Inspirational session 13

Session's theme: Supporting student learning

Paper number: 29

Presenters: Vesa Korhonen, Mikko Inkinen (University of Helsinki), Auli Toom (University of Helsinki)

Presenters' Organisation: School of Education, University of Tampere; University of Helsinki

Session's chair: To be announced later.

Session title: The student engagement in examination

Abstract:

The main objective of university studies is the development towards expertise in own scientific field. The appropriation of high-level knowledge, skills and practices is required for novice members participation into the actions of academic community (Lave & Wenger, 1991). The student-centered engagement model (Korhonen, 2012; Poutanen et. al., 2012) is one way to outline this development process. According to the model, active participation into meaningful educational practices gradually produces growth towards a skillful student and self-confident expert (cf. Wenger, 1998). Our earlier qualitative study based on the same model (Poutanen et. al 2012) has shown that students engage moderately on peer groups, but weakly on teachers and really weakly on the scientific community. There seems to exist a special academic threshold for studying and expertise in the university.

For these reasons it is necessary to understand students engagement process better as well as to develop more activating, participatory and engaging learning environments to university teaching and learning (Lonka et al., 2012; Toom et al., 2012). We have developed an engagement evaluation questionnaire (EEQ) based on the theoretical work and qualitative study mentioned above. With EEQ, a pilot study data has been collected from students in educational sciences at Universities of Helsinki and Tampere (n=96). Based on the pilot study it seems that sub-scales describing identity, belongingness and academic skills are strongly connected to the strength of self-evaluated engagement. Further, based on the tentative cluster analysis, it was possible to distinguish five groups who differed in their integration into the scholarly community. In the presentation, we discuss also on the further research challenges when aiming at collecting national data from first year students in different universities with the EEQ.

Inspirational session 14

Session's theme: Students for students

Paper number: 33

Presenters: Wies Allemeersch, Sofie Hiels, Anne-Sophie Seghers, Herman Van de Mosselaer

Presenters' Organisation: Plantijn University College

Session's chair: To be announced later.

Session title: Facebook as E-learning Platform? A higher education student perspective

Abstract:

Facebook as E-learning Platform? A higher education student perspective (ongoing research project). Social network sites (SNS s) have since 2004 emerged as key platforms for social interaction, drastically changing the way young people interact, exchange information and organize events in the process. Studies have shown that higher education students use these SNS s on a daily basis (Pempek et al. 2011) and that these SNS s have a great potential for improving the on- and off-campus experience of especially first year students. They also influence the pedagogical relationship between students and their student counselors and institutions (Selwyn, 2009). This explorative study aims at discovering the current roles of SNS s (limited to Facebook) in the academic experience of higher education students. Using the theories of Social Capital and Social Constructivism as background, this study departs from the perspective of the student on the relationship between Facebook and school.

Key questions that will be answered are:

- How do students use Facebook in academic contexts?
- How valuable do they assess their academic Facebook use?
- Do they welcome this emerging pedagogical application of Facebook?

The study plans to answer these questions through a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods in which students of a Belgian university college reflect on their academic related Facebook use. The results can function as a starting point for further research and debate in this area.

Inspirational session 14

Session's theme: Students for students

Paper number: 34

Presenters: Baljit Gill

Presenters' Organisation: Aston University

Session's chair: To be announced later.

Session title: The role of Peer Mentoring in the transition of international students to university

Abstract:

This session will share the experiences of one UK University in enhancing the student experience through peer support. The Peer Mentoring programme at Aston University offers support for students, by students across the student lifecycle, providing information, advice and guidance at critical points of their university career. It is promoted as a positive support mechanism, moving away from the deficit model for struggling students, and participation in the programme is viewed by staff and students as a mechanism for taking responsibility for their learning and playing an active role in their own development.

While aiming to provide additional support for students from a wide range of backgrounds eg older learners, overseas students and first-generation students the programme is inclusive to all students. Our programme takes a student lifecycle approach, believing that university is a series of transitions and subsequently offers student-to-student support from pre-entry through to graduation and beyond. This well-established programme has been running for seven years, and in that time has developed in response to student feedback and consultation, from a small-scale pilot to a centrally managed activity functioning across the university in all disciplines, to meet both student expectations and student needs.

This session will discuss the benefits of peer mentoring, focussing specifically on the provision of pre-arrival peer support for overseas students, and will explore the data obtained via pre- and post-mentoring questionnaires to evaluate the impact on both mentors and mentees. On-going monitoring of the programme and student feedback indicate that it is perceived as a valuable mechanism of support in enhancing the student experience and supporting successful transition to and through university.

Inspirational session 15

Session's theme: Retention

Paper number: 18

Presenters: Chris Mestdagh

Presenters' Organisation: Howest University College

Session's chair: To be announced later.

Session title: Using research on diversity and inclusion to work on change in the first year

Abstract:

Howest University College (Belgium) gives great attention to an inclusive diversity policy aiming to support all students. It executed a three year research project into the perspective of students with a need for support and of academic staff on diversity and inclusion. The goal of this research was to:

- scientifically underpin and support the further development of the diversity policy by using action research;
- develop tools that the support the in-, through- and outflow of disadvantaged groups.

In this inspiration session we will explain what we have done and how change is happening through quotes of students and staff. These quotes were collected by interviewing students and staff during the research project. For this session we will focus on the results of the part where we asked on how students experienced entering higher education: what did students find helpful when enquiring about a programme? How did they choose for Howest? How were the first days and months in Howest? What are their expectaions about guidance and support systems?

In the first stage of the project, the focus was on the perspective of students and what diversity means to them in practice meant. A total of 35 students with a need for support shared their story with us. The wealth of information this generated was processed in the next research phase: the experiences of staff in relation to diversity and inclusion. In the final stage (now) the results are being implemented in different tools that support the social policy and actions of the university college. Confronting staff with students experiences was very inspiring, both to researchers as well as staff and key actors in student guidance and diversity policy. On a policy level, as well as in concrete actions new policy is being implemented in function of better support for students in all their diversity. Most of these actions focus on the first months of a programme.

Inspirational session 15

Session's theme: Retention

Paper number: 21

Presenters: Mark Groves, Christopher Sellars, Alison Barber & Julian Smith

Presenters' Organisation: University of Wolverhampton, UK

Session's chair: To be announced later.

Session title: 'Ok, now I'm at Uni, is it for me?' Examining first year sports students' expectations of and motivations for Higher Education study pre- and post-higher student fees

Abstract:

Higher student fees were introduced in England in 2012, meaning that students could incur a maximum fee debt of £27000 (approx. 31500 euros). Within Higher Education in the UK there is also an increasing focus on student retention and student experience (Roberts, 2011). As a result, the authors decided to conduct a mixed method study over two academic years specifically examining student motivations for and expectations of higher education and the potential impact of higher fees therein.

For the academic years 2011-12 (pre-higher fees) and 2012-13 (post-higher fees) data were collected using the 'Student Engagement Questionnaire' (Zepke, Leach & Butler, 2010) and follow up focus groups. Participants were first year undergraduate sports students at a post-1992 university in the West Midlands of England. The questionnaire was completed using Surveyor, a survey application software. Focus groups were conducted by the first two authors. The survey generated descriptive quantitative data, while focus group transcripts were coded independently by both first named authors with themes identified inductively.

The themes presented were agreed following extensive discussion between these researchers. Themes emerging that will form the basis of our discussion are: perceived competency ('Can I do it?'); staff-student relationships ('It's great when they say hello'); student-student relationships ('I'd really struggle at uni with no friends'); student expectations of higher education and their specific course ('I know it's important, but what's it got to do with sport?') ; intrinsic motivation and factors influencing it ('I've only got to pass it'); and students' active engagement ('The lectures have to add something!'). These themes are discussed in the light of contemporary literature (Zepke and Leach, 2010; Zepke, Leach & Butler, 2010; Russell & Slater, 2011) with student motivation and expectations and, where appropriate, the impact of higher fees explicitly explored. Suggestions will also be made for possible interventions.

Inspirational session 16

Session's theme: Guidance and counseling

Paper number: 20

Presenters: Dr Louise Walker

Presenters' Organisation: University of Manchester

Session's chair: To be announced later.

Session title: Calculating Careers- helping first years develop interview skills

Abstract:

In the current higher educational climate, the need to provide undergraduates with opportunities to develop career awareness is becoming increasingly important. In the UK, the Destination of Leavers from Higher Education survey gives the % of graduates who are in work or full time education six months after graduating. These figures are made available to applicants through universities promotional material and UCAS, the organisation that manages undergraduate admissions in the UK. Feedback from graduate employers suggests that some students, although well qualified, fail to be shortlisted because their CVs and application forms are poorly constructed. Those students who reach the interview stage may also find they are less able to articulate their skills than students from other disciplines.

In mathematics, most students enter an undergraduate programme with little idea where their education will lead them. It is important that students address their career planning at an early stage in their undergraduate programme, ideally during their first year. To this end the School of Mathematics at the University of Manchester has developed a series of careers awareness initiatives, aimed specifically at maths students, under the banner Calculating Careers . Although they are aimed at maths students, the schemes are transferable to any discipline.

