Designing staff development: Enhancing the First Year Experience

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Today

- Background and why?

- The course design and purpose

- Frameworks

- Student perspectives

- Pedagogical implications

…….and a few points to discuss

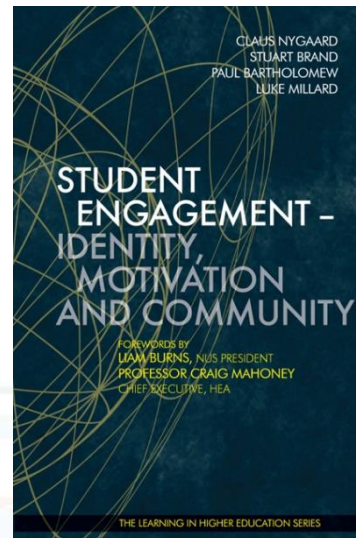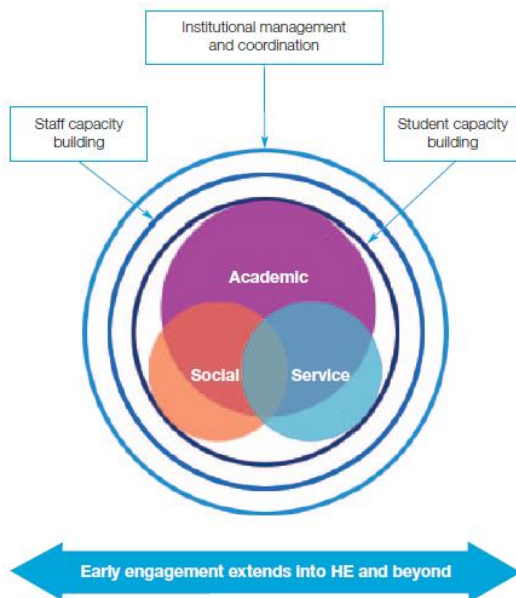# What Works: Student retention and success programme 2012-16

BCU approach founded upon:

