First Year in Higher Education Conference
AN APPLE FOR THE LEARNER: CELEBRATING THE FIRST YEAR EXPERIENCE
HOBART • TASMANIA

30 June 2008

The next, great, first year challenge: Sustaining, coordinating and embedding coherent institution-wide approaches to enact the FYE as "everybody's business".

Professor Sally Kift

ALTC (Carrick) Senior Fellow

QUT, Australia

Overview

- Lot going on – research and initiative-wise – but is it making a real difference to the FYE?
  - "piecemeal in the main" (Krause et al, 2005)

- *How to* take our FYE work to the next level
  - To bring together a whole that is greater than the sum of its many parts

- Top-down bottom-up (middle out?)
  - Of ducks, carrots and things
  - A model for institutional action
  - A Director, some resourcing and 5 QUT projects

The prompts for this… (1)

First year support efforts have tended to be piecemeal in the main, developed and sustained by individuals or small groups who champion the cause of first year transition. We have now reached the stage where universities must recognise **the need for institution-wide approaches** to enhancing the first year experience.

Krause et al, 2005, at 8.8.6

The prompts for this… (2)

Student retention is one of the most widely studied areas in higher education…The result has been an ever more sophisticated understanding of the complex web of events that shape student leaving and persistence…
But for all that, **substantial gains in student retention have been hard to come by**… More importantly, there is **much that we have not yet done to translate our research and theory into effective practice**.

Tinto (2006-7, 1-2)

The prompts for this… (3)

The Australian, HES, 25/06/08

Uni of Wollongong study reports up to 80% of undergraduate teaching load carried by sessional teachers: few systematic whole-of-campus approaches to this cohort

CSU VC, Prof Ian Goulter says investment in T&L over past 4 years has come at cost of curriculum renewal: are we "teaching well" the "best material"?

Prof Geoff Scott, UWS, ALTC study on academic leadership capabilities nec to manage change

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FYE in LAW

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE AUSTRALIA
FACULTY OF BUSINESS AND LAW
www.newcastle.edu.au

University of Wollongong
Peer Assisted Study Sessions - PASS

UOW Home > Current Students > Student Services

PASS is a program where students work together to key concepts, and develop effective study strategies non-compulsory sessions led by 'Peer Leaders', st subject in the past. PASS is provided for all students understanding of course material and improve their

Skip to content : Deakin home : Contact Deakin : Directory of staff : Site map : A-Z index : Help : Portal Search

DEAKIN UNIVERSITY

Current students
Getting started at Deakin

Deakin home > Current students > Getting started at Deakin

Getting started at Deakin home
Deakin home > Current students > Getting started at Deakin

Key Resources

Week Zero - lift off!

February 25-29 is Week Zero - your orientation week at Deakin. This is your opportunity to get to know fellow and senior students, find out about your course, university study and have fun!

Every on campus student will receive a personalised itinerary in early February outlining the activities specific to them. As well as peer and faculty sessions, you will have the opportunity to be involved in a range of workshops (register online).

DUSA, the Deakin University Student Association, offers a great range of food, fun and activities to help you get into the social side of university life and make new friends.

Off campus students are welcome to join in with Week Zero events on campus, and can also get involved in Off to a Flying Start, a program designed especially for you. This is a fantastic 2 day program introducing orientation and study skills for distance learners. Check out the program and register online.

Your itinerary:

Select your campus and then faculty and your course for your own itinerary of Week Zero activities. Remember, you will need to register for concurrent workshops.

Select your campus:

THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE
Academic Enrichment Services
Transition and Orientation Programs

Links: University Homepage Go   Search: Search the University Go

Faculties A-Z Directory Library

Future students
> What's uni like?
> Student profiles
> Choosing a course
> Resources

Orientation
> Undergraduate
> Graduate

Volunteers
> Applying

Enrolment
> Administrative enrolment
> Academic enrolment

Transition
> What is transition?
> Student profiles
> Undergraduate
> Graduate
> Returning to study

Staff
> University staff
> School staff and parents
> Contact us

Events and announcements

Student Blogs: Read all about the real student experience at Melbourne

Getting started websites: Direct link to course-specific information for first-year students

Transition in courses: Support for first-year students

Student Centres: Contact details and services available at your Student Centre

Future Students
Do what?

Transition
Starting and doing ok

Enrolment
I do

Orientation
How to do

First Year at UTAS

Look here for First Year Newsletters

View up to date information about events and reminders about important things you need to do before and during your first semester at UTAS.

Click here to view current newsletter (26 May)

Click here to view past newsletters

Where to Find Information About...
> Orientation Activities
> Enrolment Advice Days
> Your enrolment
> Enabling Programs (including UniStart)
> The Mentor Program
> Using the library
> Services and support
> IT skills and support
> Teaching and Learning (Environment at UTAS)

Search UTAS

UTAS Home | Contacts

Latest News
> Finding out if you are accepted
> Enrolment Advice Days
> Choosing courses and subjects
> Getting ready for study
> Options for studying flexibly
> Important dates to keep in mind
> Finding accommodation
> How to enrol after Enrolment Advice Day/s
> Buying Text Books
> Studying with a Disability
> Preparation Programs to improve you academic skills
> ORIENTATION: essential for a smooth transition to University Life

The messages above will be updated periodically. For a complete list of what happen and when

Discover Home   Planning for Your Future   Funding Options   Su

You are here: Home > Support @ Vic
Support @ Vic

Prospective & First Year
Student Services @ Vic

Holistic Approach

There are many sources of support Victoria. Disability Support Service wider Victoria community and exte are studying at Victoria, it is your impairment.