In this presentation I will outline the following Calculating Careers initiatives and discuss their evaluation: "Our annual Calculating Careers fair where students can talk to representatives from graduate employers, many of whom are alumni. "A student led employability audit of our undergraduate programmes, with input from industrial contacts and careers advisors. "An interview scheme in which first year students apply for mock internship posts and are shortlisted and interviewed by higher year students, with detailed feedback provided at all stages.

Inspirational session 16

Session's theme: Guidance and counseling

Paper number: 35

Presenters: Joanna Y Ye, Hamieda Begum

Presenters' Organisation: University of Leeds

Session's chair: To be announced later.

Session title: Nurturing Talent - Mentoring that Makes a Difference

Abstract:

At Leeds University Business School we have launched the Nurturing Talent Mentor Scheme aimed at enhancing first year students employability, increasing confidence and developing key skills. We have recruited over 70 professionals from a range of industries to mentor our students on a one to one basis. A mentor can help by passing on their knowledge, skills and experience that will guide and support the student.   The scheme is particularly focused on students from backgrounds underrepresented in higher education who might not have access to professional networks through family and friends. Mentors will provide support and guidance on:

- Building confidence
- Enhancing students communication skills
- Insight into industry and career direction
- Interview techniques and CV tips
- Developing professional contacts
- Understanding the application and selection process for internships and placements

Students benefit from:

- Visiting mentor s workplace to gain an insight into the business environment
- Discussing career plans to get an unbiased, experienced view of next steps
- Networking with mentor´s colleagues to find out about alternative roles
- Accessing potential work shadowing or work experience opportunities
- Gaining a realistic knowledge of various career roles and developing a personal strategy for success
- Guidance on the interview and selection process

Constructive advice on how to demonstrate the skills that employers are looking for. The early evaluation results suggest that students are achieving positive changes and are becoming more confident and employable. An overwhelming number indicated that they have developed very good relationships with their mentor and have found the mentoring to be effective for their personal and professional development.

Inspirational session 17

Session's theme: Supporting student learning

Paper number: 40

Presenters: Anne Haarala-Muhonen and Sakari Melander

Presenters' Organisation: University of Helsinki

Session's chair: To be announced later.

Session title: How to get a good start – developing the first substantive course of legal studies

Abstract:

In this paper we present the way in which the Faculty of Law at the University of Helsinki has sought to address the progression and social interaction of first year students by developing the curriculum of the course, The Foundations of Legal Thinking (11 ECTS).

At the beginning of the studies the students have an orientation period and it is followed by obligatory course The Foundations of Legal Thinking (FLT). The course focuses on generating an overall picture of legal field.

In the academic year 2009–2010 the course was based on independent textbook reading and traditional lectures offered to the whole year cohort. Written examination was the method of assessment. 257 students participated in the course. In the first examination 189 students failed and even after resit 49 students failed in passing the exam. It was clear that the curriculum needed drastic revisions.

In real life legal problems are not connected to only one area of law, but go over the branches of law. This calls for recognising the core of different legal problems, which, in turn, is crucial in solving these problems. Bearing this in mind, the main focus in developing FLT was in combining theoretical knowledge in interactive problem-based learning. The course is divided in three modules. The first module (Dimensions of Law) is based on lectures, which introduce students to various dimensions of law. The second module (Legal Argumentation) seeks to combine the knowledge adopted during the first module in actual court cases, which the students present in working groups. The third module (Lawyer in resolving conflicts) goes even further and forces the students to apply the skills adopted during the course in actual cases that illustrate the role of the lawyer in solving conflicts.

In our presentation we will describe the main developments which were done to the curriculum and teaching methods and we will show how passing rate grew significantly and how students experienced this renewed course.

Inspirational session 17

Session's theme: Supporting student learning

Paper number: 13

Presenters: Ed Foster and Sarah Lawther

Presenters' Organisation: Nottingham Trent University

Session's chair: To be announced later.

Session title: Developing a sense of belonging: what is it that helps students feel that they 'fit in' on their course?

Abstract:

Before learning can take place, it is argued, students need to fulfil a more basic "fundamental need" to belong (Strayhorn, 2012, p123), to connect with their place of learning, to "emotionally attach themselves to their institution", before they engage with their studies (Percy, 2002, p95). This sense of belonging is a "critical dimension" of student success (Strayhorn, 2012, p121). It can make study "a more fulfilling and enjoyable process" (Kember, Lee and Li, 2001, p340) and where it isn't present, can be a primary factor in the decision to withdraw from university (Thomas, 2012). Belonging is, Strayhorn argues, context dependent; the more that students feel that they fit in to the course "the greater the influence on outcomes (such as adjustment, achievement)" within the course (2012, p123). Given the importance of a sense of belonging to learning, how can we facilitate this?

This session shares the findings of research carried out at NTU with over 400 first year students that explored their perceptions of belonging to their course. Many of the students explained what had helped them to 'fit in' on their course in some detail, providing insight into how we might support students with belonging in the first year. The three most common reasons that students gave for why they felt that they fitted in on their course were: an interest in the course (those who rated this highly often used the word 'passion' when describing their course or subject), that they were coping well academically, and that they got along socially with others on their course (such as they had made friends on their course, it was welcoming). Students also told us what they do themselves to help develop a sense of belonging to their course.

The findings reflect much of the current literature on supporting students in their transition to learning and this will be discussed along with any implications the findings may have for practice.

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Inspirational session 19

Session's theme: Ways and tools of communication

Paper number: 14

Presenters: Janet Ellis, Joanne Forsyth, Ona Sumner, Joanne Timpson

Presenters' Organisation: School of Nursing, Midwifery and Social Work, University of Manchester

Session's chair: To be announced later.

Session title: Utilising Turning Point to Capture the Student Voice

Abstract:

This presentation aims to give a practical demonstration of a process piloted with September 2012 BNurs intake. Too often universities plan induction around the information that they feel students need to know rather than what the students want to know. The initiative was driven by the concept of Shared Thinking (Bowskill et al 2010), which was developed at the University of Glasgow is a model of induction, transition and reflection for communities of students.

The BNurs Induction Week Timetable for AY 2012/13 had been planned based on the traditional communication strategies but the Student Support team saw an opportunity to create an ongoing dialogue with the students. On the first day of Welcome Week interactive technology was used to elicit a list of 10 concerns from the students. They then voted for the 3 issues that were of most concern to them. There were some unexpected areas of concern and issues that we had thought would be stressors that were not primary concerns for students. On the last day of Welcome Week we reviewed the issues raised following up on those that needed clarification. We explained that in some cases we would not give a definitive answer but gave dates when relevant information would be given as part of ongoing induction. This process of eliciting current concerns will continue throughout the academic year with sessions linked to key transitions on the programme; for example assessments. The support sessions play an important role in managing student expectations and reinforce the strategy of induction not being limited to Welcome Week. This presentation will outline the motivation behind the pilot scheme, information on how it was planned and carried out, the results of the dialogue and how the scheme will influence future inductions. It will outline the positive impact we feel the pilot scheme has had on the students' experience and also the benefits of the developing dialogue to the academic and administrative staff.

Bowskill, N., Q. Cutts, et al. (2010). "Am I Alone in Thinking..?" Overcoming student concerns and isolation using a Shared Thinking approach for FIMS Induction. 3rd Annual University of Glasgow Learning and Teaching Conference. University of Glasgow.

Inspirational session 19

Session's theme: Ways and tools of communication

Paper number: 25

Presenters: Lars Grassmé Binderup, Birgitta Wallstedt

Presenters' Organisation: University of Southern Denmark

Session's chair: To be announced later.

Session title: Implementing new strategies for study introduction and First Year experience

Abstract:

Study introduction and First Year experience as part of a new strategy: Students in Focus The University of Southern Denmark (USD) is currently running a 5-year project entitled Students in Focus (6 million EUR) aimed at improving all aspects of the students learning experience in supportive physical, social, and technical settings.

In our presentation, we will discuss how a comprehensive principle of student-centeredness governs a number of aspects from the newly adopted pedagogical principle of Active Teaching & Learning to physical learning spaces and the student bar. We will especially focus on the subproject Study start and study-supportive courses dedicated to ensuring that all students experience a smooth and inclusive introduction to student life and learning starting from creating the best match between students and study programmes in student selection procedures through a reformed strategy for study introduction and first year experience in all educational programmes.

USD has six campuses and five faculties with different educational approaches and academic traditions. Our student body is characterized by a comparatively large group of students with non-academic parental background (around 80%) as well as substantial groups of international students and students with other ethnic backgrounds than Danish.