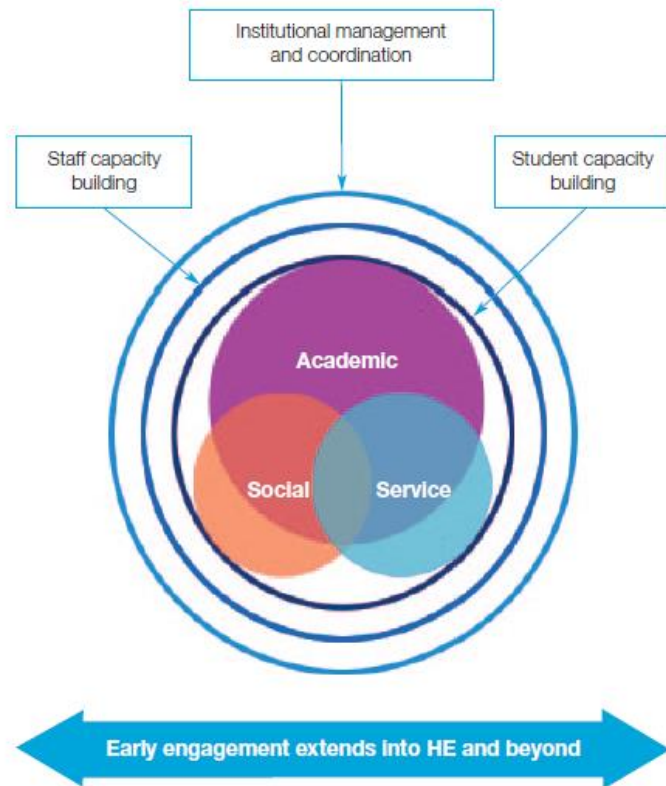Student as partners philosophy

Creating a sense of learning community

Students' Union partnership

Poor retention/student dissatisfaction in some areas

Sectoral drivers

Strategic implications
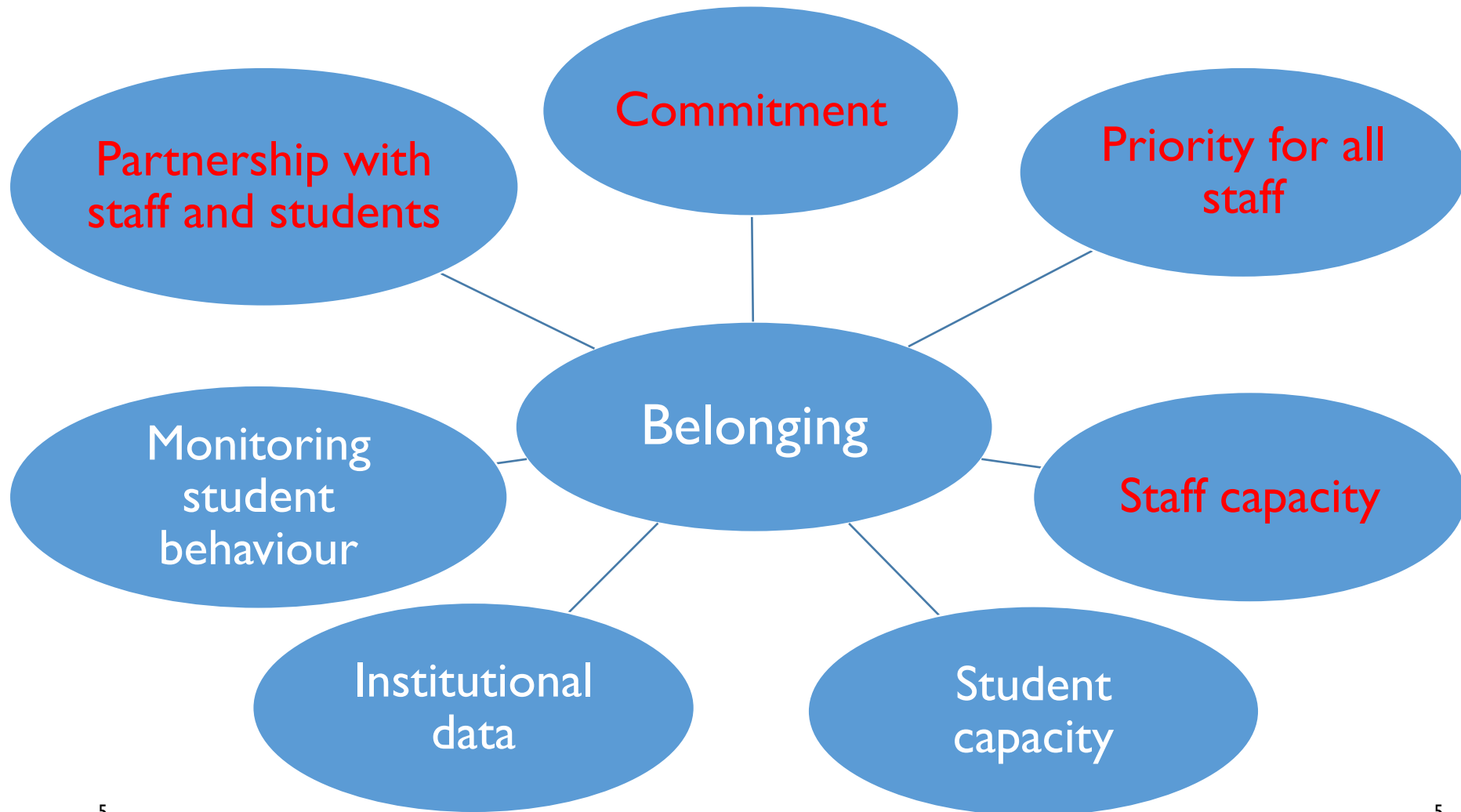
Strategic enablers

1. The **institutional commitment** to a culture of belonging should be explicit.

2. Nurturing belonging and improving retention and success should be a **priority for all staff**.

3. **Staff capacity to nurture a culture of belonging needs to be developed.**

4. **Student capacity** to engage and belong must be developed.

5. **Institutional data** should be used to identify departments, programmes and modules with higher rates of withdrawal, non-progression and non-completion.

6. Systems to **monitor student behaviour** and **take action** when at-risk behaviour is observed.

7. **Partnership with staff and students** to implement change across the student lifecycle and throughout the institution.