(Just click on the [icon] icon to go to

Prospective & First Year

Study @ Vic Day

Flinders
UNIVERSITY
ADELAIDE · Australia

HOME   ABOUT FLINDERS   FACULTIES & DIVISIONS   LIBRARY
Quicklinks < please select > Go   Search
Flinders University > Current students > Student services > Get Connected

Get Connected
Making the transition to u

• Making the transition to uni
• Managing the change
• Success strategies
• Your guide to student services
• Course and other concerns
• Information for family and friends
• Transition services

So you've made it to University...Fab

Starting at university is a big step - a come straight from school, others hav age students who bring with them a w

Transitioning to university, like starting socially, emotionally, academically and university as easy for students as possi

The Get Connected site is about student and knowing where to go should the nee

But the most important part of transitioni

Study & Learning Centre
RMIT UNIVERSITY

The first four weeks

Roles & responsibilities of the studen

Students studying at tertiary level need to become inde able to:

• manage time effectively
• develop the skills necessary for accessing appro
• become an active participant in their own learnin
• read widely, ask questions and form opinions
• develop analysis and critical thinking skills
• understand the processes of lectures, tutorials

Introduction
Independence
Manage learning
The lecture
Lecturer's role
The tutorial
Responsibilities

Video presentation (00:02:06)

To see the roles and responsibilities video prese below. Please note that this will open in a new brow

Roles & responsibilities (56 KB)
Roles & resposibilities (broadband)

Transcript

Roles & responsibilities (PDF document)

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What do you think?

- Where do you think your institution is on a FYE scale of 1 to10?

- Are you "piecemeal" or "institution-wide"?

- Have you translated your "research and theory" into "effective practice" such that "substantial gains" have been made?

- Are all your approaches (eg sessional staff, teaching, support, curriculum renewal, leadership) joined-up/ "institution-wide"?

What do you think needs to happen?

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Vincent Tinto:
(2002;4)

The more students learn, the more value they find in their learning, the more likely they are to stay and graduate. This is particularly true for more able and motivated students who seek out learning and are, in turn, more likely to respond to perceived shortcomings in the quality of learning they experience on campus. *Least we forget the purpose of higher education is not merely that students are retained, but that they are educated.* In the final analysis, **student learning drives student retention**. [Emphasis added]

Some themes from FYE literature? (1)

- Much activity & research (eg 40 years in US), including audits of practice esp to identify successes & areas for improvement

- Focus on coordinated, sustainable, *whole-of-institution* approaches
  - Including institutional policy making; institutional home for FYE; x-institutional collaboration; institutional spaces
  - US NSSE has shown student **engagement** varies more *within* than between institutions.

- Awareness of institutional difference – need own data

- Managing/ adapting (NZ) for diversity
  - includes supporting *all* students not just "at risk"

- Enhanced monitoring of student engagement & progression to enable timely intervention & support

Some themes from FYE literature? (2)

- Commonality of focus on "induction, transition, integration & coherence of provision" (Scottish QAA)
  - Esp longitudinal approach to induction;
  - Pre-entry support, preparation, expectations & program choice
  - Commitment to "acculturating" students to both HE institutions *and* to their new discipline (includes mediating expectations)
- Emphasis on intentional curriculum design & "good teaching"
  - Esp to embed transition support & re importance of formative assess
  - Harnessing technology affordances for seamless engagement
- Use of peer-to-peer systems /social integration
- Staff development, support, reward & recognition
- Commitment to evaluating [and disseminating] practice

Why do our FY students leave?

Lots of reasons, many of them similar across sector

Most recently

- Yorke & Longden (2008, HEA, UK Phase 2):
  the major influences on non-continuation
  (v similar to 1997 UK work):
  - poor choice of programme;
  - lack of personal commitment to study;
  - teaching quality;
  - lack of contact with academic staff (hints that this becoming more significant);
  - inadequate academic progress; and
  - finance.

The first-year experience of
higher education in the UK

Mantz Yorke
Bernard Longden

FINAL REPORT

NB Many return
eventually

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Why do they dis-engage [in FY]?

➤ Many reasons (eg family difficulties, location, equity, work-life balance) but major factors: Yorke (1999, 2006)

- Quality & organisation of teaching
- Program difficulty & lack of preparedness to cope with it;
- Poor choice of program, including lack of vocational relevance
  - More students know about their institutions & courses before enrolling, less likely they will withdraw (40% cf 25%)
- Worry over financing their studies (2006)

➤ "Complex inter-relationship between course dissatisfaction, course preference, limited engagement, and student perceptions of academic staff and of the quality of teaching"

(Krause *et al*, 2005, at 64)

AUSSE: Australasian Survey of Student Engagement

- Asks students "what they do" via the *Student Engagement Questionnaire* (*SEQ*)

- "Engagement": "students' involvement with activities and conditions likely to generate high quality learning" (at vi)

- Data collected

  – "details the time and effort students devote to educationally purposeful activities and provides insights into students' perceptions of the quality of aspects of their university experience" (at vii)

- An interesting AUSSE finding re paid work –

  – Students who work between 1 and 30 hours "tend to report higher levels of engagement than students who do not work and those who work for more than 30 hours a week" (at ix)

  – cf *Australian University Student Finances 2006* (James et al, 2007)

    - 40% F/T and 54% P/T said work adversely affecting their study
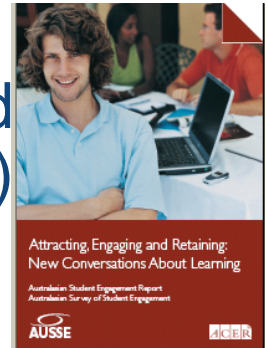
AUSSE See http://www.acer.edu.au/ausse/resources.html

In 2007 25 Aust and NZ institutions took part

Six engagement-focused scales

	FY	3rdY
Academic Challenge	45.1%→47.7%	
Active Learning	33.1%→38.1%	
Student and Staff Interactions	18.3%→23.9%	
Enriching Educational Experiences	23.4%→27.7%	
Supportive Learning Environment	**51.2%←49.9%**	
Work Integrated Learning (AUSSE)	39.3%→49.8%	

