

Promoting academic confidence and social integration through induction and programme structures

Students' entry into HE is challenging and potentially difficult (Reay, 2002). A student's ability to negotiate the academic demands of a programme of study and integrate into peer networks is recognised as essential to their retention and success (Krause et al., 2005; Tinto, 2003). Consequently, universities have placed increased attention on the process of student induction. Structured programmes of support to promote integration, including and guidance from academic staff regarding expectations of university-level study, are now commonplace (e.g. Yorke & Thomas, 2003). Such activities are focused at the programme level (e.g. Edward & Middleton, 2002), yet researchers such as Tinto, (2003) advocate the value of a whole-institutional approach to student induction. This paper will discuss research into immersive module practices with first year students in all Schools, as part of a whole Institutional approach to promoting good study habits and developing student to student networks to support learning and thriving in higher education. This will include exploring some of the practical strategies used within the immersive modules to integrate students and promote peer and academic networking. One intriguing outcome is recognition of the value of explicitly scaffolding students time outside class, and the potential benefits of continuing this more supported approach throughout first year and potentially beyond. Employers expect graduates to have good workplace ethics and habits. Is it time to frame our expectations of our students to mirror those expected in the workplace?

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