Welcome to EDU7211 Transition and the First Year Experience

This module is designed to allow you to explore some of the existing practice surrounding student transitions as they join Birmingham City University and to examine new ways of developing our current provision in order to enhance their experience across the first year and beyond.

News forum: Come Talk to Us and Each Other!

Welcome to the Adventure

WELCOME

Assessment and Feedback

ASSESSMENT

Academic Resources

Transition Mentoring

Social Engagement

Exciting Inductions

Personal Tutoring

Embedded Workshops

Academic Development

Learning Technologies

NIMBUS 2001

Data

There are no upcoming events

📅 Go to calendar...
➕ New event...

Library Resources

Reading Lists Online
Find Library Resources
Subject Libguides
Libr@ry Help

Course Checks

Help

👁 This course is visible

Essentials ▸   ✓

Dates ▾   ✗

Manage all dates   ⚙
Start date: 19 June 2015   ✗

Section checks ▸   ✗

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Latest news

Add a new topic...

(No news has been posted yet)

Navigation

Aims

- Evaluate theories and processes around the first year experience and student transition as a basis for proposing changes to existing practice.

- Make informed design decisions in relation to a new aspect, approach or initiative around the first year experience and student transition within the context in which you operate.

- Critically reflect on your approaches to the design process providing evidence of how you have acted on feedback from your peers and other stakeholders.

- Construct an action plan for change that includes appropriate methods for evaluation and dissemination of the intervention you design.

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Daily structure (week long block)

Academic underpinning – educational evidence for why we do what we want

Case studies – practical examples of the challenges we face and how we

Development time – time for you colleagues to develop your ideas co individually

High-Impact Educational Practices
★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

First-Year Seminars and Experiences

Many schools now build into the curriculum first-year seminars or other programs that bring small groups of students together with faculty or staff on a regular basis. The highest-quality first-year experiences place a strong emphasis on critical inquiry, frequent writing, information literacy, collaborative learning, and other skills that develop students' intellectual and practical competencies. First-year seminars can also involve students with cutting-edge questions in scholarship and with faculty members' own research.

Common Intellectual Experiences

The older idea of a "core" curriculum has evolved into a variety of modern forms, such as a set of required common courses or a vertically organized general education program that includes advanced integrative studies and/or required participation in a learning community (see below). These programs often combine broad themes—e.g., technology and society, global interdependence—with a variety of curricular and cocurricular options for students.

Learning Communities

The key goals for learning communities are to encourage integration of learning across courses and to involve students with "big questions" that matter beyond the classroom. Students take two or more linked courses as a group and work closely with one another and with their professors. Many learning communities explore a common topic and/ or common readings through the lenses of different disciplines. Some deliberately link "liberal arts" and "professional courses"; others feature service learning.

Writing-Intensive Courses

These courses emphasize writing at all levels of instruction and across the curriculum, including final-year projects. Students are encouraged to produce and revise various forms of writing for different audiences in different disciplines. The effectiveness of this repeated practice "across the curriculum" has led to parallel efforts in such areas as quantitative reasoning, oral communication, information literacy, and, on some campuses, ethical inquiry.

Collaborative Assignments and Projects

Collaborative learning combines two key goals: learning to work and solve problems in the company of others, and sharpening one's own understanding by listening seriously to the insights of others, especially those with different backgrounds and life experiences. Approaches range from study groups within a course, to team-based assignments and writing, to cooperative projects and research.

LEAP

Undergraduate Research

Many colleges and universities are now providing research experiences for students in all disciplines. Undergraduate research, however, has been most prominently used in science disciplines. With strong support from the National Science Foundation and the research community, scientists are reshaping their courses to connect key concepts and questions with students' early and active involvement in systematic investigation and research. The goal is to involve students with actively contested questions, empirical observation, cutting-edge technologies, and the sense of excitement that comes from working to answer important questions.

Diversity/Global Learning

Many colleges and universities now emphasize courses and programs that help students explore cultures, life experiences, and worldviews different from their own. These studies—which may address U.S. diversity, world cultures, or both—often explore "difficult differences" such as racial, ethnic, and gender inequality, or continuing struggles around the globe for human rights, freedom, and power. Frequently, intercultural studies are augmented by experiential learning in the community and/or by study abroad.

