No Entry, Side Winds, No Through Road, Soft Verges, Turn Left Ahead, No Overtaking, Stop and Give Way, Steep Hill Upwards:

Are students prepared for navigating transitions in HE?

Roni Bamber,
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Chair, Student Transitions Enhancement Theme
Student Transitions

Enhancement Theme

2014-17
ST Theme - Organisation

• 3 year plan of work
• Central organising group
• Focus on institutional work
• Student Network
• Projects
Focus

Transitions

❖ Into HE
❖ Through HE
❖ Out of HE
What are transitions?

‘The process or a period of changing from one state or condition to another’ (Oxford English Dictionary)

Transitions are difficult!

(HEA/NUS, 2013)
Conceptions of Transitions

• Process?
• Event?
• Period of change?
• Passage?
• Stage?
• Journey?
Different transitions…

Old Life

Provenance: School

Work

Student Type: WA

UG / PG

New Life

College

International

Disability

Minority Groups (Gender, Ethnic)

FT / PT
Only one transition or many?

• Both
Student Journey(s)

**Stages**
- Getting there
- Settling there
- Being there
- Staying there
- Moving on from there

**When**
- Application to enrolment
- Making the transition
- The First year
- Course design, TLA
- Employability, LLL
I arrived a day late…

sent to the wrong building

Getting lost…
Finding friends…
Belonging

Big tall place for a small person

Intimidating walking into the building

A deaf person can’t belong

Living at home, hard to fit in

I arrived a day late… sent to the wrong building

Getting there…
I wasn’t very sure about how well I was doing academically in the first semester. At school, your teacher would tell you… you’re doing this really well, if you just do this, it’ll make it better… you got so much feedback personally… At uni… you’d never be told where you stand. They’d give you feedback… but they’d never be like ‘this is going to pass’ or ‘that wouldn’t pass’ [so you ask yourself] ‘ok, where do I stand? What am I aiming for?’

(Shovin and Doye, 2015: 27)
‘I don’t see why uni should have to be always in hindsight… it seems to be that’s the way it is, it is a learning process to make mistakes and then say I could have done this or that better, but it seems like everything has been like that’ (Shovin and Doye, 2015: 4)

First year at university is very overwhelming for students and I feel a little more support would go a long way to improve undergraduate confidence (Shovin & Doye, 2015: 12)
‘In order to make ends meet I have to work outside… as well. I do residential care on a night shift basis. This has a big impact on my family commitments…. So there’s no space to expand into to get the college work done” (Bamber & Tett, 2000: 65)
I feel better about myself and that is key for me. Coming from a background where education was a no-starter for me, I’ve achieved something, I’ve succeeded… I basically know more about what I’m talking about and I know more about how to make things happen. In terms of being a worker I’m confident and capable. Before I knew that I’d skills and abilities and stuff, but now I know that I can achieve things. It’s made a difference.’ (Bamber & Tett, 2000: 72)
Navigation for whom?

• For each student group?
• For the most vulnerable, most challenged?
• For all students the same?
Entry Rate Differences:

- 22% aged 18-19 in most deprived areas
- 63% in most advantaged areas (UCAS, 2012)
Navigating through what?

• Framework of transition categories
  (Univ of Sheffield, 2009)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of Transition</th>
<th>Examples</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Academic Cycle</strong></td>
<td>Joining the university, induction and orientation, first exams/assessed work, spending time abroad, writing up and graduating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal, Emotional, Developmental</strong></td>
<td>Recognising that students are moving through an intense and highly developmental phase of their lives. Becoming an independent adult, beginning and ending relationships, searching for a sense of purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intellectual/Academic</strong></td>
<td>Moving from school to university mode of study, working independently, dealing with raising the bar, higher levels of expectation intellectually, moving from UG to PG</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sense of Belonging</strong></td>
<td>Becoming part of and detaching from communities</td>
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HOW?
ACADEMIC CYCLE

What?!
Make signage, rules, expectations clear (for all students)
Peer-Assisted Learning

Academic Tutor
INTELLECTUAL / ACADEMIC
“LEARNING TO LEARN”
Projects, Support
e.g. Widening Access Initiatives

- Pre-entry support
- Support on entry
- In-course support
- For specific learner groups
- Early stages especially important (Gazeley & Aynsley, 2012)
- And transition points (HEA/NUS, 2013)
PERSONAL, EMOTIONAL, DEVELOPMENTAL
3 P Model (Biggs, 1985)

**PRESAGE**
- Student characteristics,
- Teacher characteristics,
- Learning environment

**PROCESS**
- What we do,
- What students do

**PRODUCT**
- Learning outcomes,
- Persistence

Includes emotional and psychological baggage
Expectations

Hopes

Fears
Acknowledge affective side of learning

Family

Country, Culture

Mum!

Old loves, new loves

New flat mates
SENSE OF BELONGING
3 P Model (Biggs, 1985)

PRESAGE
Student characteristics, Teacher characteristics, Learning environment

PROCESS
What we do, What students do

PRODUCT
Learning outcomes, Persistence

You can control / influence some of this
Identity, belonging and building social capital

**Proactive…** (Thomas, 2013)

- Community
- Peer relations
- Staff – student interactions
- Social activities
- Other?

What stories do your students tell about this?
Honeymoon to healthy adjustment?
Eg PGT

Menzies and Baron, 2014
UG Version?

Chart Title

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre-entry</th>
<th>Term 1 pre assessment</th>
<th>Term 1 post assessment</th>
<th>After Xmas</th>
<th>Term 2</th>
<th>Easter</th>
<th>Term 3</th>
<th>Year 2 T1</th>
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<td>Series 1</td>
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Effective interventions
(Thomas, 2013)

Most effective pre-entry and induction interventions

– Particularly effective in academic sphere

– **Combine**
  - Providing information
  - Informing expectations
  - Developing academic skills
  - Building social capital
  - Nurturing a sense of belonging (Thomas, 2012)
STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY?
## Engaging Students

(Bamber & Jones, 2014)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Presage</th>
<th>Process</th>
<th>Presage</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Institutional / staff / dept characteristics</td>
<td>Setting high expectations</td>
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Students themselves can…

• Nurture a sense of belonging
  – ‘so important to student retention and success’ (Sanders & Higham, 2012)
  – Eg peer support, friendship
• Play a range of formal roles in retention and WA (Sanders & Higham, 2012)
  – Eg student ambassadors, mentors
• At different stages of life cycle: pre-entry, induction, during programme, exit
• But need help / support
And for students who don’t engage?

‘Students who are not engaging are at risk of withdrawal. Identifying and following up students who are not engaging improves retention and success’ (Thomas, 2012)

• How do you identify them (monitoring)?
• What do you do about it (follow-up)?
So what?

• Particular needs, diverse students
• Nurturing relationships
• Support for transition at all stages of student journey, including pre-entry (Gazeley & Aynsley, 2012)
• Although most benefit from early interventions and sustained attention at key transition points (Kuh et al, 2008)
HOW TO ENSURE WE KNOW ABOUT AND SHARE EFFECTIVE INTERVENTIONS?
Get involved with the Enhancement Theme!
Thank you!

Enhancement Themes website: www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk
References