Six outcomes-focused measures

- Higher-order Thinking
- General Learning Outcomes
- General Development Outcomes
- Average Overall Grade
- Retention Intention
- Overall Satisfaction
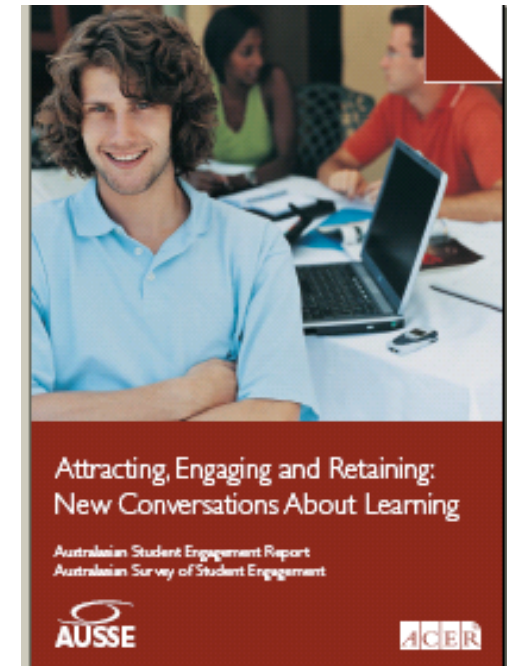
Attracting, Engaging and Retaining:
New Conversations About Learning

Australasian Student Engagement Report
Australasian Survey of Student Engagement

AUSSE   ACER

Australasian survey of student engagement

Something (else) to ponder: Non-academic support

- AUSSE (pp 17-18) has shown up a deficit re support to cope with non-academic challenges & to help socialise
  - **56.6%** of students report that institutions provide academic support "quite a bit" or "very much"

  BUT
  - Only **15.7%** say this for **non-academic support** (49.7% never supported; 34.6% sometimes supported);
  - **21%** say support provided **to socialise** (37.6% never supported; 41.4% sometimes supported).

> The best aspects of my university in engaging students to learn is having someone you can speak to if you need help with anything
>
> First year primary education student
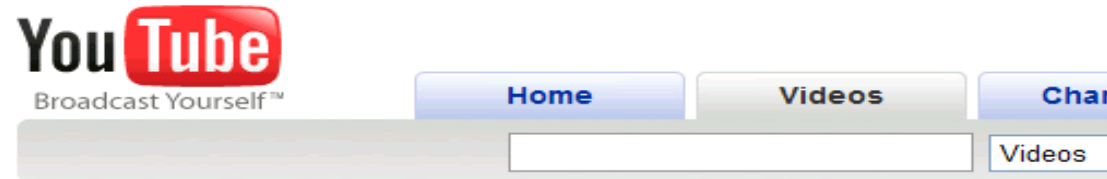
Changing patterns of student engagement

YouTube video
A Vision of Students Today
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dGCJ46vyR9o

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What are some change challenges? (1)

- Enacting coordinated **institutional approaches**
  - Leadership and governance structures
  - McInnis (2003, p.13) "bridging the gaps between academic, administrative and support programs [is] a substantial challenge"
  - How to use data (and what we know) to identify and deploy institutional action that – gives them "good reasons to stay beyond FY" (Krause, 2006); helps them "stay and succeed" (Tinto, 2006-7).

- Getting agreement that **retention (education) is a priority**
  - Generally and esp amongst teachers
  - Tinto (2006-7) teachers "typically do not see retaining students as their job. Given what many [teachers] believe to be the root causes of attrition, namely the lack of skills and motivation, they might observe that they would not have a a retention 'problem'"if the admission office only admitted more qualified students".
  - "We need to teach the students we recruit, not the ones we would have liked to recruit" (NAO, 2007, p.30)

What are some change challenges? (2)

- **Curriculum design** – **a transition pedagogy**
  - We do a lot of work *around* the curriculum, or *in aid of* it, but now need to come in from the periphery and focus on articulating and implementing a "transition pedagogy' – what would that look like?
  - THEN – *sustain* enactments of that intentional curriculum design
- Conceptualising a comprehensive, integrated, coordinated **orientation process** (over time)
- Harnessing **ICTs** – eAdmin and eLearning – for holistic view of institutional engagement (Nelson, Kift & Harper, 2005)
- **Staff development** – academic and professional
- **Data** (and the use of it) for evidence-based quality enhancement
- The **engagement** aspect of transition pedagogy (AUSSE)

QUT research re digital culture
(Nelson, Kift, Harper 2005)
http://eprints.qut.edu.au/archive/00003943/01/3943_1.pdf

- Used to extend and complement face-to-face
  - Students want a balance
- Convenient and efficient for info transfer and communication
- But want holistic view of their institutional (IT) engagement – need help re
  - *Not knowing about* [admin and acad processes]
  - *Not knowing what* [eg support available]
  - *Not knowing how* [to use institutional online system]

How to harness e-admin and e-learning for engagement?

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What institutional approaches?

Most recently, Yorke & Longden (2008) identified a number of **broad areas of institutional activity** through which the chances of student success can be enhanced:

- an institutional commitment to student learning, and hence to student engagement
- proactive management of student transition
- treating the **curriculum** as an academic milieu, and also one in which social engagement is fostered
- choosing **curricular structures** that increase the chances of student success
- placing emphasis and resourcing on the FYE
- systematically monitoring and evaluating student achievement, and acting on the evidence thereby collected
- academic leadership.

