Supporting Student Transitions

First contact and beyond

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Aims and objectives

• Identify the different transitions in the student lifecycle

• Discuss how the different student transitions can impact on retention rates and student progression

• Look at how to plan and develop activities around a diverse student population
Setting the scene
How is the student different today?

Social
• Introduction of fees
• Introduction of loans
• Changes in the job market
• Pressure to attend university to improve job prospects
• Requirement to work to supplement income whilst at University
• Post degree debt and associated problems
• Play hard

Academic
• Change in approach and style of 16-18 Qualifications
  • A levels-England
  • SATs and ACTS – USA
  • UAI, ENTER, TER- Australia
How has the student changed for us?

Massification

- Increase in student numbers especially in the past 10 years
- Globally increase translates into 4.6% increase in participation in HE annually
- Increase in overseas competition
  » 1970 1 in 2 studied in North America and Western Europe
  » Today it is 1 in 4

Kingston University London
How has the student changed for us?

Diverse

- Academic qualifications
- Domiciled status
- Social class
- Students with disabilities
- Mature students
- Mode of study
Who are our students?

5 minute activity
Bubbleton University Student body

**UG domiciled status** (82% of student body)
- UK domiciled 89%
- EU domiciled 6.5%
- OS 4.5%

**PG domiciled status** (18% of student body: research and PGT)
- UK domiciled 80.4%
- EU domiciled 6.6%
- OS 13.3%
- Disability 10%

**Ethnicity**
- White 76%
- Asian 6%
- Other 5%
- Non-disclosure 13%

**Age on entry**
- 18-21 62%

Female participation in all levels 60%
Male participation in all levels 40%

Source: HEFFA (Higher Education Fudged Facts Association)
Bubbleton Students Identities

UG UK domiciled, English Second Language, Direct Entry

UG Mature, Disability (dyslexia), single parent

Mature, Veteran, Commuter, Carer of Elderly Parents
UG Young Learner, Care Leaver
Disability (Mental Health)

Disabled, Postgraduate, Part-time

PGT International, transgender

UG, Visiting, International

UG, part-time, WBL
• Student today is multifaceted which are not always obvious

• All new students whether UG or PG need to go through the same transition stages

• A student’s reason for going to university and prior learning experiences (personal/formal) is likely to have a big impact on their expectation and experience

• Reasons for going to university are changing
  • Not sure what I want to do
  • Parental expectations
  • A degree will get me a better job. I am not interested in the journey
  • I need a degree as a bare minimum
  • No longer for the love of studying and self development
‘we have students from different ethnic groups and non-English speaking backgrounds, international, lower socio-economic backgrounds, mature aged students, students with disabilities, as well those for whom higher education is the first family experience’

(Crosling et al, 2009)
5 minute activity

The importance of identifying and supporting student transitions

In tables:

Identify what you think are the important transition periods in a student’s journey at University.
What are the different transitions?

The Practitioner Model

- Outduction
- Re-orientation and Reinduction
- Arrival and Orientation
- Pre-arrival

Source: M Morgan (2011) Improving the Student Experience- the practical guide for universities and colleges, Oxon: Routledge.
5 minute activity

In tables:

Discuss in your groups what you think the key issues are for your stage allocation

**First Contact and Admissions**

**Pre-arrival**

**Arrival and Orientation**

**Induction to Study**

**Reorientation and Reinduction**

**Outduction**
First contact and Admissions

• Setting expectations

• Managing expectations and aspirations

• Academic integration

• Social integration
• Why go to university?

• How and why will university study be different to previous types of study?

• What is expected of a university student?

• How will students be treated at university?

• What happens in each academic level of study?

• What support advice and help is available both academically and personally throughout the lifecycle?

• Is university suitable for everyone?

• What will the university experience give students?

• What are the options for a student after university?
Pre-arrival

- Reinforcement of first contact and admissions information
- academic and personal advice
- guidance and support
- Identifying and providing support to students with specific needs
- Combined unit information sent out (* Sussex example)
• Do I need to undertake any pre-entry academic work or reading?