We will especially discuss two related major challenges:

1. How to design a study introduction equally inclusive for all groups of students
2. How the principle of Active Teaching & Learning can be introduced and imbedded in the different academic traditions during the first year of study

We will also report briefly on our recent concrete experiences with reformed study introduction programmes at the Faculties of Humanities, Health and Science primarily focusing on the creation of intensive introduction modules (2-4 weeks), early assessment and feedback and tutor support during the first semester. ADDITIONAL POSTER on Active Teaching & Learning

Inspirational session 20

Session's theme: Best practices

Paper number: 46

Presenters: Laura Hirsto

Presenters' Organisation: University of Helsinki/ Faculty of Theology

Session's chair: To be announced later.

Session title: Practices of personal study plans and self-regulated learning

Abstract:

In this presentation, the practices and processes of personal study planning in a Finnish theology faculty will be presented. These practices have been developed on the basis of follow-up as well as various cross-sectional studies on theology students motivational and learning processes during university studies. Through the studies it has been possible to identify certain challenges and motivational dynamics theology students face. These dynamics have many similarities with general university study-paths according to earlier research, but also some special features.

Theology students in this context have to make many decisions concerning their studies such as their curriculum path, future career prospects as well as their major subjects during the course of their studies. When they have entered the faculty through an entrance exam, they have a possibility to choose between three different curricula: 1) a general theological education, 2) the education required to become a teacher of religion, and 3) qualifications for students wishing to become pastors in the Evangelical-Lutheran church. There are five possible majors to choose from for the bachelors degree and generally eleven possible majors in the masters degree.

It has been shown that a considerable amount of theology students have difficulties in the regulation of learning (e.g. Hirsto, Alanne & Huttunen, 2012; Parpala, Lindblom-Ylänne, Komulainen, Litmanen & Hirsto, 2010). This means, for example, difficulties in setting goals for their studies and engaging in the aims to progress with their goals. Goal setting is an important phase of self-regulated learning (e.g. Zimmermann, 2002) and the personal study plans are designed to facilitate this process during theology students study paths.

The emphasis in this presentation is on the practices during the first two years of the theological studies, but also the whole process and its developments will be described.

Inspirational session 20

Session's theme: Best practices

Paper number: 47

Presenters: Rebecca Roper, Michael Carr, Tara Cusack, Mary Gilmartin, Yseult Freeney

Presenters' Organisation: IADT, Dun Laoghaire, Dublin Ireland

Session's chair: To be announced later.

Session title: What Makes the Best First Year Experience?

Abstract:

The importance of a good first year experience in higher education institutions, has been increasingly recognized by higher education institutions, in terms of laying a sound foundation for educational persistence and completion. The institutions that compose the Dublin Region Higher Education Alliance (DRHEA) proposed, through a teaching and learning fellowship scheme, to examine what constitutes a good first year experience. Five teaching and learning fellows, from different institutions and disciplines, were appointed for a six month period to examine this topic.

The fellows undertook (a) a systematic review of the literature and (b) and examined regional initiatives intended to enhance the first year learning experience.   (a) The review focused on two key aspects of the literature   interventions and outcomes. (b) Regional initiatives have been sourced in the form of exemplar case studies from across the eight DRHEA institutions and from across a variety of disciplines.

A number of institutional initiatives emerged as key in terms of better enabling first year engagement, these included: the establishment of learning communities, the conduct of first year seminars, the introduction of mentoring programmes and changes to the academic curriculum.

We reflect upon the strategies that are most effective in producing tangible results for learners in facilitating social and academic integration into higher level education. We also identify aspects of this transitional period that extant initiatives fail to take into consideration. The importance of committed participants or champions for first year enhancement from all staff, including academic, professional and support staff, should not be underestimated. Successful institution-wide interventions aimed at creating a best first year experience require strategic and concerted efforts from a majority of stakeholders.

This session will invite participants to investigate the question 'What Makes The 'Best' First Year Experience?' within the framework of the systematic literature review undertaken by the DRHEA (Dublin Regional Higher Education Alliance) Fellows, and will feature information from focus groups and case studies within the 8 institutes of higher education in Dublin, Ireland. Participants will be able to share their own experience, and will be encouraged to consider fresh thinking in approaching the challenges unique to their own institutions.

Inspirational session 21

Session's theme: Supporting student learning

Paper number: 8

Presenters: Vesa Korhonen, Mira Valkonen

Presenters' Organisation: School of Education, University of Tampere

Session's chair: To be announced later.

Session title: Student engagement and identity

Abstract:

The start and fluency of university studies can be examined from different versatile perspectives. One point of view is the engagement approach which has been internationally researched and discussed for a long both theoretically and empirically (Tinto, 1975; 2000; Kuh, 2001; Langley, 2006; Leach & Zepke, 2011). Also in Finland there have been openings to engagement related research and discussion (Mäkinen & Annala, 2011; Korhonen, 2012).

Korhonen has developed a specific engagement model for evaluation and guidance improvement purposes in higher education (see Korhonen, 2012; Poutanen et. al 2012), where the student engagement can be examined through three important and intertwined matters in the learning process: how sense of belonging to the studying field is experienced, how participation in the learning communities takes place and how necessary academic skills needed in the academic teaching-learning communities are learned and managed. Important corner stone is also the student s developing learning identity (see Wortham, 2006).

In this presentation, we examine with the engagement model how the transition to a university student is performed and how the start of studies is experienced at generalist educational fields. The study is a case study conducted in the Schools of Education and Information Sciences at the University of Tampere in 2012-13 as a part of the Campus Conexus project.

The data is collected in two phases, at first, with an online self-evaluation questionnaire (n=58) to the participants of six tutoring groups, and next, continuing with interviews (n=7) to the first year students in education. With the questionnaire first year students engagement orientations and perceptions of academic teaching and learning environments are discussed. Based on the interviews, the personal engagement experiences and challenges are examined in more detail.

Inspirational session 21

Session's theme: Supporting student learning

Paper number: 12

Presenters: Hanni Muukkonen, Mikko Inkinen, Kai Hakkarainen, Katariina Salmela-Aro, Kirsti Lonka

Presenters' Organisation: University of Helsinki

Session's chair: To be announced later.

Session title: Students' daily activities and contextual affects

Abstract:

The challenges and demands of the first university years typically include the adoption of a student role and the building of relationships with fellow students (e.g., Grob et al., 2001; Salmela-Aro, 2009). Furthermore, acculturation into the academic contexts and practices poses demands on both intellectual and self-regulatory abilities.

The purpose of the study is to examine the actual activities of first-year higher education students, and to determine what kinds of socio-emotional experiences are associated with their activities. The Contextual Activity Sampling System (CASS) research methodology and the CASS-Query mobile application have been developed for contextually tracking of participants activities. The method relies on Ecological Momentary Assessment designed to trace real-time advancement of learning activities by frequent sampling.

75 students from 3 universities took part in a two-week follow-up, with 5 queries per days, resulting in c. 3000 responses. Students rated their positive and negative emotions, absorption, challenge, competence, and commitment, and provided an explanation of their doing at that moment. The doing responses were qualitatively categorized (Kappa .87) and examined in relation to the meaningfulness and affect variables.

The studying contexts were experiences as very challenging while competence was not very high. This can be translated to a feeling of anxiety (Csikszentmihalyi, 1995; Delle Fave & Massimini, 2005), reflecting the high demands first-year students appear to experience in higher education. On the other hand, students also reported high commitment, absorption, interest, and determination, which is likely to support them through studying tasks.

Collaborative learning generated higher levels of commitment, interest, and absorption compared to other studying activities. The results support prior findings that sporting and leisure hobbies as well as interaction have an important positive influence on well-being.

Inspirational session 22

Session's theme: Curriculum and course development

Paper number: 39

Presenters: Jane Mullen, Frances Marsden

Presenters' Organisation: University of Huddersfield

Session's chair: To be announced later.

Session title: Embedding learning development: staff reflections

Abstract:

This paper is based on the reflections of a team of staff who delivered a core module this academic year to over 200 undergraduate first year students on four degrees in the School of Education. The team is very aware of the importance of supporting students in their transition to degree level study, but were concerned that due to changes in module credits valuable theory was being squeezed out of courses. Consequently, a module was written that embedded skill development within course specific theory. This meant not simply including these abilities in the learning outcomes but specifically designing the opportunities for development within the module and providing the necessary input or guidance to enable such development.

It is widely recognised that study skills modules are not well received by students and that curriculum contents and pedagogy can motivate students to engage and be successful in higher education (Thomas, 2012:34). With the focus on student centred learning the students created a portfolio of evidence of their learning development and reflected on their learning before writing their first essay. Encouraging and developing the students academic skills became the responsibility of all the academic staff, but as Clughen & Hardy(2012) acknowledge some found it difficult to balance the time spent on skills development and theory delivery.

This paper evaluates what we have learnt in delivering this module and the effectiveness of an embedded approach to skill development.

Clughen , L & Hardy, C. (2012) Writing at University: Student and Staff Expectations and Experiences . In Clughen, L & Hardy, C, (eds) Writing in the Disciplines: building supportive cultures for student writing in UK higher education. Bingley: Emerald Group Pub.