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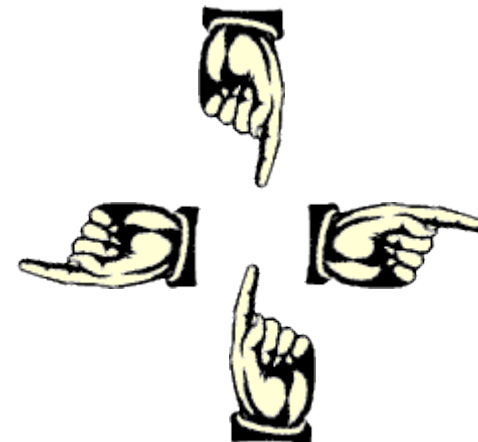CRICOS No. 000213J

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But how to enact IT??

Top down

Middle out

Bottom up

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Institutional T&L Change Process
(adapted from Diamond, 2005)

- What is [Uni X's] agreed "**vision**" for the FYE/ student experience?
- Is the focus student learning, development and engagement?
- Do all areas' "plans" and "activities" support that "vision"?
- Is the vision's implementation **research-led** & **evidence-based**?
- What is the **governance structure**? Is L&T "leadership for change" effectively integrated throughout [Uni X] with clarity about roles? Includes visionary high-level leadership and distributed professional and academic leadership.
- Is **reward and recognition** aligned with the "vision"?
- Is implementation continuously monitored, **evaluated** and refined?
- Is professional and academic **staff development** aligned to support?
- Are institutional leaders **working collaboratively across silos** to explore new structures, processes and practices?
- Does a "willingness to test all previous assumptions" exist?
- Is there a commitment to change at all levels of [Uni X]?

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Of ducks and carrots

Action

Reward & recognition

Data analysis

Staff development

What is good teaching & support

Promotion criteria

Probation

What is a good student exp

KPIs

PP&R

Leadership & governance across silos

Area plans

Top level plan(s)

Vision
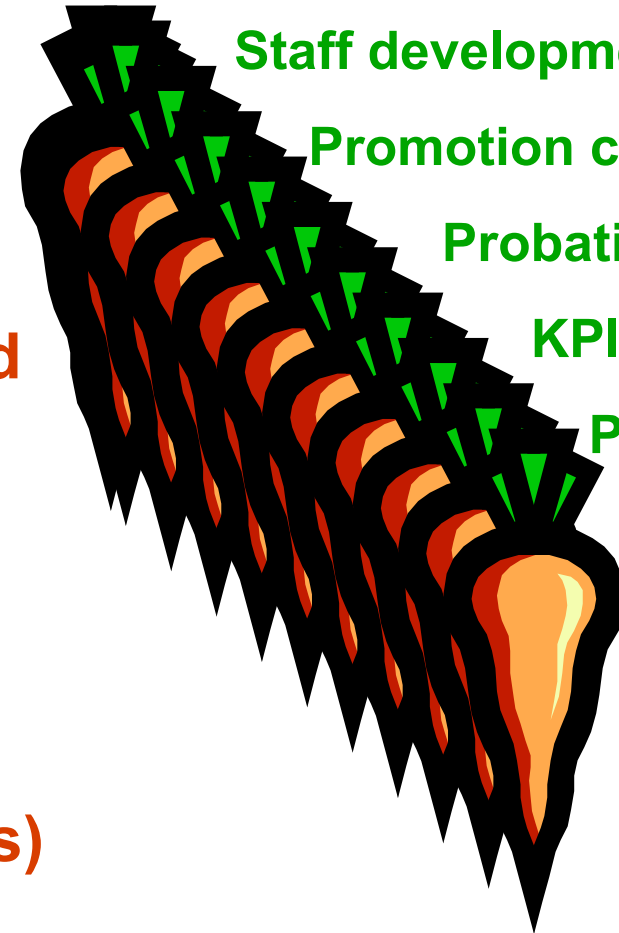
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Some simple steps.
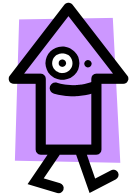
1. Identify and then coordinate individual dispersed FYE efforts
   - Is respectful of those efforts; allows for new initiatives
   - Addresses Kuh's (2007) NSSE warning that FYE may vary more *within* than *between* institutions
   - Allows for leveraging to upscale and make visible

2. Building on this ground-up approach, promote and enact a model for institutional action –
   - Leadership and governance across silos
   - Create institutional structures, polices and practices for whole-of-institution approaches

   in a climate of "readiness for change" (Southwell et al)

Leading to… What we (QUT) did

Already had "vision"/ blueprint / framework

– The FYE must *engage new learners in their learning* and *mediate support for that learning*. Assisted by:
  - awareness of and timely access to support services
  - creating a sense of belonging through involvement, engagement and connectedness with their university experiences.
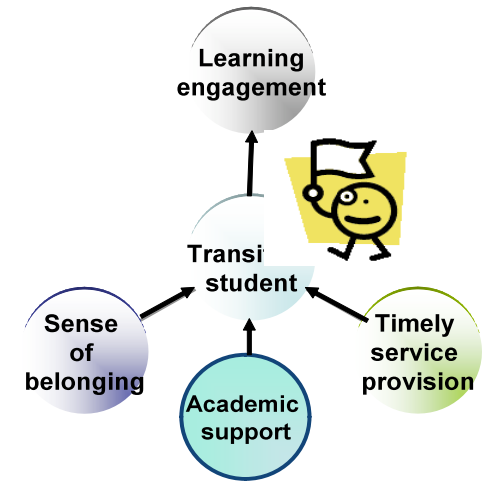
Already had lots of "things"

Appointed Academic Director, FYE

– To lead development of coherent organisation context
– To bridge academic, administrative and support silos (McInnis, 2003)
– To build stakeholder consensus
– Bring the "things" together and identify gaps
– To pursue five projects for early FYE policy and program gains
– Underpinned by development of QUT specific data collections

Resourced ongoing operationalisation (Large T&L Project)

As per Tinto (2006-7, 7)

We have genuinely sought to

…*connect specific programs and practices for students to institutional actions that provide support for the faculty and staff directing those programs and practices*.

