Transitions Beyond the First Year: Implications for Curriculum Design, Student Support, and Success

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INTRODUCTIONS
Group Activity 1

• At your table - Introduce yourself, country, institution, your job role and what you’d like from the session

• (5 min) Feedback to the group – one shared outcome you’d like from the session
Group Activity 2

• Keywords on your table – what do they mean to you:
  – Transition
  – Academic advising/support
  – Second-year student
  – ‘Sophomore slump’
  – Student success

• 5 min discussion / 5 min feedback to group
Group Activity 3

• Round tables consider the issues and experiences a first year student encounters at different stages
  – Consider: pre-arrival/induction; 1st semester; 2nd semester; summer break, year two 1st semester; year 2nd semester
  – Changes in support; changes to themselves; institutional change; course changes
  – Is this the same internationally?

• Use flipchart paper (15 minutes in group)
• reading the other groups work and adding points (5 minutes)
• debrief and discussion (20 mins)
Teesside University
Student Learning Experience Framework

STUDENT ENTRY PROFILE
Characterised by differences in:
- previous academic experience
- level of ability
- orientation to study

FOUNDATION AND ORIENTATION
- initiation into disciplinary and intellectual culture
- orientation to learning in HE
- application

DEVELOPMENT AND EXPLORATION
- development of disciplinary research skills
- application and analysis
- critical reflection

CONSOLIDATION AND EXPERTISE
- consolidation and development of knowledge and understanding
- self-initiated enquiry
- synthesis, integration and evaluation
- demonstration of expertise in specific areas

STUDENT EXIT PROFILE
- intellectual qualities
- knowledge acquisition and creation
- vocational/professional qualities and skills
- learning and generic skills

PROGRAMME PHASE

TUTOR LED
LEARNING SKILLS
- learning to learn
- self-management
- information management
- working with others

LECTURES
SEMINARS AND TUTORIALS
PRACTICALS

LEARNING TEAMS
GROUP/LIVE PROJECTS
NEGOTIATED PROJECTS
STUDENT-LED SEMINARS

RESOURCES/COMPUTER-BASED LEARNING

LEARNER GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT (ACADEMIC AND PASTORAL): e.g. Learning Support Tutors, Skills Support Centre

STUDENT LED
DISSEMINATIONS
RESEARCH PROJECTS
IN-DEPTH STUDY
DESIGN AND BUILD

PROJECTS
SELF AND PEER ASSESSMENT
WORK-BASED ASSESSMENT

ILLUSTRATIVE LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES

ILLUSTRATIVE ASSESSMENT APPROACHES

IMPORTANCE OF FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT
SKILLS-FOCUSED PORTFOLIOS
COMPUTER-AIDED ASSESSMENT
SHARING THE RESEARCH & EXISTING PRACTICES
Research from the United Kingdom
How do you feel about progressing?

• 86% respondents feel ‘positive’ about progressing to second year

• However……………………………………..
## Support Accessed to Help Transition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support mechanisms</th>
<th>Y1 (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic staff discussed in lectures/tutorials</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had an informal opportunity to interact with 2nd/3rd year students</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had a formal opportunity to interact with 2nd/3rd year students</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An introduction into 2nd Year session</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Learning Mentors</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An essay or another form of assessment at 1st year level</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Links to websites on critical analysis</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of the above</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Blind optimism?
How do you feel about progressing?

• 62% Second year’s were ‘worried’ about progressing to third year

• Having experienced a within University transition more realise 3rd year could be very different
Second Years’ Reflections:

The transition between first and second year has not been easy as first and second year in an academic level are miles apart with some very large gaps which have not been easy to catch up to, because the knowledge has not been there from the first year.

The marking criteria certainly requires a step up from academic skills acceptable in the first year.
Students’ Ideas to Help Transition

• Summer -assignment, reading and information
• Seminars with staff and higher level students
• Re-introduction sessions
• More peer support sessions
  – “..most no longer experience the same level of support they received as freshmen. It is therefore critical that sophomores feel plugged in with their peers and to campus resources..” (Peter Kraft)
Advice to Year One from Year Two

• Use central and local support available
• Work over the summer
• Read more before sessions
• Talk to your peers, they can help
• Get to know students from years’ 2 and 3
• Ask for module guides and reading over summer
Research from the United States
Primary Criticism of 2\textsuperscript{nd} Year Support: “You’re just moving the cliff!”

Is this how our efforts to support second-year students are perceived?
Second Year as a Developmental Milestone

- Critical juncture for students developmentally
  - Academic development
  - Connection to institution and place in the community
  - Career development
  - Personal identity issues
  - Examination of life purpose
- Increased capacity to make progress on important college outcomes
Second Year as a Developmental Milestone

Source of identity and meaning-making:

Ea-External voice-unquestioning
Eb-External voice-low tension
Ec-External voice-high tension
E(I)-External with awareness of internal
I(E)-Internal with acknowledgement of external
I(a-c): External

National Survey of Sophomore-Year Initiatives

• **Purpose:** “to get a better understanding of sophomore-specific efforts” on campuses across the country (*Keup, Gahagan, & Goodwin, 2010*)

• **Administration period:** March-June, 2014*

• **Administration target:** Institutional representatives that could respond on programmatic interventions