Thomas, L. (2012) Building Student Engagement and Belonging in Higher Education at a Time of Change: the final report from the What Works? Student Retention & Success programme. London: Paul Hamlyn Foundation.

Inspirational session 22

Session's theme: Curriculum and course development

Paper number: 45

Presenters: Carolien Van Soom, Lieve De Wachter

Presenters' Organisation: University of Leuven, Belgium

Session's chair: To be announced later.

Session title: Academic literacy and math skills predict academic achievement of first year

Abstract:

Academic bachelor programs in Science & Technology are characterized by a low academic achievement of first year students. These programs typically require a strong academic preparation in mathematics since math modules of varying complexity are obligatory in all first-year programs. Numerous retention studies focus on cognitive variables such as high school GPA and Math test scores as typical predictors of study success (1-3), and also coaching programs of first year students bachelor of Science programs typically focus on remediation of math skills.

Academic achievement, however, depends not only on math skills. Academic language skills have been shown to be powerful predictors of academic achievement in general (4-9). Also motivational characteristics, such as the level of autonomous motivation and academic self-concept, have been repeatedly associated with academic achievement (10-11).

To improve the study success and the efficiency of coaching programs for first year students in Bachelor of Science programs, we investigated whether entry levels of academic language skills are also important predictors in Bachelor of Science programs, and to what extent motivational characteristics improve a predictive model based on cognitive characteristics.

Regression analyses showed that in all Bachelor of Science programs, the score on an academic language skills test was a significant predictor of early academic achievement, in combination with general prior achievement data and test scores on math skills. Motivational aspects had only a small additional predictive value in regression models.

Implications of these results for academic practice are discussed. Typical coaching programs for first year students in exact sciences focus exclusively on remediating math skills. The observation that academic language skills are an important indicator of students' future academic achievement, also in exact sciences, suggests that a general academic language skills test could be used to inform both science and non-science students about their chances on future study success. Diagnostic math tests have an additional value for science students, since they allow to advise students to take remedial modules to train specific math skills.

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Inspirational session 23

Session's theme: Retention

Paper number: 32

Presenters: Kristine Lysnes, Harald Aage Saethre, Anders Huseboe

Presenters' Organisation: University of Bergen

Session's chair: To be announced later.

Session title: Evaluation of the complete learning environment of the second semester

Abstract:

The bachelor programme in Mathematics at the University of Bergen (UiB) struggles with a high drop-out rate between the second and third semester. We wanted a tool to find out why the rate was highest after the first year and if there was something in the second semester that could explain this. The tool we traditionally use for evaluation is only for specific courses. How then can we learn about challenges our students experience that lies outside one specific course? And how can we learn how the different courses influence each other positively/negatively and work together to form a complete semester?

To try to answer these questions, we initiated a pilot project in the spring semester 2012, where we used a focus group of students in their second semester of the bachelor programme. We interviewed this group to find out how the semester work as a complete learning environment; academically, practically and socially.

The aim of the project was to give the Department a tool to identify the challenges students experience. When we know the challenges, we can use this information to make changes to ensure the students a good learning environment and to ensure they see the purpose and maintain their motivation for further studies. What we ultimately hope to achieve is to reduce the drop-out rate. The results from the focus group gave us both additional and completely new information compared to the traditional evaluation methods.

Results will be used to improve both the learning environment and the information we give to the new students. Our results, experiences, methods and questions from this project can easily be transferred to other study programmes. Most bachelor programmes at UiB experience the highest drop-out rate after the first year, and a focus group can give valuable information on how to improve the learning environment.

Inspirational session 23

Session's theme: Retention

Paper number: 44

Presenters: Päivi Kinnunen, Erkki Pesonen, Maija Marttila-Kontio

Presenters' Organisation: Aalto yliopisto

Session's chair: To be announced later.

Session title: Computer science students retention and experiences of the first study year

Abstract:

The challenge for the Finnish higher education is to recruit intelligent and motivated computer science students and then keep the retention rate high throughout the bachelor and master level studies. The challenges of keeping the retention high both at the course level and degree level are evident both in Finland as well as abroad.

This ongoing study takes a deeper look at what exactly happens during the first two study years; how students experience studying computer science, how their knowledge and abilities evolves and at what point of studies some students decide to leave the computer science major and why. The general research goal of this project is to find out in what ways we could develop the computer science curriculum and the teaching and studying practices so that students who have chosen computer science as their study major will succeed in their studies.

We have set four research questions: How do computer science students experience the first study years at the university? At what point of studies some students decide to drop out and why? How does computer science students knowledge about computer science evolve during the first study years? How the curriculum and the teaching practices can be developed based on the knowledge of the students experiences and their learning?

We have a longitudinal research design in order to be able to observe students several times during their studies. This enables us to observe how the experiences change and the understanding and skills evolve over the years. We are collecting both qualitative and quantitative data from Aalto University and the University of Eastern Finland.

Round table 12

Session's theme: Best practices

Paper number: 41

Presenters: Annick Hayen

Presenters' Organisation: Hasselt University

Session's chair: To be announced later.

Session title: Exploring self-reflection tools: LeMo (Learning and Motivation test) at the start

Abstract:

The transition to higher education is not always as easy as it looks. A lot of students are dropping out during their first year at University. Research on the background characteristics of students has been done e.g. lower socioeconomic status, inadequate schooling in college, … In a system were there is a free entrance to higher education, we cannot do nothing and watch them see fail, lower self-esteem, … In according to Tinto, we know the key factors to invest. If we want to encourage young people to excel their talent we need to decrease the threshold of incoming student in their first months at University. Giving support were necessary to ensure that all students find their way. The start of the academic career is crucial. Therefore we need to start as soon as possible to work on social and academic integration. These are the foundations for excelling during their academic career. It is common to start with a questionnaire at the beginning. It makes students more aware of their strengths and weaknesses. In the past a questionnaire was very time-consuming, mostly one focus at the time e.g. motivation, learning strategies, … Therefore, a new test is developed LEMO-test (learning and motivation). The purpose of this testing is to make students more sensitive of their own. In the feedback they receive, we are reaching them some advice to make progress in their uncomfortable zones. Consciousness of themselves in terms of learning is an attitude towards future and later working.

Offering academic skills and employability skills from the start, creating a powerful, learning environment that beside cognitive competence also social skills supports, can make a difference in bounding. In order to stimulate this bounding and increase new students' level of engagement and commitment to success we implemented the LEMO- test as a self assessment instrument. During their first week at the university, within one of the lessons, they all take part in the electronically testing. Immediate personal feedback is provided on four clusters: motivation, learning strategies, self regulation, self-efficacy. Students are invited to discuss their personal feedback with involved educating and supporting staff-members.

In the learning group we would like to briefly present the LEMO-test and the implementation within our educational first year strategy. From the other group members we want to learn about other experiences with similar tools. Together we would like to explore and find answers on the following questions:

General:

What is the meaning of self reflection in higher education?

What is the impact of motivation, learning strategy and self-regulation on students' success?

How to improve motivation, learning strategy and self-regulation?

What are the conditions to make understanding own capacities and shortages a factor of behavioral change?

Topic self-assessment:

What are the arguments pro self-assessment tools, how to choose the most appropriate tool?

What is most relevant and predicting to be measured by the tool?

How to implement a self-assessment tool in the organization? Is integration within the educational and student-supporting system important?

How to measure effect and result on students' study success?

Evaluation or assessment:

Tutoring, monitoring, counseling, learning outcomes are possible strategies to evaluate the benefit of early large support. There is on-going evaluation by means of a steering group, project management, reporting procedures and participation of all groups (staff, students) involved.

Round table 18

Session's theme: Supporting student learning

Paper number: 50

Presenters: William Carey

Presenters' Organisation: The University of Manchester

Session's chair: To be announced later.

Session title: 'My, My, My…, What?, How…?' Peer Support: Is it a good thing? Who cares?

Abstract:

The University of Manchester operates two complimentary forms of Peer Support engaging over 1500 higher year students through Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS) and Peer Mentoring. Over 95% of all first year students have access to this support.   Both models have been in operation since 1995 and now operate in over 60 disciplines, supporting in excess of 6000 students.

Peer Support has defined aims and objectives:
- To enhance the quality, quantity and diversity of Student Learning within a discipline
- To involve students as partners in their learning experience
- To provide further opportunity for the development of intellectual and professional competencies
- To provide students with a supportive environment to assist the transition into and throughout Higher Education

But, how are these aims measured? Can Key Performance Indicators be defined?

Whilst there is evidence from wide ranging literature indicating Peer Support does impact positively on FYE, the question *still* remains 'How can we evidence impact?'! Evidence is often required in the context of an individual institution thereby creating a challenge to make the local activity relevant whilst not 'reinventing the wheel'.

This session will, through active discussions, encourage participants to address key questions including:
- Why do we measure impact?
- What do we want to know? / What do others want to know?
- How can we evidence impact in the context of our institution?

