

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>

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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.

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Session's theme: Supporting student learning

Paper number: 16

Presenters: Victoria Reszler, Elisabeth Krauss

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.

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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.