Service Learning, Community-Based Learning

In these programs, field-based "experiential learning" with community partners is an instructional strategy—and often a required part of the course. The idea is to give students direct experience with issues they are studying in the curriculum and with ongoing efforts to analyze and solve problems in the community. A key element in these programs is the opportunity students have to both *apply* what they are learning in real-world settings and *reflect* in a classroom setting on their service experiences. These programs model the idea that giving something back to the community is an important college outcome, and that working with community partners is good preparation for citizenship, work, and life.

Internships

Internships are another increasingly common form of experiential learning. The idea is to provide students with direct experience in a work setting—usually related to their career interests—and to give them the benefit of supervision and coaching from professionals in the field. If the internship is taken for course credit, students complete a project or paper that is approved by a faculty member.

Capstone Courses and Projects

Whether they're called "senior capstones" or some other name, these culminating experiences require students nearing the end of their college years to create a project of some sort that integrates and applies what they've learned. The project might be a research paper, a performance, a portfolio of "best work," or an exhibit of artwork. Capstones are offered both in departmental programs and, increasingly, in general education as well.

The 'Five Senses' of Successful Transition
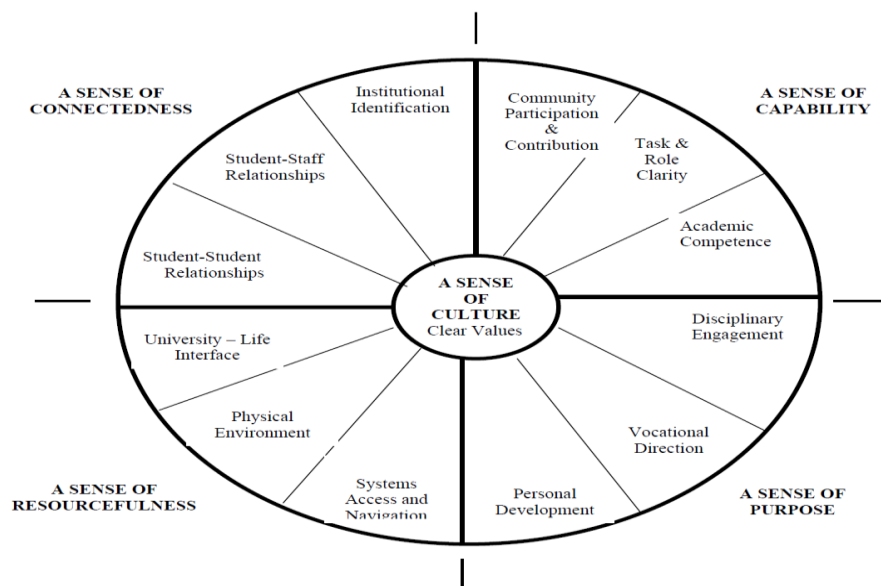
DESIGNING AN ORIENTATION AND TRANSITION STRATEGY FOR COMMENCING STUDENTS
A conceptual summary of research and practice
Alf Lizzio (2006)

The 'Five Senses' of Successful Transition

A SENSE OF CONNECTEDNESS

A SENSE OF CAPABILITY

A SENSE OF RESOURCEFULNESS

A SENSE OF PURPOSE

Institutional Identification

Student-Staff Relationships

Student-Student Relationships

University – Life Interface

Physical Environment

Systems Access and Navigation

Community Participation & Contribution

Task & Role Clarity

Academic Competence

A SENSE OF CULTURE Clear Values

Disciplinary Engagement

Vocational Direction

Personal Development

DESIGNING AN ORIENTATION AND TRANSITION STRATEGY FOR COMMENCING STUDENTS
A conceptual summary of research and practice
Alf Lizzio (2006)

11

Institutional culture

How would you describe the FYE culture at your university?

Discuss in your groups (5 minutes)

Our challenges and opportunities

- Changing A' Level landscape

- The working student

- Motivation, Belonging & Resilience ➡ student success

- Mental Health and student wellbeing

- First year experience shapes perception and sets expectation (NSS) – Learning Gain

Survive and Thrive!!!