No single FYE – "the" FYE is complex

The first year experience is **not a homogeneous experience** but a **multiplicity of experiences** contingent on type of institution and student characteristics… Furthermore, the first year experience **evolves and changes** both **temporally and culturally**. Issues facing students when they **first arrive** are not the same as issues **half way through** the first year or **towards the end**:

Harvey et al (2006) at vii
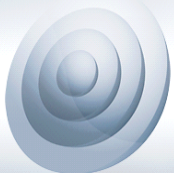
Requires some mapping

- An "end to end" process view (including feedback loops, responsibilities & roles) for the student experience.

- We have already had a first attempt and now are going again.

- 2008 work of the operationalising project under the new Director, AssProf Karen Nelson

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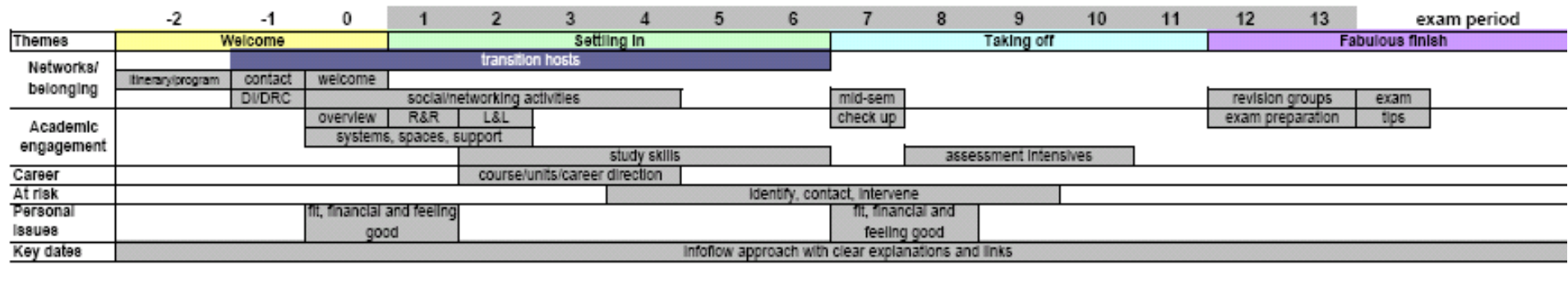Student-Centred Timeline for Managed Learning Environment

RMIT's Draft Student Transition Plan 2007-2010

Sample initiatives to support transition into new learning environments[5]

Before start of academic semester	Orientation	Program induction	Early intervention					Progressing learning				Assessment			Post-assessment and adjustment		
Specific cohort orientation Meet and Greet Buddy/host programs Bridging programs Academic Induction Program [AUSAID] Enrolment	P'folio welcome and program induction Course guides and explanation of expectations IT skills and intro to IT systems	SSG information in program/campus tours Mentoring and buddy programs Learning groups and tutorial groups Program and transition camps SSOC reps election and training	International student mentoring Ungraded assessment and feedback Early identification and referral to specific support services Equitable assessment					Learning w'shops In-program learning activities Group learning activities Language development activities				LSU W'shops – exam preparation Course evaluation Equitable assessment arrangements Special consideration			Progress Committees		
-6 to -1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	Exam	Exam	Results
Training student leaders, mentors and buddies Website orient'n information and FAQs Student Diary and Emergency After Hours information International student online buddies Accommodation and e-jobs assistance	Orientation activities and festivals Meet and Greet w'shops for cohorts Posters and service promotion Guide to Ice Breakers [for academics] SSG service briefings and promotion for staff Scholarship and financial application and selection	Orientation evaluation Promotion of clubs and groups including NBAs Library tours	Learning Lab International student cuppa's Learning W'shops SSG Expos and campaigns Posters and service promotion Service feedback and focus groups Assistive technology software accessible in uni computers and training sessions Alternative formatting [libraries]					Service promotional materials and education campaigns Learning Lab Learning W'shops Cultural activities and celebrations Advisement, referral and case management				Service evaluation			Preparations for semester enrolment and orientation		

Weekly Student Email Bulletin – THE FLY – articles promoting services and personal support strategies

[5] Nelson, K., Kift, S., Humphreys, J., Harper, W., *A blueprint for enhanced transition: Taking an holistic approach to managing student transition into a large university*, First Year Higher Education Conference, July 2006, Griffith University.

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Deakin's Timeline of activities/issues around transition

	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	exam period
Themes	Welcome			Settling in						Taking off				Fabulous finish			
Networks/ belonging		transition hosts															
	itinerary/program	contact	welcome											revision groups	exam		
		DI/DRC		social/networking activities						mid-sem check up				exam preparation	tips		
Academic engagement			overview	R&R	L&L												
			systems, spaces, support														
						study skills				assessment intensives							
Career				course/units/career direction													
At risk							identify, contact, intervene										
Personal issues			fit, financial and feeling good							fit, financial and feeling good							
Key dates		infoflow approach with clear explanations and links															