Through the experience of all participants, the facilitator will:
- share an evolving approach being developed at The University of Manchester
- consider the impact results from a series of local evaluations and,
- encourage participants to consider and share their approaches to evaluation

Round table 6

Session's theme: Guidance and counseling

Paper number: 3

Presenters: Simo Mikkonen

Presenters' Organisation: University of Jyväskylä

Session's chair: To be announced later.

Session title: Integration through group counseling: students as members of the academic community

Abstract:

This session aims at discussing and developing different forms of students group counseling with the immediate aim of increasing dialogue between students and department staff. Partly, the aim of mentoring is to enhance integration and prevent early drop-outs, but it is also important for opening communication channels, for getting feedback and increasing awareness of necessary learning skills.

The tendency to push students from high school into universities more quickly and without gap years has resulted in younger students who are less ready for autonomous studies and independent action than those with more experience having spent some years working or otherwise outside school rooms. This poses certain challenges in integrating students to university studies that require autonomy and decisiveness. Problems in these areas manifest themselves in early dropouts, delayed studies and generally lowered study motivation among students.

Mentoring and enhanced group counseling during first study years could increase motivation and study pace resulting in quicker graduation and improved experiences. In order to further develop ideas of mentoring and group counseling, we would like to share and present ideas related to these issues. You might have experiences of enhanced mentoring and group counseling, or be interested in developing such schemes at your institution. You might use different terms of your approach rather than counseling or mentoring, but if it matches the description, you are most welcome to participate or contribute to this learning group.

Convener of this learning group will introduce their plans for the academic year 2013/2014 which include combined efforts of student tutors, departmental coordinators and members of the teaching staff. The plan aims at increased mentoring of incoming students, improved internal dialogue within the departmental community and better integration of students into student and academic communities.

Show and tell 10

Session's theme: Supporting student learning

Paper number: 5

Presenters: Siobhan Clay

Presenters' Organisation: University of the Arts London

Session's chair: To be announced later.

Session title: Commonplace: a sustainable student community

Abstract:

Commonplace is a user-generated student website designed and hosted by University of the Arts London (UAL). The site was created in collaboration with students to support successful transitions into higher education. Our aim was to build a friendly and accessible community platform for current and prospective students to share knowledge and experiences about being a UAL student in London, responding to challenges students face when starting university such as adapting to the learning culture and demands of university study, making friends and living away from home for the first time.

All the content on Commonplace is authored by students and posted using a simple online submission tool. Students post up study tips, recipes, secret London places, maps and tips. There is also a vibrant notice board.

In the Show and Tell session we will show how the site was developed and how it is being used. We will also share our top tips for building your own engaging and sustainable online student resources.   It's a great site that caters to students and provides support, entertainment and tons of useful info. The job opportunities and announcements are personal faves (student user).

In its first 18 months, Commonplace has gained over 140,000 hits and has established itself as a trusted community platform for students and a valuable resource for academic staff and central services at UAL. http://commonplace.arts.ac.uk

Show and tell 10

Session's theme: Supporting student learning

Paper number: 51

Presenters: Annick Eelbode

Presenters' Organisation: Ghent University, Belgium

Session's chair: To be announced later.

Session title: Measuring and monitoring study progress: A first step towards structural and evidence based student guidance

Abstract:

In order to gain a better insight in the determinants of success, failure and drop out 'study-progress' of about 20,000 students, first enrolled between 2005 – 2008, was monitored up to four consecutive years. Newly defined study performance indicators such as 'study success rate' (i.e., ECTS Credits completed/enrolled) and 'Learning Track Typology' showed strong indicators for whether a student will, eventually, succeed or drop out. The findings also indicate that in addition to focussing on drop out a great deal can be learned from studying success also.

In the end monitoring study progress aims at helping students in obtaining a degree. Our approach to monitoring study progress will be presented. Examples will be given that demonstrate how the results of monitoring study progress can be used to detect situations with a high risk of future failure and/or drop out.

Monitoring shows that some students seem to lack the insight of what it really takes to succeed. And that even after a first unsuccessful year quite a lot of them still lack that insight. We will conclude with presenting two newly developed counselling initiatives aiming at helping students to require the meta-cognitive skills needed to approach higher education with more realism.

Show and tell 10

Session's theme: Supporting student learning

Paper number: 16

Presenters: Victoria Reszler, Sabine Schnepfleitner

Presenters' Organisation: University of Graz / 4students

Session's chair: To be announced later.

Session title: 4students as a cross-media information hub

Abstract:

4students Studien Info Service is the service point for pupils and students for all questions concerning studying at the University of Graz. It consists of six permanent employees, for events or fairs there will be supplementary staff employed. The service point functions as a central information hub and cooperates with all university related as well as non-university related study-relevant service points.

4students provides individual guidance and information via phone, e-mail, Skype, Facebook, internet portal and also via consultation hours. Further, 4students is in charge of several information events on the campus and represents the University at educational fairs. Additionally 4students offers a brochure especially for the information needs of first year students as well as various workshops to ease the problems at the beginning of higher education studies such as study and learning skills or scientific writing. 4students also started a podcast series concerning various specific topics for the first semesters at University.

The newly perceived diversity of the target groups demands to open more channels and possibilities of communication. Concerning diversity dimensions and the relevant way of communication, 4students is focusing on (inter) nationality, social class background, age, geographic location, educational background, income and employment. The consideration and involvement of these components form a communication-mix varying from traditional media to the different possibilities of modern technologies, taking into special consideration the Digital Natives as well as Digital Immigrants.

To meet the requirement for the central platform for all information on studying at the University of Graz, it is necessary to combine the different modes of access of media and channels of communication for a perfect cross-linking. 4students should exemplify student guidance and counseling in Austria and show the importance of target group oriented communication.

Show and tell 10

Session's theme: Supporting student learning

Paper number: 38

Presenters: Karla H. Benske

Presenters' Organisation: Glasgow Caledonian University

Session's chair: To be announced later.

Session title: Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence: how can universities best prepare themselves

Abstract:

Adapting to a new national curriculum to ensure the best possible first-year experience at university From 2002 onwards a new national curriculum for schools, called Curriculum for Excellence has been developed, planned and implemented. The Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) signifies a step away from content driven, exam-focused teaching towards a concept of four capacities: successful learners; confident individuals; responsible citizens; and effective contributors.

The main aspects of the CfE which are of interest to universities are: the embracing of values (wisdom, justice, compassion, integrity) as an integral part of an inclusive curriculum accessible to all students as a stimulus for personal achievement and for students to become informed and responsible citizens, taking their life experience into account; learning that is engaging and active in order to enable students to develop creative ways of applying their learning, knowledge and skills; personal support that treats the learner as a partner and includes the review and planning of learning.

In order to ensure a best possible first-year experience student-facing members of staff will need to be equipped with the necessary skills to enable them to deal with a student body that will include a different calibre of students coming from Scottish schools with high expectations and a sense of entitlement and confidence that forms part of the CfE.

The presentation will show how Glasgow Caledonian University is preparing for the first students that will come to university after experiencing the CfE and which steps it has taken, including research, partnership working with stakeholders across the sector and staff development. Introducing a radically new national curriculum may be a rare event, but it does impact on the first-year experience and as European higher education institutions face an ever changing political, economical and educational landscape, such an example is of importance across national boundaries.

Show and tell 7

Session's theme: Curriculum and course development

Paper number: 11

Presenters: Lorraine Gearing, John Dishman

Presenters' Organisation: Coventry University College

Session's chair: To be announced later.

Session title: Our First Year, Their First Year

Abstract:

Coventry University College opened its doors to students in September 2012 and is a wholly owned subsidiary of Coventry University. As we come to the end of this first year, we can reflect upon the unique package that has resulted in significant student retention and achievement. There are a number of innovative practices that distinguish the student experience from that of a traditional university to maximize the opportunity for student achievement. Our goal is to develop a community of good practice and teaching and learning.

Each programme has been set up with a sequential block structure for each module. Full time students study and complete 4 separate modules during each academic year, with high contact hours and in a very structured environment. Of the twenty attendance hours, eighteen are subject specific and two per week are to provide small group tutorials. Typically, there would be between 5 and 7 students in each tutorial. The result of short but intensive study blocks has enabled students to concentrate on a single module, complete assignments whilst the subject is current and have a clear idea of their achievement as they continue their studies. All results are released to students early in the following block of study.

The original target market was the local day student, who wanted to stay in the family home whilst undertaking higher education. Reasons for this choice range between financial considerations and cultural expectation. Surprisingly, the actual student demographic showed nearly a third of students coming from outside the local area. We have observed a much higher than expected retention and progression rate, particularly as we encouraged widening access during this first year and confirmed the majority of places across the clearing period in August 2012. This is the first year of operation for Coventry University College, however the results suggest that the mode of study has contributed to the success of our students.

Show and tell 7

Session's theme: Curriculum and course development

Paper number: 17

Presenters: Liisa Myyry, Taina Joutsenvirta

Presenters' Organisation: University of Helsinki

Session's chair: To be announced later.