UK Engagement Survey — First Year Response Comparison

Benchmark 2014

BCU 2014

BCU 2015

This profile line compares how first year respondents answered questions in the UK Engagement Survey between 3 data sets. Data from 2014, including the national benchmark, is used to contrast against data from 2015.

The percentage represents the number of respondents that answered positively to the proposed question (e.g. "Very Often" or "Often"). As a result of this aggregation method not all questions could be included, most notably the questions about what students do with their time.
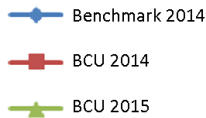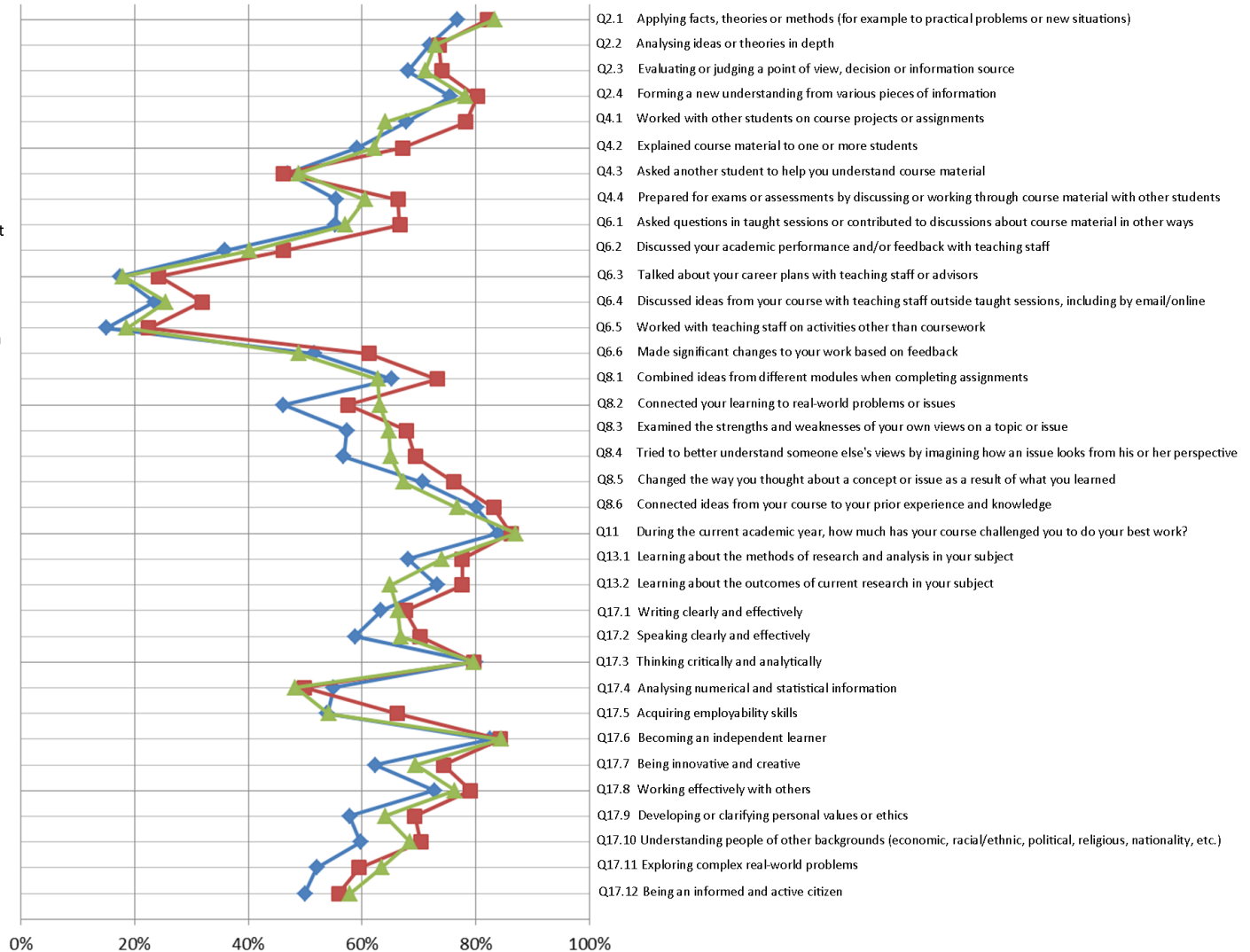
Additionally not all questions could be compared due to differences in between the 2014 and 2015 surveys but where possible the questions have been mapped between versions. Only questions where the text had not changed significantly were mapped.