Explanations and definitions:

themes:		details:	responsibility:
	transition hosts	roving students helping first years find their feet, initial contact	DSL
Networks/ belonging	itinerary	personal transition plan including o-week essentials sent out	DSL
	contact	O-week guides make personal contact to arrange day 1 meeting and answer preliminary questions	DSL
	DI/DRC	international enrolment and disability client orientation	DI/DRC
	welcome	initial host meetings and outline of o-week challenge-engagement opportunities	DSL - input from lib, ITSD, facs, psd
	social/networking	structured activities around meeting people across a range of formats	DUSA/DSL/faculties
	mid-semester check up	informal check in by first year host/course adviser or infoflow questionnaire on 'how are you going'	DSL/faculties
	revision groups	catch up, review, get ready for exams	faculties
Academic engagement	overview	welcome to university, faculty, school, course	executive, faculties
	R&R rights & responsibilities	what to expect and what we expect (first lecutres week)	faculties, dusa(?), infoflow
	L&L living and learning	ways of learning at university and ways of 'being' at university (first tutes week)	faculties with support from DSL
	systems, spaces, support	how we do things, where we do things and where to get help	lib, its, dsa, psd, dsl, dusa
	study skills	referencing, plagiarism, assignment writing, time management, language, etc, etc	faculties, DSL
	assessment intensives	drop-ins/key workshops targeting those in difficulty from first assignments	faculties, DSL
	exam preparation	handling exam questions and styles, getting ready for exams	faculties, DSL
	exam tips	good luck email during study week with 10 top tips for exams	DSL thru infoflow
Career	course/units/career direction	confirming direction, changing units, graduate jobs, volunteering, expanding career options	faculties (course advisers), DSL (careers)
At risk	identify, contact, intervene	note and respond to low attendance, first assessment failure, etc	faculties with support from DI, DSL
Personal	fit, financial and feeling good	health, sport, money, scholarships, friendships, homesickness, arising issues	DSL with support from DSA
Key dates		critical dates for first year students	ASD, infoflow

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May we remind ourselves why?

Miss Teen USA 2007 - South Carolina answers a question

0:02 / 0:48

How a lot of our first year student responses come across to us

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0R84a7njTd0

2007: Role as QUT Director, FYE

- 12 month secondment to DVC(A) as *Director, FYE* across QUT faculties and divisions

- 5 sub-projects –
  1. QUT FYE Vision Project
  2. First Year Teaching and Support Enabling Project
  3. Pre-Orientation, Orientation and Transition Project
  4. **First Year Curriculum Project**
  5. First Year Students Project

- Only undergraduate FYE

Functional aspects

- Project management framework

- Multiple working groups (10 in all) bringing acad and prof colleagues together to share and to build x-institutional communities, structures & practices.

- Regular progress reports submitted to Uni T&L Committee (UTLC)

- Interim Report presented to UTLC (June 2007): overview of progress, briefing on proposed action for institutional endorsement, and assessment of risks

- All Program documentation and resources collected available on a dedicated Program wiki.

- Final Report was submitted (December 2007) for the QUT community's consideration, future action and implementation.

Therefore –

- To move from theory to action (Tinto)

- Esp to take ground-up, disparate pockets of activity and build cohesiveness around existing practice by its being

  - identified and made visible to staff and students – student-facing and consistent in presentation,

  - up-scaled,

  - recognised and validated,

  - moved into mainstream institutional practice,

  - quality assured,

  - sustainably resourced, and

  - so that future cross-institutional decision-making, sharing and planning can occur (eg policy and KPIs/ targets).

- Peer-to-peer example in paper at 9

First Year Student Experience Program

➢ To address the institutional priority of ensuring that QUT's organisational contexts – its structure, policies and practices, particularly its first year learning and teaching approaches and all related service delivery – are integrated, coordinated, intentional and proactive so that first year student engagement, learning and success are supported and enhanced.

➢ To promote an organisation-wide ethos to the FYE, with a student-centred perspective, that is embedded at all levels: strategically across the institution, tactically in the faculties and divisions, and operationally in the classroom.

1 First Year Vision

➢ To deliver an evidence-based, high-level FYE Vision that articulates a strategic institutional commitment to a positive and successful FYE for all QUT students. This statement of institutional intent aims to provide the framework aims to inform all relevant institutional policies and practices to ensure that QUT's approach to the FYE is intentional, and that cohesive, systematic strategies are developed and deployed consistently for a sustainable, whole-of-institution engagement with an agreed philosophy of the FYE at QUT.

➢ See now "The First Year Experience" in QUT Policy at http://www.mopp.qut.edu.au/C/C_01_05.jsp - QUT MoPP

2 First Year Teaching & Support Enabling

To set in place strategic organisational policies, structures & processes to:

➢ raise the status and profile of first year teaching and support among full-time academics and professional staff by aligning QUT's institutional commitment to the FYE with the incentives, workload allocation, recognition, reward and other support mechanisms necessary to ensure that organisational areas are intentional and strategic about their allocation of QUT's best teachers and professional staff to first year learning environments;

➢ ensure that these FY teachers and professional staff are appropriately supported by all other faculty academic and professional staff members and also cross-institutionally as required; and

➢ enhance staff development offerings for greater alignment to QUT's strategic priority of the FYE.

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Project 2:
still very much a work-in-progress

- Requires significant long term culture shift here – Tinto's taking education/ retention seriously

- Recommendations around
  - Reaching articulated consensus about what constitutes good teaching (for appointment, probation, promotion, PP&R, etc)
  - FYE perspective in staff development for both academic & professional staff
  - Incentives for teaching and support staff (reward and recognition)
  - Drivers for managers to enact

- Some gains
  - FYE perspective into academic leadership roles
  - Staff development for academic and sessional staff has FYE perspective
  - Operationalising project has strong staff development aspect

3   Pre-Orientation, Orientation & Transition

➢ To pilot some desirable transition and orientation strategies.

➢ To recommend an integrated and coherent set of institutional processes and practices that, in an accurate, realistic and relevant way, introduces and familiarises students, and their immediate family and significant others to QUT.

➢ To ensure that QUT's transition and orientation strategies are conceptualised as a process that occurs over time; in some aspects, before the first semester commences and independently of the curriculum, and in other aspects embedded in curriculum design.

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QUT Orientation (1)

1. Good practice, discipline-based approach.

   – By 2007: FYE Program Coordinator had in place quality assured O Week approaches at Faculty level

     • more student-friendly and social in the discipline context (informal, semi-structured interactions between commencing & later-year students); and

     • Purposely limited amount of "talking head" information provided formally in large group lectures by faculty & divisional staff.