• What do I do when I arrive at university?

• How do I register?

• How do I pay my fees and accommodation costs?

• What do I need to do in the first few weeks at university?

• What will be expected of me academically in the first few weeks?

• What support services do I have access to?

• What extra curricula activities can I engage in?

• What if I don’t settle in and I want to leave?
Arrival and orientation

• Expectations set during the first contact, admissions and pre-arrival stages need to be delivered

• Focus on academic and not administrative activities

• Opportunity to make friends

• Settle into their university life and studies as soon as possible

• Appropriate information and support

* See handout –8 Strand Approach to Arrival and Orientation
Induction to Study

• Settling into studies

• Coping with the demands of academia

• Managing pressures of life

• Induction period
  • Minimum of 1 semester
  • Maximum of 1 academic year
Re-orientation

• Takes place at start of new academic year

• Reminder of academic and personal support available

• Reorientation session for all returners

• Identify extra support students need
Re-orientation Activities

- Introduction to academic requirements
- Refresher on support available
  - PAL
  - Mentors
  - Academic and non-academic support
Reinduction

Remind students of support available and help identify and correct academic weaknesses

Provide:

• ongoing study skill development

• access to employability advice and support whether via the curriculum or extra curricula;

• opportunities to engage in personal development

• involvement in community and citizenship activities.
Reinduction activities

• Academic issues
  • Revision sessions, past exam papers
  • Work returned more quickly
  • Project help

• Life support skills
  • Presentation and report writing skills
  • CV writing, job interview help
  • Careers advice
OUTduction

“Getting students through the student lifecycle involves more than simply getting them to complete their course. It should support students in the transition from the world of study into the world of life”.

Michelle Morgan 2009
‘OUTduction’ starts during INduction when students are introduced to the key skills and knowledge they will build upon and utilise during and post study’.

Source: M Morgan, 2008
Students are failed in business know-how

Call for universities to ensure that all degrees teach entrepreneurship, writes Hannah Fearn

UK universities must make the development of students’ entrepreneurial skills a core part of degree courses, or they will lose out to international competition, according to a new report.

The joint report from the Council for Industry and Education (CIEHE) and the National Endowment for Technology and the Arts says that 11 per cent of UK universities are engaged in entrepreneurship – most of which through business schools.

It calls on universities to ensure all degrees in a wide discipline provide students with training in enterprise.

"Societies must lead the way in transforming how higher education prepares the UK’s workforce for its future economy,” said the vice-chancellor of the university, too dependent on short-term funding and inherently fragile,” he said.

"Universities must lead the way in transforming how higher education prepares the UK’s workforce for its future economy,” said the vice-chancellor of the university, too dependent on short-term funding and inherently fragile,” he said.

The report, Developing Entrepreneurial Graduates, recommends that universities should involve businesses and social entrepreneurs in the provision of training in entrepreneurship.

Tim Barnes, executive director of UCL Advances (which promotes entrepreneurship at UCL), said: "The report is timely, as universities are starting to take entrepreneurship much more seriously. It’s a fundamental part of preparing students for the future."

Skills gap still a concern, UUK told

Minister warns that employers believe graduates lack what firms need. Rebecca Attwood reports

The UK is “not yet anywhere near” a position where employers believe that the university system is producing graduates with the skills they want, John Denham, the Universities Secretary, warned this week.

In an interview with Times Higher Education ahead of his speech at Universities UK’s annual conference, Mr Denham said the results of his department’s consultation on higher-level skills had made it clear that there was still seen to be a gap between what employers say they want from higher education graduates and what universities provide.

"Our job... is to get people in the same room to talk about these issues through because I am absolutely convinced that the tensions and the conflicts that people feel are there will actually very often melt away,” Mr Denham said.