• **Total number of respondents:** 816 institutions
  
  – 46% (*n* = 355) reported having a sophomore-year initiative
Campus-Wide Efforts Focused on Sophomores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Campus-wide effort (n = 794)</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Retention study</td>
<td>41.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>41.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional assessment</td>
<td>28.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic planning</td>
<td>26.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program self-study</td>
<td>16.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in a national survey</td>
<td>15.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accreditation</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant-funded project</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objectives for Sophomore Success Initiative (n = 454)</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve retention</td>
<td>61.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career exploration</td>
<td>53.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic assistance</td>
<td>45.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection of a major</td>
<td>45.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career preparation</td>
<td>45.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership opportunities</td>
<td>43.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connection with the institution</td>
<td>35.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic skills</td>
<td>31.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduation rates</td>
<td>31.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service learning</td>
<td>29.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student satisfaction</td>
<td>29.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student-faculty interaction</td>
<td>29.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-exploration or personal development</td>
<td>26.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Types of Sophomore Success Initiatives

- Academic advising
- Academic coaching or mentoring
- Back-to-school events
- Career exploration
- Career planning
- Class events
- Common reading experience
- Course-specific support for high-risk classes
- Credit-bearing course
- Cultural enrichment activities
- Early alert systems
- Faculty/staff mentors
- Financial aid
- Internships
- Leadership development
- Learning communities
- Major exploration & selection
- Online communication
- Opportunities to co-teach or assist in teaching a class
- Outdoor or wilderness adventure
- Peer mentoring by sophomores
- Peer mentoring for sophomores
- Print publications
- Residence life
  - Sophomore live on-campus requirement
  - Soph-specific living-learning community
  - Soph-specific residential curriculum
- Retreats
- Service-learning/community service
- Student government
- Study abroad
- Summer newsletters/communication
- Undergraduate research
Most Common Sophomore Success Initiatives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sophomore Initiative (n = 351)</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic advising</td>
<td>57.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career exploration</td>
<td>53.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career planning</td>
<td>49.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early alert systems</td>
<td>42.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership development</td>
<td>41.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major exploration and selection</td>
<td>33.3</td>
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<tr>
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<td>28.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class events</td>
<td>28.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service learning/community service</td>
<td>26.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internships</td>
<td>26.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Less Common Sophomore Success Initiatives

- **20-25% of institutions reporting**: faculty/staff mentors, study abroad, residence life-sophomore required to live on-campus, online communication, student government
- **10-20% reporting**: undergraduate research, cultural enrichment activities, residence life-soph-specific living-learning communities, course-specific support, financial aid, learning communities, peer mentors for sophomores, credit-bearing course
- **5-10% reporting**: co-teach or assist in teaching a course, retreats, residence life-soph-specific residential curriculum, print publications, summer newsletters/communication, common reading experience
- **<5% reporting**: outdoor/wilderness adventure, summer bridge programs
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- **<5% reporting**: outdoor/wilderness adventure, summer bridge programs
Duration of Sophomore Initiative

- 1 year or less: 21.4%
- 2-5 years: 57.3%
- 6-10 years: 12.8%
- 11-15 years: 4.0%
- 16+ years: 4.6%
Coordination of Sophomore Initiative

Percent

1-Totally decentralized
2
3
4
5-Totally centralized

12.4
25.1
34.9
19.3
7.5

Totally decentralized
Totally centralized
Is someone in charge of Sophomore Success Initiatives?

- 29% full-time position
- 71% part-time position

Don’t Know 1%
Yes 34%
No 65%
## Challenges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason for no sophomore initiative</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other*</td>
<td>41.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited time</td>
<td>35.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not an institutional priority</td>
<td>35.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of funding</td>
<td>34.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of staff/faculty buy-in</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of expertise</td>
<td>12.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Other (2008):  
• Focus on first-year students  
• Lack of staff  
• High retention  
• No leadership/authority  
• Definitional challenge (i.e., what is a “sophomore”)*
Major Findings

• Common approaches to second year support
• Identify a range of options and opportunities for new programs
  – Curricular approaches & HIPs are underutilized
• Connection to outcomes
  – “There is a practically and statistically significant relationship between having sophomore success initiatives and persistence during the first two years of college” (Keup, Gahagan, & Goodwin, 2010)
  – Expand student outcomes of second-year programming
• Uneven campus coordination
FYE Approaches
Transition pedagogy (Kift and Nelson, 2005)

• 1\textsuperscript{st} Generation: Co-curricular support
  – Professionals on curriculum periphery

• 2\textsuperscript{nd} Generation: Curriculum development
  – Faculty and professional partnerships

• 3\textsuperscript{rd} Generation: Whole institution approach
  – Across all disciplines integration into L&T strategy of institution - Faculty and professional partnerships
Examples of Practice

• Teesside
  – TV production – assessment including Y1, Y2, Y3 students (2nd Gen)
  – History – end of year 1 seminars with Staff & 2nd year students (2nd Gen)
  – Sports Therapy – practice clinic (1st/ 2nd Gen)
  – Sport and Exercise – L&T strategy includes year 2 extended induction, staged assessment (2nd Gen)
    • E.G. early formative assessment and peer marking within S&C, critical analysis tasks, reflective activity
Year 2 Progression Data

- Uni average 79%
- Sport average 83%
  - Sport Therapy 85%
- History 85%
- TV production 91%
- Where interventions are considered above University mean
- Early curriculum interventions more successful
Integrating Personal Development and Employability into the Curriculum (3rd Generation)

• Many students study to start their career
• Help them to identify development needs and where this can be achieved
  – In & out of the curriculum
  – Allow space for this to be assessed
• Incorporate support staff in the teaching
• Several benefits for students
  – e.g. Promotes engagement, autonomy, motivation, assessment of ‘hidden curriculum’
Group Activity 4

• Create and design the your ideal out of first year transition activity
• Choose one of the transition practices presented or come up with your own
• Where does it sit on the Kift & Nelson transition pedagogy model?
• What are strengths and limitations of this approach?
• How would you evolve the practice to improve it a to fit within your own institution context/s?
• 20 mins in group