   – Staff and student feedback response that

     • students better prepared than previous cohorts; and

     • experiencing less confusion around administrative matters

   – Through mailouts and other encouragement, O Week attendance rates were pleasingly high

QUT Orientation (2)

2. Refreshed 2007 O Week survey feedback: largely happy with discipline events but we weren't meeting students' holistic O Week expectations – lack of buzz, excitement & activity over the 4 campuses

    –   Therefore (realistic response) in 2008: campus-specific O week days to ensure critical mass of students on given campus, and centrally organised "Big Top" event at mid-day for all to share.

    –   Result: higher again attendance rates; less double degree orientation clashes and positive data (see paper at 13)

QUT Orientation (3)

3. Conceptualisation of O Week as *one* part of a larger transition process over time

 – Another area for policy enhancement, leveraging off the *FYE Policy* already approved (Project 1).

 – UTLC has approved a new QUT *Orientation and Transition Policy*, accompanied by a set of guidelines for faculty and divisional implementation

 – An agreed statement of *Orientation Good Practice Principles* (see paper p 14)

 – An agreed definition of "Orientation" …see next

All a considerable partnership achievement for QUT

QUT's Orientation and Transition Policy

"QUT conceptualises student Orientation **as a process that occurs over time**; in some aspects, independently of the curriculum (from the letter of offer through to Week 4 of first semester) and, in other aspects, embedded in the curriculum. This will be achieved through:

- a process of academic and social integration to facilitate learning engagement; and
- just-in-time information provision and timely access to support services.

…

QUT supports commencing students in a number of ways and with a **particular focus on critical time periods. One of these critical time periods is Orientation Week ("O Week")."**

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4   First Year Curriculum

To promote an intentional first year or **transition pedagogy** for adoption in aid of FY curriculum design and enhancement: that is, to promote FY curriculum which, amongst other things (after STAR, 2005):

➢ is **relevant** to and informs students' **vocational aspirations** early on in their course;

➢ assists students' **transition** *from* their previous educational experience *to* studying at tertiary level, as well as addressing the different learning needs and skills required relevant to their new discipline of study;

➢ provides students with **formative assessments** of their work **early** in their program or program component; and

➢ facilitates quality, authentic learning experiences, promotes student involvement in their learning and provides students with "**good reasons to stay beyond the first year**" (Krause, 2006)

A "Scoping" note.

- **Undergraduate** (cf postgrad) curriculum

- First year **curriculum** (and co-curriculum)
  - First year **students** very diverse and can enter the curriculum at multiple entry points
    - We need to attend to them
    - Take care about advance standing and bridging courses
  - The focus here is the **curriculum** (rather than the experience of commencing students)
  - Diverse nature of student progression also means that non-first year students may enrol in first year units of study.
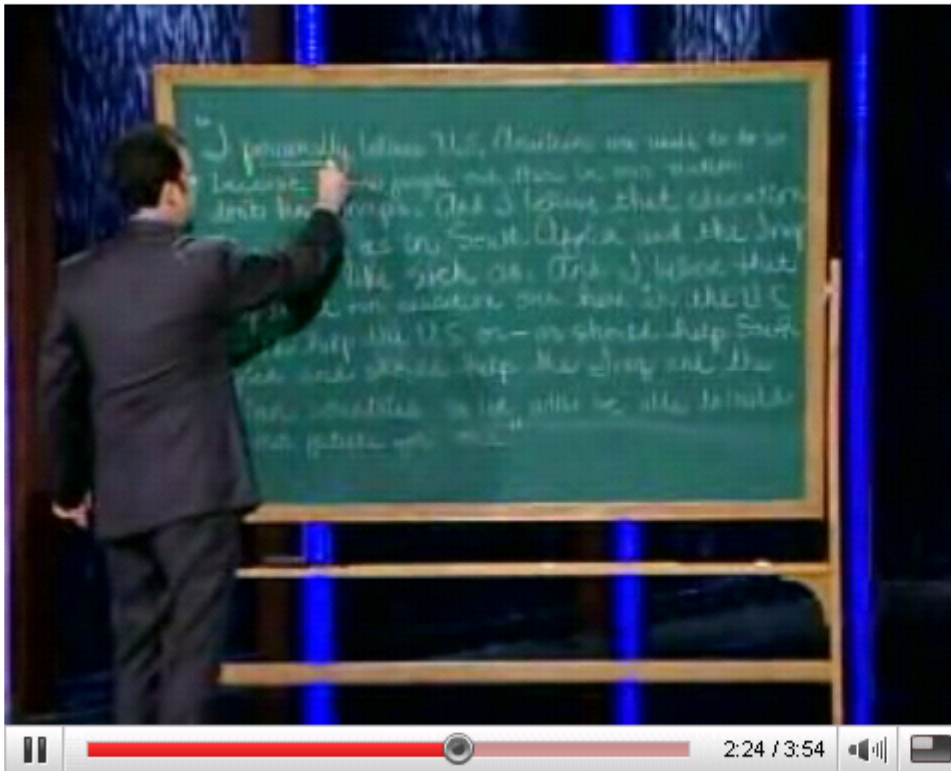
Supporting Miss Teen South Carolina in her learning

Jimmy Kimmel Explains what Miss Teen said

Through the provision of

- Academic skills support – oral communication; and

- Timely and individualised feedback.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aR75L08SBHo

Why a _transition_ pedagogy?