Session title: Developing exam practices to support professional development during higher education

Abstract:

Proctored closed book exams in class are a classical form of university learning, but still widely used at least in the University of Helsinki. These exams represent testing culture, where the focus is on testing factual knowledge and low-level cognitive skills. Unproctored open book online exams represent assessment culture, which focus on assessing the acquisition of higher-order thinking processes and competencies. Open book online exams demand also teachers to ask for knowledge production instead of reproduction of knowledge.

Earlier studies show that online exams are perceived as a step towards student-centered and constructivist learning, they tend to reduce text anxiety for those suffering high anxiety in class settings, and that they don t seem to increase cheating behavior compared to class exams.

At the faculty of social sciences a pilot of open book online exams was launched to improve the quality of learning. The aim was to support students professional development - ability to select relevant information from information load and to apply and analyse knowledge   and encourage cognitive development right from the first year of their university education. A data (N=110) was collected from the students who took an online exam in 2011-2012 in order to compare the learning experiences between the traditional exams and the online exams.

Concerning the learning experiences, the respondents used approximately the same time to study for the online exam than for the same kind of class exam, but they focused more on understanding, not to memorizing contents. Answering the questions was different due to the open book method: students could focus on applying and combining knowledge. Most students also felt they learned more from the online exam than from the same kind of class exam and they found answering the online exam more professional-like performance than answering to the traditional exam. Some critical comments about online exams were also presented.

Show and tell 7

Session's theme: Curriculum and course development

Paper number: 22

Presenters: Andrea Reid

Presenters' Organisation: Queensland University of Technology

Session's chair: To be announced later.

Session title: Developing graduate attributes: The first steps towards work-readiness

Abstract:

Globally, universities are becoming increasingly responsive to the importance of graduate employability. Research into what employers are looking for in graduates has shown that more than just theoretical knowledge of the discipline area is required; they want people with the skills and attitudes appropriate to professional life.

For almost 20 years the US National Association of Colleges and Employers has conducted an annual survey to determine which skills are valued by employers and their latest findings show that problem solving, leadership, written communication and team work are among those most valued (NACE 2012). In Australia, these are commonly known as graduate attributes. Essentially, any given university program should be designed to develop these attributes as well as achieve discipline-specific learning outcomes. How graduate attributes are developed in students differs across universities and within programs. However the literature clearly shows that best practice is to embed (and therefore teach and assess) these attributes within discipline teaching (Radloff et al 2008).

This session will report on the strategies which an Australian Business School is employing to begin to develop students graduate attributes across the first year. The session will also cover how student performance of graduate attributes is evaluated, particularly to meet the requirements of accrediting bodies.

References: National Association of Colleges and Employers 2012, Job Outlook 2013. Retrieved from http://www.naceweb.org

Radloff, A et al 2008, 'Assessing graduate attributes: Engaging academic staff and their students', in Engaging Students in Assessment, Adelaide, Australia, 20-21 November. Retrieved from http://www.ojs.unisa.edu.au/index.php Key words: curriculum development, supporting student learning

Show and tell 7

Session's theme: Curriculum and course development

Paper number: 37

Presenters: Arto Saloranta, Helena Kasurinen

Presenters' Organisation: Laurea UAS

Session's chair: To be announced later.

Session title: Curriculum and course development: Development of career management skills in higher education

Abstract:

The aim of this paper is to discuss the concept of employability and how we can enhance the development of career management skills from the beginning of the studies in HE. The future, welfare and competitiveness of Europe will call for employees flexibility and skills to adjust to changing and insecure labor markets. In HE sector-wise and specific competences are emphasized, but general skills and resilience are not included in pedagogic contents and goals. Professional growth or professional development refers to a student s development from a student to an expert.

We claim that employability is connected with resilience of an individual. We will discuss how we can take into account the factors influencing resilience and employability during career counselling process and professional growth. In the educational and career path crucial elements are individuals positive attitudes towards their future and high self-efficacy beliefs. Besides developing professional skills and competences during studies we believe that also these other capabilities can be trained.

In the session we will introduce a research project in which it is studied how we can promote students resilience and employability skills. First, it will be explored what kind of abilities students have when they are designing their future career in the early phase of their studies. During the project different activities and interventions will be developed. These activities help students to improve their attributes that increase their resilience. Interventions help students to study the employability factors and explore how the factors influence their possibilities to plan their future and get employed. Besides practices and tasks, workshops dealing with different themes will be organized. The research project will conducted in Laurea University of Applied Sciences in 2013-2015.

Show and tell 7

Session's theme: Curriculum and course development

Paper number: 49

Presenters: Erja Sipilä, Katja Laine, Jaana Hännikäinen

Presenters' Organisation: TUT / Department of Electronics and Communications Engineering

Session's chair: To be announced later.

Session title: New Introduction Studies for First Year Students

Abstract:

It has been discovered that moving from high school to university is challenging for many students. Students ask for among other guidance, scheduling assistance and assistance in finding the most suitable learning methods [1]. In order to meet these challenges the Faculty of Computing and Electrical Engineering (TST) at the Tampere University of Technology started to develop first year studies.

TST decided to start new introductory courses for the first year students. These courses aim to familiarize students to studying at the university, to motivate students to the basic studies, to provide students hands-on experience with simple electrical construction projects, to provide students tools for scheduling own studies and to provide students possibilities for group work.

As a part of the new introductory courses a teacher tutor is appointed for all first year students. This tutoring system before anything aims to improve the contact between students and teachers. In addition via the tutoring the students learn how to work in a group, how to study in an organized matter and how to self-evaluate own learning. In order to improve the contacts between students and working life an excursion with the tutor groups will be made. The excursion improves the students understanding about the future work tasks in the field.

These new introductory courses will be realized during the fall semester 2013.

[1] Pajarre, E., 2012. Minä DI-opiskelijana - Ensimmäisen vuoden opiskelijoiden kokemuksia ja odotuksia yliopisto-opiskelusta. Tampereen teknillinen yliopisto, Yliopistopalvelut, Raportti 7. http://dspace.cc.tut.fi/dpub/bitstream/handle/123456789/21185/pajarre_mina_di-opiskelijana.pdf?sequence=1

Show and tell 8

Session's theme: Students for students

Paper number: 27

Presenters: PhD Terhi Skaniakos, PhD Leena Penttinen, Professor Marjatta Lairio, Leena Penttinen, Marjatta Lairio

Presenters' Organisation: University of Jyväskylä

Session's chair: To be announced later.

Session title: Peer mentors experiences of mentoring programs in Finnish higher education

Abstract:

In many universities there are peer mentoring programs which aim to assist first-year students transition into academic life. With the concept of peer we refer to someone with the same or nearly equal status as the person being tutored. The aim of the peer mentoring programs is to provide a system which effectively aids the student to the new educational culture. Most often peer mentoring takes place during the first weeks and months of the studies and the mentors are students in senior position on the same field of study. The mentoring includes orientation to practical issues and social support, but also academic support. Most studies focus on the mentees experiences.

In this poster we focus at the peer mentors' self-reported experiences of mentoring. We are interested in mentors' experiences: aims and contents of the peer mentoring activities, the pedagogy involved, as well as their collaboration involving other guidance providers. The role of the peer mentor is contemplated within the framework of the Borgen & Amundson s structured group counseling activities.

The collaboration aspects are based on the holistic career guidance model of Watts & van Esbroeck. The analysis is based on Internet questionnaire responses, collected in 2010 (N=795) from 13 Research Universities (RU) and Universities of Applied Sciences (UAS). It involves statistical analysis of the numeric data and thematic content analysis of the open answers.

The mentors have generally been satisfied with both, the training and the actual mentoring. They named psycho-social issues as the most important area of their work. However, study planning was reported an area, in which the students have the greatest need for guidance. Being a mentor has increased their general level of activity as a student. In order to develop mentoring, the mentors desire for more extensive and effective cooperation with the staff.

Show and tell 8

Session's theme: Students for students

Paper number: 28

Presenters: Elina Lehkonen, Jukka Parviainen

Presenters' Organisation: Aalto University School of Science

Session's chair: To be announced later.

Session title: Creating systematic guidelines for student engagement at the School of Science

Abstract:

In spring 2010 Teaching and Education Evaluation (TEE) was executed at the Aalto University. The evaluation produced information for developing teaching and education. As a result the ongoing project 'Student care and support' was launched. The project was one of strategic initiatives in autumn 2012 at the Aalto University School of Science (Aalto SCI). The project is focused on students, their studies and well-being and creating practices to support them.

In poster we show some practical achievements during the first year. At Aalto SCI all new students are given a systematic handshake by orientation week (e.g. SCI Get-together event, study planning practicums) and orientation to studies. There has also been a new form of guidance learning counselor available for students (face-to-face guidance on study skills and workshops). A students well-being survey is collected in the spring.

As a result every degree programme will put together actions for advancing students well-being together with students, guilds and faculty. Focus on the project has been on preventive actions and developing systematic model for monitoring students progress of studies. Staff tutors meet new students in personal meetings and talk about student s study plan. Students progress of first year studies has also been proactively monitored by looking credit units and personally contacting students.