He added that it was unfortunate that the intrinsic value of higher education was not what employers want something instrumentalist and higher education is delivering something of intrinsic value that is different is one of the problems,” he said, adding that many employers wanted people who were able to solve problems, communicate, apply critical analysis to evidence and think for themselves.

As part of his wider drive to consider the future of higher education in the next 15 to 20 years, he said he would be “going to the business community, students, people interested in the regional impact of universities and so on,” to develop a picture of “the challenges of the future as they are seen from within the university sector with the view of the importance of the relationship between schools and universities.

"He believed the biggest shift in the statistics, is it absolutely clear that the big prizes are to be had by enabling more of the people who say they want to go to university... to actually get in, and achieve the results,” Mr Denham said.

Employers also said they were concerned about the quality of UK graduates in a new survey.

Business leaders have reiterated concerns about the quality of UK graduates in a new survey.

Employers are concerned about the literacy, numeracy and employability of today’s students, according to the survey conducted by the Confederation of British Industry (CBI). It found that improving education standards tops the list in its annual employers’ concerns, with higher education and
OUTduction activities

• Focused employability skills
  – Debating skills
  – Project management
  – Time management

• Academic skills refresher
  • Plagiarism
  • Referencing
  • Report writing
• Careers advice
  • What to do with the degree?
    – Career route options

• Future study
  – PG
    – Lifelong learning

• How to get a job?
  – CV writing
  – Interview technique
  – How to complete application form
Questions to be asked

• How can skills learnt at university be transferred to life post study?

• What are the different study, travel and work options available after graduation?

• How could they impact on a student’s career and life in general?
The key to a quality student experience

• Supporting students in, through and out of each stage

• Key service providers need to talk to one another and coordinate and join up their activities

• Effectively combining aspects one and two

• Academic imperative must be heart of all activity

• Must be owned by the Student’s home unit (faculty, school, department).
Themes in the Practitioner Model

Managing

Curriculum and Assessment

Student

Employment

Pedagogy

Aspirations and Expectations

Academic and Social Integration

Finance

Support

And

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Curriculum and Assessment</th>
<th>Pedagogy</th>
<th>Support</th>
<th>Finance</th>
<th>Employment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Contact and Admissions</td>
<td>Information on subjects that make up a degree; specific subject study in each level of a degree; type of assessments undertaken in each year; using the degree post study.</td>
<td>An outline of the different study and learning styles available.</td>
<td>An overview and promotion of support and facilities available.</td>
<td>Information on loans / fees / bursaries; money management advice; accommodation costs.</td>
<td>Advice, support and guidance on part-time work during study; year placement options; internships; summer placements; voluntary work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Arrival</td>
<td>Specific information on subjects to be studied in the first year of academic study; Pre-arrival preparation tests / reading / coursework.</td>
<td>An outline the different study and learning styles available; start engagement in learning the process.</td>
<td>Information on accessing services and support.</td>
<td>Applications for loans / bursaries; payment of fees / accommodation costs; money management advice.</td>
<td>Advice, support and guidance on part-time work during study; year placement options; internships; summer placements; voluntary work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrival and Orientation</td>
<td>A reminder of subjects that make up a degree; specific subject study in each level of a degree; subjects to be studied in the first year of academic study; type of assessments undertaken in each year; using the degree post study.</td>
<td>A reminder of the different study and learning styles available; start the main engagement in learning the process.</td>
<td>An explanation of the services and support available; learning when and how to access services and support.</td>
<td>Payment of fees / accommodation costs; money management advice; accessing hardship funds.</td>
<td>Advice, support and guidance on part-time work during study; year placement options; internships; summer placements; voluntary work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Induction to Study</td>
<td>An explanation of how different subjects and assessments are undertaken in the first year of study.</td>
<td>A review of learning how to study in a given year; understanding the different types of learning styles and approaches required.</td>
<td>Regular reminders of services and support available and how to access them.</td>
<td>Money management advice; accessing hardship funds; debt control.</td>
<td>Advice, support and guidance on part-time work during study; year placement options; internships; summer placements; voluntary work.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reorientation and Reinduction</td>
<td>A reminder of previous skills and identification of skills gap; making subject choices which count towards degree; learning and undertaking different assessments for the new level of study; study away / placement options.</td>
<td>A review of previous learning skills and styles in new academic level.</td>
<td>A reminder of services and support at relevant and appropriate times of the year.</td>
<td>Payment of fees / accommodation costs; money management advice; accessing hardship funds; debt control.</td>
<td>Advice, support and guidance on part-time work during study; year placement options; internships; summer placements; voluntary work; preparation to enter employment post study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outduction</td>
<td>Explaining the classification structure; applying skill set post study.</td>
<td>An explanation of how to transfer learning processes to future study and work.</td>
<td>A reminder of services and support available and how to access them in final level of level of study and post study as alumni (career service etc).</td>
<td>Money management advice; preparation for repayment of loans / fees; debt control.</td>
<td>Advice, support and guidance on preparing to enter employment or further study as an alumni.</td>
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What to ask?

