

Round table 12

Session's theme: Best practices

Paper number: 41

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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 where there is a free entrance to higher education, we cannot do nothing and watch them see fail, lower self-esteem, ... In accordance with 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.