One goal of this project has been to enhance student centric learning environment. Co-operation between guilds and faculty is strong including collaboration agreements between guilds and degree programmes. Guilds play an active role in students engagement to university studies, e.g. peer tutors. There is also an ongoing project called POP (For better learning) in which students and staff members carry out concrete projects together, e.g. changing library into a learning space.

Keywords: student engagement, study skills, student s well-being, learning community

Show and tell 8

Session's theme: Students for students

Paper number: 30

Presenters: Eeva Miettinen

Presenters' Organisation: Faculty of Pharmacy, University of Helsinki

Session's chair: To be announced later.

Session title: Student tutor -a tour guide to the university world

Abstract:

The Faculty of Science is big unit in the University of Helsinki. The student admission is annually over one thousand, but only about 300 Masters of Science graduate. As a significant part of the student population never graduate retention is a big problem in the Faculty of Science. New student s commitment to studying in the Faculty has been a subject of discussion.

In Finland student tutoring is an essential part of beginning of academic studies. Student tutoring is the first contact to University when the new students start. Aims of the study were to get a better understanding of what are the key elements in student tutoring and what should and could be done to make it work even better.

Results are based on e-mail surveys of people responsible of tutoring from departments, N=8 and student organisations, N=11. Student tutors, N=93 filled a survey as an ending of tutoring and also new students, N=155 were asked feedback on tutoring. Data was analysed by qualitative methods mostly using data based content analysis.

The fundamental goals considered to be getting new students to get to know the physical and social environment of the Campus and University in general. Also peer support given by the tutor and the group was seen as a positive element of student tutoring. Student tutors also provide a hands-on knowledge about studies and studying, compared to the higher level information provided by the departments.

Based on the results student tutoring works well at the moment. To develop tutoring further questions like how well tutoring reached the new students and how versatile and deep the meetings were need to be answered. Based on the found results can be said that student tutoring has a significant role in beginning of the studies. New students said that student tutoring helped them to start their studies and find friends. In this light student tutoring can be seen as an important part of preventing retention.

Show and tell 8

Session's theme: Students for students

Paper number: 31

Presenters: Pirre Seppänen,

Presenters' Organisation: The Student Union of the University of Helsinki

Session's chair: To be announced later.

Session title: Recommendations for good tutoring

Abstract:

The student organization of Theology presenting their best practices for tutoring and encouraging new students to become a part of the scientific community. In Finland student organizations are very strong and they play significant role in student's first year. The Student Union of the University of Helsinki agrees all these best practices and this organization and their faculty is also know of their excellent tutoring. We have also written materials.

Show and tell 9

Session's theme: Best practices

Paper number: 2

Presenters: Maria Helena Costa Alves Guimaraes Ustimenko,

Presenters' Organisation: Institutue of Accountingf and Administration of Porto (ISCAP/IPP)

Session's chair: To be announced later.

Session title: Building skills for the 21st century: How to get students involved in the learning process

Abstract:

As a teacher of Translation and Russian Language, I work not only with Portuguese students at undergraduate and graduate levels, willing to learn the correct use of Russian language in specific areas, but also with incoming students from Russia and with Russian speaking students, whose families are living and working in Portugal. We have soon realized that the development of an intercultural environment in classroom was not the result of a linear equation. The simple presence of students with different cultural backgrounds does not mean that they are aware of the importance of this factor in the learning and training for skills process. Therefore the development of an intercultural dialogue has soon become our skopos, considering that it is a condition sine qua non for long-term innovation and growth.

This aim, however, can only be attained if we help students to understand that the acquisition of transversal skills is the result of a continual dialogue. In the context of a student for student spirit, we have developed a new approach based upon the analysis of translation problems resulting from pragmatic, cognitive and cultural lack of information, so that students could reflect on the advantages of working and helping each other, inside and outside the classroom, since their first day at university. This new approach was implemented for the first time last year. The results were: 1) the subtitling of a Russian film (collaborative work of a Portuguese and a Russian speaking student   slide 1); 2) the organization of a book exposition (collaborative work of several Portuguese and Russian speaking students); 3) the translation of a story written by Nikolai Leskov, the last great storyteller, according to Benjamin (collaborative work of a Russian student with several Portuguese students learning Russian). Students were able to surpass certain stereotyped ideas they had.

Show and tell 9

Session's theme: Best practices

Paper number: 10

Presenters: Marielle Diederen, Laetitia Gardeniers, Faculty of Social Studies and Education

Presenters' Organisation: Zuyd University of Applied Sciences

Session's chair: To be announced later.

Session title: Let's do it together…

Abstract:

Orientation and transition programs at Zuyd University of Applied Sciences are a shared responsibility of staf, institutional research and faculty/schools. Our Faculty of Social Studies and Education is leading in orientation programs with elements as a gap-program, student-to-student orientation (f.e. meet&greet, conversation), and a unique out-door introduction. In this show en tell session we want to share the outcome of institutional research, enrollment management and faculty activities with the attendees.

Show and tell 9

Session's theme: Best practices

Paper number: 19

Presenters: Tiina Kiviniemi,

Presenters' Organisation: University of Jyväskylä

Session's chair: To be announced later.

Session title: Welcoming the first year chemistry students: Alkukeitos-course

Abstract:

In this presentation, a seven-year-old tradition from Department of Chemistry in University of Jyväskylä is described. Alkukeitos (translating somewhere between "appetizers" and "primordial soup") is a compulsory introductory course (2 ects credits) for first year chemistry students, taking place in the very first weeks of their first semester. The course, consisting of student counseling, student-to-student tutoring, introductory lab works and informal meetings with both teaching staff and senior students, is planned and executed as a collaboration between a number of teachers, researchers and students in the Chemistry department.

The primary intent of the course is to soften the student transition into the university world and to enhance student engagement and participation in chemistry community. The presentation shares the best practices found during the development of the course, and discusses how to create continuity in the first study year that starts with an intensive course with small student groups and continues with lecture- and laboratory courses with much larger amount of participants.

Keywords: Student transition, Student engagement, Introductory course

Show and tell 9

Session's theme: Best practices

Paper number: 23

Presenters: Tiina Laulajainen, Sinikka Karjalainen,

Presenters' Organisation: University of Helsinki Language Centre

Session's chair: To be announced later.

Session title: First year students - smooth start to language studies: Language Centre approach

Abstract:

Language and communication studies are an integral component of all Finnish university degrees. Language skills are needed in university studies, and they are required, more than ever, in today s workplaces. The language requirement for all Bachelor's / Master's degrees includes both the national languages of Finland (Finnish and Swedish) as well as at least one foreign language. It is the task of the University of Helsinki Language Centre to provide these studies. Beyond the degree requirements (Faculty-specific), the Language Centre (LC) also offers elective courses open to students of all Faculties.

According to the constructive alignment principle of learning at the University, it is important for the students to get their language studies started as smoothly as possible after entering. LC teaching is based on a student-oriented approach, in which language and communication skills are seen as an essential part of a student s growing academic expertise and professional competence.

In this poster we will present some of the LC s good pedagogical and advisory practices in helping first-year students. LC courses are designed in close cooperation with the Faculties to ensure that they meet the specific requirements. The LC offers advising services for various target groups, such as degree students, international students and students with learning difficulties. The Language Centre also participates in the yearly orientation events organized by the University for new students. In addition, we will consider some future challenges in this area, including the transition from school to university. Schools and universities need to cooperate in order to help the students to adapt to the more academic way of language learning at the University.

Workshop 1

Session's theme: Guidance and counseling

Paper number: 4

Presenters: Herman Van de Mosselaer, Ine Janssens, Elke Denoo

Presenters' Organisation: AP Hogeschool University College

Session's chair: To be announced later.

Session title: Strength Based Coaching: Experiencing proven methods for strength based coaching

Abstract:

We invested the past years in research and applications of strength based coaching methods. Seeing students as individuals with unique possibilities and strengths, helps us to coach them towards confident youngsters who are able to reflect upon themselves and guide themselves towards better results. Last year we started a project because we found it very important to coach first year students on their strengths.

The aim of this project is twofold

1. effect research of coaching methods
2. action research resulting in a practical guide

Half of the first year students who are following a study programme as Nutrition & Dietetics were coached in a strength based way (experimental group). The other students were treated as usually. The teachers of the experimental group received an in-depth training including Appreciative Inquiry (Cooperrider), Solution Focused Coaching (Berg), FeedForward (Goldsmith) and Growth Mindset (Dweck). While coaching, we started from discovering strengths and qualities. We tried to connect with their aspirations and dreams, and appreciated what was already present. We stimulated them and supported their learning.

The impact of coaching will be measured by comparing results of the pre and post-test. We expect that coaching leads to more autonomy, stronger relatedness between students (and their teacher), more excellent competencies and even better study results, due to more intrinsic motivation (all based on the self determination theory; Ryan & Deci; Vansteenkiste). Further, also the general well-being is expected to increase. As a final hypothesis, we also expect to observe personal growth for the teachers.