- **Because of what we know about our students**
  - We know so much – who they are, what their legitimate expectations are, what their issues are likely to be, who is likely at risk _etc etc_
  - Negligent not to facilitate re what we know
- **Lack of primary student identity**
  - No play & study through uni together like most of us did (McInnis, 2003)
  - No time to make all the necessary accommodations
- **Because this _not_ solely about discipline content** –
  - These are all qualified students
  - Is about the academic, admin & or support systems and processes that wrap around the (easy/ hard) content

However

Tinto cautions (2002, 8):

> …universities must provide [teachers] with the pedagogical and assessment skills they need to establish conditions in their classrooms that promote student involvement, learning, and retention…[and] we must reward faculty for effective teaching and provide incentives for faculty to innovate in their teaching and work with students.

Tinto V. (2002) Establishing Conditions for Student Success. In: *11th Annual Conference of the European Access Network*, Monash University, Prato, Italy. Retreived May 28, 2008 from http://www.ean-edu.org/news/tinto-pratoconf.pdf

Can we agree a principled approach?

- Is it possible to identify certain (generic) curriculum design principles that stand out as supportive of first year learning engagement, success and retention?

- First Year Curriculum Design Principles –
  - A set of interconnected organising principles to facilitate all students fully achieving desired learning outcomes that –
    - Are research-based (but move *from* theory *to* action);
    - Can help guide and inform practice;
    - Are supported by practical tips, checklists, examples & strategies for implementation (to move *from* principle *to* practice).
  - **ALTC (Carrick) Fellowship Project:** Currently developing a series of case studies in different disciplines where colleagues are analysing their practices against such principles.

An intentional transition pedagogy

- FY curriculum design (***concurrently w quality first year teaching & support***) that –
    - Aids **transition** *from* [previous educ experience] *to* nature of learning in HE and their new discipline as part of LLL
    - Acknowledges student **diversity** – broadly
        - diversity may exacerbate transition difficulties
        - can make few assumptions about existing knowledge & skills
    - **Design** is student-focussed, explicit and relevant providing **foundation** & **scaffolding** for FY learning success
    - Enacts an **engaging** & **involving** curriculum pedagogy
    - Aids transition to **HE assessment** & provides **early feedback**
    - Is itself **evaluated** and **monitors** for student engagement

FY Curriculum Design Project: Positives

- All QUT Faculties engaged in 2007 = whole-of-institution practice in an intentional and principled way

- Broad x-institutional community of practice

- Shared language and understanding

- Another UTLC policy approved (principles & guidelines)
  - NOW staff development for its widespread deployment

- Enabled cross-fertilisation of practice between divisional and faculty colleagues – esp
  - Harnessing an important range of institutional expertise not always influential (e.g., Academic Skills Advisors, Language & Learning Advisors, Liaison Librarians, etc).

5   First Year Students

➢ To enhance organisational areas' understanding of who their student cohorts are and to ensure that they are provided with the data and other resources necessary to monitor those cohorts' progression and retention, to intervene as appropriate in aid of students at risk, and to monitor the rates and causes of attrition.

➢ To access and respond to the student voice about the quality of their FYE and make recommendations about how FY students might be better connected to each other and to the academic and professional support services available to them.

Developed QUT specific data collections

- FYES = First Year Experience Survey
  - See generally and for some screen shots of the FYES at http://www.yourfeedback.qut.edu.au/qut_surveys/fyes/index.jsp
  - Feedback to students - ttp://www.yourfeedback.qut.edu.au/Vice-Chancellor_invites/response/fyes.jsp
  - Targeted things we wanted data and feedback about as impetus for action
- Also a refreshed Orientation Survey
  - Feedback to students http://www.yourfeedback.qut.edu.au/Vice-Chancellor_invites/response/orientation.jsp
- Program Exit Survey – automated – collects data around
  - Factors influencing your decision to withdraw (from a list w free text also)
  - Was the program as expected?
  - Discuss withdrawal with anyone at QUT?
  - Could we have done anything to stop the withdrawal?
  - Do you plan to return to QUT in the future?

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QUT Program Exit Survey 2007 (to Nov 2007):

What influenced yr decn to withdraw (could select more than one)

Answer	Responses: Total no	Total %	2007 commence responses	2007 % of commence responses
Your course of study	**578**	**19.8%**	**332**	**19.8%**
the institutional culture and facilities	105	3.6%	53	3.2%
accommodation	45	1.5%	26	1.6%
transport	108	3.7%	68	4.1%
isolation / loneliness	94	3.2%	59	3.5%
family issues	258	8.9%	152	9.1%
health issues	157	5.4%	80	4.8%
personal issues	373	12.8%	223	13.3%
your employment situation	432	14.8%	242	14.4%
your finances	**308**	**10.6%**	**184**	**11.0%**
Other reason…	456	15.6%	257	15.3%
Grand Total	2914	100.0%	1676	100.0%

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Other Project 5 outcomes

- Got our first in family data from FYES – 2007: 39.5%

- Peer-to-peer interactions identified & coordinated and status raised through Report (& Recs) to UTLC

- Recognised necessity to systematise our approaches to monitoring for student (dis)engagement during the *currency* of their semester's enrolment (in order to make proactive support interventions before final results)
  - Over 2008, this work sponsored by the new Director, FYE and taken up by Large T&L Project
  - QUT-wide *Student Success Project* initiative (with four active Faculties from mid-year 2008 and the final four scheduled for inclusion in 2009): see Duncan & Nelson (FYHE, 2008).

On a sombre note

- The crucial partnerships that have combined better to deliver a comprehensive, integrated and coordinated FYE remain fragile and require continued support, focus and nurturing.

- Without ongoing sponsorship (eg, well-resourced FYE Director (or like) over 2008 (and beyond)), in tandem with coherent governance structures, gains that have been made to date will easily dissipate and fragment.

- Disappointingly, if unsurprisingly, seems leadership on these issues must be academic
  - perhaps because of the centrality of learning and oflearning engagement to the FYE
  - Perhaps this is the teaching cohort that needs most convincing

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To conclude: Helicopter parents

Miss Teen South Carolina's proud parents hovering in the background

Thank-you for listening

Questions and Comments