They questions come from the following question groups;

Q2, Q13. During the current academic year, how much has your course emphasised the following activities?

Q4, Q6, Q8. During the current academic year, about how often have you done each of the following?

Q17. How much has your overall student experience contributed to your knowledge, skills and personal development in the following areas?

Q2.1 Applying facts, theories or methods (for example to practical problems or new situations)
Q2.2 Analysing ideas or theories in depth
Q2.3 Evaluating or judging a point of view, decision or information source
Q2.4 Forming a new understanding from various pieces of information
Q4.1 Worked with other students on course projects or assignments
Q4.2 Explained course material to one or more students
Q4.3 Asked another student to help you understand course material
Q4.4 Prepared for exams or assessments by discussing or working through course material with other students
Q6.1 Asked questions in taught sessions or contributed to discussions about course material in other ways
Q6.2 Discussed your academic performance and/or feedback with teaching staff
Q6.3 Talked about your career plans with teaching staff or advisors
Q6.4 Discussed ideas from your course with teaching staff outside taught sessions, including by email/online
Q6.5 Worked with teaching staff on activities other than coursework
Q6.6 Made significant changes to your work based on feedback
Q8.1 Combined ideas from different modules when completing assignments
Q8.2 Connected your learning to real-world problems or issues
Q8.3 Examined the strengths and weaknesses of your own views on a topic or issue
Q8.4 Tried to better understand someone else's views by imagining how an issue looks from his or her perspective
Q8.5 Changed the way you thought about a concept or issue as a result of what you learned
Q8.6 Connected ideas from your course to your prior experience and knowledge
Q11 During the current academic year, how much has your course challenged you to do your best work?
Q13.1 Learning about the methods of research and analysis in your subject
Q13.2 Learning about the outcomes of current research in your subject
Q17.1 Writing clearly and effectively
Q17.2 Speaking clearly and effectively
Q17.3 Thinking critically and analytically
Q17.4 Analysing numerical and statistical information
Q17.5 Acquiring employability skills
Q17.6 Becoming an independent learner
Q17.7 Being innovative and creative
Q17.8 Working effectively with others
Q17.9 Developing or clarifying personal values or ethics
Q17.10 Understanding people of other backgrounds (economic, racial/ethnic, political, religious, nationality, etc.)
Q17.11 Exploring complex real-world problems
Q17.12 Being an informed and active citizen

0%   20%   40%   60%   80%   100%

Embedded Belonging

Through Institutional Student Engagement

The Mehaffy perspective

"The first year of college is broken"

Changing nature of the student
Other things are more interesting – can learn elsewhere
Staff autonomy: Work in a silo
Staff training: is it appropriate
Teaching focus not learning focus
Pastoral not related to the academic
Courses are staff-centric not student centred

The Mehaffy perspective

"The dominant conclusion of that study was that what mattered most about graduation success was not a specific program or special funding but culture; a campus culture where faculty and staff believed that their role was to help students become successful. Culture is a critical component of a redesigned first year of college."

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The Mehaffy lunchtime challenge

- Monday - How can we create a more powerful, more engaging first year of college that increases student retention and success?

- Tuesday - How can we build a curriculum that is integrated and interesting, that addresses student interests and passions, that connects students to the community and region?

- Wednesday - How do we organize students to optimize engagement, learning, and a sense of belonging?

- Thursday - How do we create a culture of experimentation and innovation? How do we create a culture that celebrates failure as a way of learning?