In this workshop we will introduce you to some of these methods and let you experience strength based coaching. In an interactive way we will demonstrate methods used in our project and hope that you will share your suggestions for improving it. Participants will be introduced to - and are expected to share - good practices.

Workshop 11

Session's theme: Guidance and counseling

Paper number: 6

Presenters: Nova Ambachtsheer- van Schijndel, Katrien Bruinsma

Presenters' Organisation: NHTV

Session's chair: To be announced later.

Session title: Pedal to the Metal; starting a study AND enjoying it!

Abstract:

The workshop consists of a short introduction to the topic, and will continue with some exercises to let the participants experiences the activating coaching sessions. The maximum amount of participants is 20. The Study Career Coaching program is part of the curriculum of our Academy, and it is based on the theory of "social constructivism" and "solution focused approach" The relevance for a European audience lays in the fact that this course main goal is to develop self management skills within our students, which enables them to conduct "life long learning" which is one of the spearheads of the European Union.

The course I developed is created from competency based learning, combined with solution focused coaching.The academy uses this definition for "a competency"; The capability in a given (work) situation and particular professional role, to adequately handle or deliver the desired result based on knowledge, skills and attitude. The level of competency development is measured on three levels; operational, tactical and strategical level of performance. Students are assigned to study career coaches, staff members trained to coach and train students in self management skills.

The course is spread out over 4 years, with a more supply driven approach in the first year, working to a demand driven approach in the graduation phase. In the first year, tools are introduced to the students. These tools are helpful to reflect own behavior, and will enable the student to set goals for his/her development. The student will develop knowledge not only about his/her strengths and weaknesses, but also about learning styles and teamwork. These tools can be applied throughout the four years of education and are part of their "competency development plan" which is a living document to set goals and reflect on development.

Keywords: Competency Based Learning, Self Management, Solution Focused Approach

Workshop 2

Session's theme: Students for students

Paper number: 43

Presenters: Kerry Bellamy, Chris Wright

Presenters' Organisation: University of Wales Newport

Session's chair: To be announced later.

Session title: Enhancing connected peer support outside the classroom

Abstract:

An individual student experience is fast becoming as much of a focus for applicants as the course they are intending to study. As a result, institutions are faced with the need to ask themselves just how much of that experience takes place outside the lecture hall. With the social, emotional, financial and academic pressures of a new life today s student has a significant mountain to climb as they pick their way through their student journey.

At the University of Wales Newport, we have established a network of Student Partners who work alongside our academic and support staff in a number of specialist roles and focus on the enhancement of the student experience outside the classroom. With over 400 students working within this structure we believe that we offer an extremely effective peer-to-peer support system, which not only supports the students as they adjust to student life, but also provides colleagues with an opportunity to really understand what is happening for our students.

Our framework encompasses a number of schemes overall but in particular our Student Mentors and Nightline schemes have received recognition of best practice from both the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) who safeguard quality and standards in UK universities and the Matrix Quality Mark, which offers organisations a unique quality standard assess and measure the quality of their advice and support services.

With student interactions across these schemes increasing significantly year on year, we feel confident that we have the right mix of student centred provision in place that supports students before they arrive, empowers them from enrolment and walks alongside them offering a safe place to explore their personal and academic development for their entire student journey. This workshop seeks to offer attendees a practical opportunity to learn more about the work being carried out at Newport through case studies and portfolios.

Workshop 3

Session's theme: Leadership and management

Paper number: 24

Presenters: Harald Åge Sæthre,

Presenters' Organisation: University of Bergen

Session's chair: To be announced later.

Session title: A systematic approach to students' success

Abstract:

We can find many good retention initiatives in this EFYE conference and elsewhere, but are we sure that we have chosen the right means to confront our challenges? To strengthen the support for working with retention, it is necessary that our own and our colleagues efforts produce positive results, but in in some cases we can see that a new initiative in fact can worsen the results. Such negative results or nearly non-results have stopped the best, and in fact is often used as an argument against starting up new initiatives.

This session will introduce a practical orientated model that one can use to work systematically and find actions that give the highest possible effect without using too many resources. It is also aimed as a tool to people who are new to retention issues when they start their work. The model is based on Tinto's longitudinal model of institutional departure but is viewed through the glasses of a project manager that has needed to see results. It has been tested through 15 years meeting new challenges, doing mistakes but mainly getting results.

Workshop 4

Session's theme: Guidance and counseling

Paper number: 26

Presenters: Johanna Ollila, Atte Vieno

Presenters' Organisation: Finland Futures Research Centre, University of Turku

Session's chair: To be announced later.

Session title: Connecting the dots - possible paths from first year to first job

Abstract:

In our workshop, we will present research findings from our multi-method project concerning educational choices and transitions from secondary to tertiary education in Finland. Competitive entrance examinations, opportunities to change majors, the frequent gap years and a system of secondary education where educational choice is not systematically reflected upon result in a wide variety in the backgrounds of first year students in higher education.

Our research paints a picture of youth engaged in attempting to connect the seemingly limitless opportunities offered by the educational system with the contemporary labour market that seems to offer few guarantees. We argue that accomplishing this connecting of dots between education and the labour market necessitates the development of a capacity to critically reflect on the values and meanings attached to choices and their consequences. Engagement in such reflection from the first year on should lead to more committed students motivated by a deeper understanding of the possibilities opened up by their educational choices.

In the workshop, we present a set of tools for personal futures orientation designed for and tested with secondary and tertiary education students in Finland. The focus is on the student perspective: the foundations of the motivation and aspirations regarding studies, roles in the student and academic community, and career are laid during the first year of studies.

In the workshop the participants test and reflect the collaborative visioning process which can be adopted and used from the first year onwards. The method used is a futures workshop, which is a central element in a personal futures process developed and tested for the university students. The purpose of a futures workshop is to enrich and widen participants' perspectives on alternative futures and the various possibilities within.

Workshop 5

Session's theme: Student participation in the community

Paper number: 36

Presenters: Laura Heinonen, Aino-Kaisa Mannila; Suvi Eriksson

Presenters' Organisation: National Union of University Students in Finland

Session's chair: To be announced later.

Session title: Supporting student engagement through teaching

Abstract:

How do students become engaged in their studies? How do you maintain and cherish the enthusiasm of a new student throughout his or her academic career? Studies have shown that as much as two thirds of a student s learning is achieved during the first two years of study. A student s experiences during his or her first year also have a strong influence on his or her subsequent studying. (Lähteenoja, 2010.)

What we concluded is that we can influence the students integration into the community as well as increase their engagement in their studies by supporting a shift from a degree- and performance-centred, to a student- and competence-centred learning culture and philosophy. Student-centred learning (SCL), is a method of learning or teaching that puts the learner at the centre. A Student-centred culture brings the students and the staff closer to each other, improves the students' study abilities through communality and support, improves the learning outcomes and enhances the students' general working-life skills. (Attard, A., Di Iorio, E., Geven, K. & Santa, R. 2010.)

Learning and teaching are major points of agendas for SYL, the National Union of University Students in Finland. As a part of the work on improving smooth progress of studies, SYL has coordinated the Kyky (ability) -project since 2009. The goal of the Kyky-project is to improve the students ability to study and the communality of university students in co-operation with universities and university student unions.

The goal of the workshop is to join together to look for answers as how to support the students in becoming engaged in their studies through teaching. Attard, A., Di Iorio, E., Geven, K. & Santa, R. (2010a). Student-centred learning. An insight into theory and practice. Bucharest: Education International, The European Student´s Union. Lähteenoja, S. (2010). Uusien opiskelijoiden integroituminen yliopistoon. Sosiaalipsykologinen näkökulma. The University of Helsinki.

Session's theme:

Paper number: 51

Presenters: Annick Eelbode,

Presenters' Organisation: Ghent University, Belgium

Session's chair: To be announced later.

Session title: Measuring and monitoring study progress: A first step towards structural and evidence based student guidance.

Abstract:

In order to gain a better insight in the determinants of success, failure and drop out 'study-progress' of about 20,000 students, first enrolled between 2005 – 2008, was monitored up to four consecutive years. Newly defined study performance indicators such as 'study success rate' (i.e., ECTS Credits completed/enrolled) and 'Learning Track Typology' showed strong indicators for whether a student will, eventually, succeed or drop out. The findings also indicate that in addition to focussing on drop out a great deal can be learned from studying success also.

In the end monitoring study progress aims at helping students in obtaining a degree. Our approach to monitoring study progress will be presented. Examples will be given that demonstrate how the results of monitoring study progress can be used to detect situations with a high risk of future failure and/or drop out.

Monitoring shows that some students seem to lack the insight of what it really takes to succeed. And that even after a first unsuccessful year quite a lot of them still lack that insight. We will conclude with presenting two newly developed counselling initiatives aiming at helping students to require the meta-cognitive skills needed to approach higher education with more realism.