For every initiative developed within a stage or theme, the following questions need to be addressed.

• What is the aim and objective of the initiative?
• Who needs to be involved in the development of the initiative?
• Who is the target group?
• What do they need to know?
• What information is going to be delivered?
• Who will deliver it?
• When is it going to be delivered?
• Is the timing appropriate?
• How will it be delivered?
• What is the cost of the initiative?
• What is the timeline for the initiative?
• Is it financially viable?
• Can the initiative and information be adapted for another group of students?
• How will it be evaluated and monitored?
# Example of interlinking stages, themes and activities

**Stage** = Arrival and Orientation  
**Activity within the theme** = First week’s orientation programme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Staff involved</th>
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</table>
| Curriculum and Assessment     | • Start the process of learning by giving out and explaining timetables (if not available before)  
                                 | • Explain course documents and                                                                                                                                                                           | Home unit academics and non-academic staff, Central Units such as Academic Registry, LRC, IT, external examiners, student representation |
| Pedagogy                      | • Start the process of teaching students how to study at university such as having a fun lecture in a large LT  
                                 | • Get students to start working in groups on fun activities (e.g. Fun subject quiz or rocket building competitions)  
                                 | • Light touch study skills (LRC?)                                                                                                                                                                           | Home unit academics and non-academic staff, university L&T academic centres, staff development, LRC, IT, student representation |
| Finance                       | • Costs related to study (e.g. accommodation, uni fees, Money management of advice for students                                                                                                                                                           | Home unit academics and non-academic staff, university financial services, student representation                                                                                                               |
| Support                       | • Light touch reinforcement of support available students (e.g. disability, dyslexia, financial guidance                                                                                                                                              | Home unit academics and non-academic staff, disability/dyslexia/equal opportunity units, financial services, student representation                                                                               |
| Employment                    | • Job fair  
                                 | • Reminder of purpose of education and how to transfer learning skills into the workplace in PT work, placements or post study                                                                                                                         | Home unit academics and non-academic staff, university careers and employability/enterprise units, student representation                                                                                     |
Summary

• Students lives are complex

• Student Experience is multi-dimensional

• Supporting transitions is applicable to all UG and PG

• Do not silo students or unit functions.
• Support in terms of stages not specific years

• Home unit manages the Lifecycle

• Key players to coordinate and collaborate

• Map Practitioner Model to length of course
‘Not joining the dots’
‘Joining the dots up’
‘Dot to dot and beyond’
Conclusion

‘We need to inspire new generations to engage in higher education, to believe in the benefits of HE and to invest in it. By ensuring that no student is forgotten or left behind, through adopting an inclusive strategy in all its activities, sustainability should be achievable’.

Morgan, 2013
Thank you for listening
Any questions?

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Author and Editor of www.improvingthestudentexperience.com

Editor and Contributor to *Improving the Student Experience-A practical guide for universities and colleges* (Routledge, 2012) and *Supporting Student Diversity in Higher Education* (Routledge, 2013)