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Why are you going to University (select all that apply)? New starter survey 2015
Improve career prospects **80.2% 397**
To study a subject I'm interested in **71.31% 353**
To live independently away from home **21.21% 105**
To meet new people **40% 198**
Because it's expected of me / pressure from others **5.25% 26**

What is your biggest concern about starting university?
The academic work **42.28% 104**
Making friends **10.98% 27**
Managing finances **20.73% 51**
Moving to an unfamiliar place **6.5% 16**
Accommodation **0.41% 1**
Fitting in **12.6% 31**

Do you plan to work whilst studying at university?
Yes, I plan to work part time **60.08% 298**
Yes, I plan to work fulltime **6.05% 30**
No **13.91% 69**
Not sure **19.96% 99**

What are you most looking forward to?
Meeting new people **14.4% 70**
Learning about my subject **77.37% 376**
The freedom of being away from home **2.88% 14**
Social life **3.91% 19**

The student perspective

Jack Hogan and Ella Robson

From your experience - what are the key challenges for students seeking to successfully complete their first year student experience?

Setting the curriculum design challenge for staff

- Transition pedagogy

- Assessment for engagement

- Lifewide learning

- Are there any full-time students left?

Transition pedagogy

Student success is largely determined by student experiences during the first year.

Upcraft, M. L., Gardner, J. N., & Barefoot, B. O. (Eds.). (2005). *Challenging and supporting the first-year student*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

First Year Student Experience

http://www.freewebs.com/horseloversveen/the-far-side-comic.jpg

Common FY Curriculum Complaints (Kift, 2009)

- Lack of clarity and consistency regarding expectations

- Lack of coherence, achievability and relevance

- **Assessment** and **feedback**
  - UK Yorke & Longden (2008): 29% said feedback not prompt
  - James *et al* (CSHE, 2010): only 35% found feedback helpful
  - AUSSE (2009,76): only 40% FYs often/ very often received prompt feedback (cf 80.4% of staff thought feedback often/ very often prompt)
  - UK NSS (2008): satisfaction with assessment & feedback lowest
  - US NSSE (2009,38): 42% FYs sometimes/never receive prompt f'back

- **Lack of preparedness** re tertiary literacies: e.g academic; information; IT; numeracy; visual; statistical; professional practices; cultural; + + + ???

- **Group work** – esp group processes

- **Staff interest** – only 26% FYs believe staff are interested in their progress (CSHE, 2010).
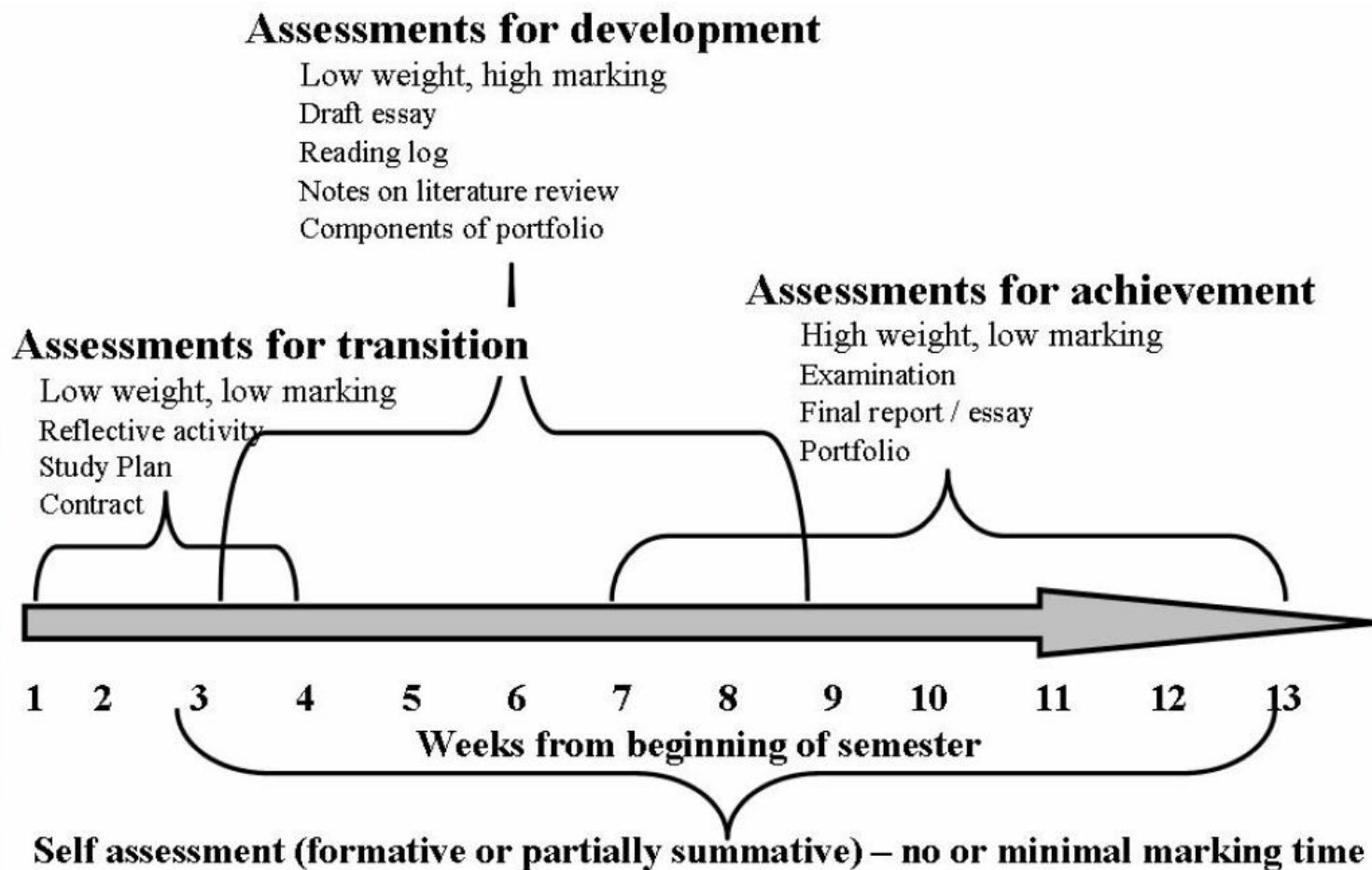
What this means for us …

