change_programme_2012-2015

Summary briefing report: What works? Student retention and success change programme, December 2013

http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/documents/retention/What_works_change_programme/SRS_Briefing_report_December_2013_SUMMARY.pdf

Research and evidence base for student engagement

http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/detail/studentengagement/research_and_evidence_base_for_student_engagement

Thank you!

What Works? Student Retention & Success

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