- 'Joined-up' *institutional approaches* = partnerships.
  - General and specialist services
  - Academic and non-academic support
  - Curricula and co-curricula engagement

- Once 1st semester starts, harness *the curriculum* as academic and social 'organising device' to do serious transition and retention work
  - Both in and outside (physical and virtual) classroom – eg
    - By inclusive teaching, learning & assessment practices
    - Being explicit about what's required for success (HE & discipline)
    - Attending to sense of belonging through curriculum strategies
    - Through pathways & interactions facilitated

(Kift, 2008)

Design	Knowledge, academic skills, attitudes, behaviours mapped and articulated so relevance to success understood
Diagnostics	Which individuals or groups may need particular attention to explain how they can be successful in this new environment?
Diversity	Are there strategies in place to address inclusivity and make it a positive
Engagement	How will students connect – peers/staff /institution/ building - friendship
Assessment	Schedule of assessment – early successes and integrated developmental support
Evaluation	Do you have an evidence base? Why do you need change – show impact!

Key questions for curriculum design - adapted from Kift (Millard 2018)

Taylor (2008, 23) Strategies for assessment

COUN

http://ro.uow.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1059&context=jutlp

Assessments for development
Low weight, high marking
Draft essay
Reading log
Notes on literature review
Components of portfolio

Assessments for achievement
High weight, low marking
Examination
Final report / essay
Portfolio

Assessments for transition
Low weight, low marking
Reflective activity
Study Plan
Contract

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10   11   12   13
Weeks from beginning of semester

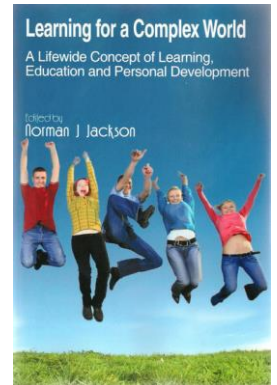**Self assessment (formative or partially summative) – no or minimal marking time**

Embrace lifewide learning

….is learning in different places simultaneously (Barnett)

- Liquid learning
- An individual inhabiting several learning spaces simultaneously
- The learner and university without boundaries
- Learning taking place in any learning space

…..university loses control of learning, but can we use to assess and integrate diversity of student 'real life' interactions and show the strength of those life experiences

Enabling success

How do we enable student success?

In your groups identify key issues you would want your colleagues to integrate into their course design to enable (and not penalise) students in the first year.

Thanks for engaging

Do you have any questions?

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