A Transition Pedagogy: Third Generation First Year Experience

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Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, Queensland, Australia

http://www.lonelyplanet.com/worldguide/australia/
QUT

- 40,000 students
- 7 Faculties
- 3 campuses
- In 2010: 11,000 commencing students
- 10 year history of attention to the FYE
- Noticeable drops in FY attrition over last 2 years
  - From ~18.6-19% (2006-2008) to 17.4% (2009) to 16.2% (2010)
Overview

• Approaches to the first year experience (FYE)
  – Some snapshots of the international research and evidence base

• Embedded, contextualised support for all students

• Model for a partnership, whole-of-institution, approach for first year success & retention
  – A ‘Transition Pedagogy’ for the FYE –
    • ALTC Fellowship Research on whole of FY *curriculum design*
      – To intentionally mediate entering diversity and support
      – To do serious transition and engagement work

• From theory to action
  – 6 First Year (Curriculum) Principles
  – Some practical examples
Student success is largely determined by student experiences during the first year.


http://www.freewebs.com/horseloversveen/the-far-side-comic.jpg
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)
1. Approaches the first year in ways that are intentional, explicit, and based on clear philosophy/rationale for students’ first year.

2. Seeks to engage students in the collegiate experience both in and out of class.

3. Ensures that all first-year students encounter diverse ideas, viewpoints, and people.

4. Serves all first-year students, including various segments of the first-year student population, according to their needs.

5. Has organizational structures and policies that provide a comprehensive, coordinated approach to the first year.

6. Uses a variety of quantitative and qualitative designs and methods to examine all aspects of students’ first-year experience and to evaluate and understand the impact of institutional policies, strategies, and interventions.
Project Origins for Foundations of Excellence®

Over the past 20 years, the attention that colleges and universities have paid to the first year has grown exponentially. The reasons for this phenomenon are multiple and include changes in demographic characteristics of the students themselves, concerns about the high rate of dropout that peaks between the first and second year, and recognition that the first year presents a unique opportunity to engage students in the habits of learning. The vast majority of American postsecondary institutions are currently offering one or more special initiatives focused on helping first-year students make a successful transition to higher education. And higher education literature abounds with what are described as “best practices” in a variety of first-year programs. But heretofore, campuses have lacked any systematic, valid definition of, or standards for, first-year excellence that go beyond a single “best practice” program to a broader characterization of a campus’s total approach to the first year. While colleges and universities are often hesitant to embrace “standards” or to measure themselves against external benchmarks, they nevertheless are hungry for models of excellence, for approaches that work to produce higher levels of student learning and retention.

In early 2002, the Policy Center on the First Year of College (now John N. Gardner Institute for Excellence in Undergraduate Education) launched a project to identify and honor “Institutions of Excellence” in the first college year (drawn from all sectors of American higher education). From a national pool of 130 nominees, 13 campuses were selected because of their high achievement of five broad criteria developed by the Policy Center. These institutions were featured in a 2003 Jossey-Bass book, Achieving and Sustaining Institutional Excellence for the First Year of College. The Foundations of Excellence project builds upon this effort through intentional collaboration of researchers and campus-based practitioners to develop and vet mutually agreed-on standards for the first-year—standards that could be used as both an aspirational model and a means of measuring a campus’s level of first-year excellence.

Project Specifics [http://www.fyfoundations.org/projectOrigins.aspx](http://www.fyfoundations.org/projectOrigins.aspx)

The Four-Year Institution Pilot

The Foundations of Excellence project began in February 2003 with an open invitation to over 900 four-year campus chief academic officers at member institutions of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) and the Council of Independent Colleges (CIC). These campuses were invited to participate with the Policy Center in the development of standards for the first year, which we termed “Foundational Dimensions®” or “Dimensions” for short. Over 200 member institutions of both organizations agreed to participate in the project and to establish campus-wide “Foundations Task Forces” to consider an initial short list of six Dimensions developed by Policy Center staff members, John N. Gardner, Betsy D. Barefoot, Randy L. Swing, Stephen W. Schwartz, and Michael J. Siegel, our
Foundational Dimensions® (Four-Year College Version)  http://www.fyfoundations.org/4year.aspx

Foundations Institutions create organizational structures and policies that provide a comprehensive, integrated, and coordinated approach to the first year. These structures and policies provide oversight and alignment of all first-year efforts. A coherent first-year experience is realized and maintained through effective partnerships among academic affairs, student affairs, and other administrative units and is enhanced by ongoing faculty and staff development activities and appropriate budgetary arrangements. (Organization)
‘Institutional and cultural transformation’

‘That many first-year seminars have been add-ons and loosely coupled to the curriculum also contributes to the fact that many seminars do not survive (Barefoot, 2000)…in a perfect world where all first-year instruction included special attention to the individual needs of students, there would be no need for first-year seminars. However, in the absence of institutional and cultural transformation, campuses are likely to continue embracing first-year seminars for years to come.’

What Matters to Student Success in the First Year of University?

George D. Kuh

Pacific Rim First Year in Higher Education Conference
QUT Gardens Point, Brisbane

July 5, 2007

George Kuh (2007) Keynote at Pacific Rim FYHE Conference


Student engagement varies more within than between institutions.
FYE approaches (Kift, Nelson & Clarke, 2010; Kift, 2009; Wilson, 2009)

• **1st generation FYE**
  - Essentially co-curricular – professionals on curriculum’s periphery

• **2nd generation FYE**
  - Curriculum focus – recognises entering diversity and supports student learning experience via pedagogy, curriculum design, & L&T practice – requires faculty & professional partnerships

• **3rd generation FYE**
  - 1st and 2nd generation FYE quality assured and seamless across institution, across all its disciplines, programs & services via faculty & professional partnerships

= Transition pedagogy –

*a guiding philosophy for intentional first year curriculum design and support that carefully scaffolds and mediates the first year learning experience for contemporary heterogeneous cohorts.*

Kift & Nelson (2005)

What this means for colleges & universities…

• ‘Joined-up’ coordinated *institutional approaches* = partnerships.
  – General & specialist services and support
  – Academic and non-academic interventions
  – Curricular and co-curricular engagement

• Once 1st semester starts, harness *the curriculum* as the ‘glue’ and the academic and social ‘organising device’ (McInnis, 2001) to do serious transition and retention work
  – Both in and outside (physical and virtual) classroom – eg
    • By inclusive teaching, learning & assessment (for L’ing) practices
    • Being explicit about what’s required for success (HE & discipline)
    • Attending to sense of belonging through curriculum strategies
    • Through pathways & interactions facilitated

(Kift, 2008)
Link to student blog on uni life

http://starthere.qut.edu.au/realstudents/videofaqs

Advice for making it at uni?

Make this site as personal as you are

No need to create a new account - simply sign in with your Facebook login!

Once logged in you can see a shortlist of courses and other information under the 'my dashboard' section.

Video FAQs

- Email a student
  - Ask a current student directly.
- Real experiences
  - Find out about work experience
- Meet real graduates
  - Real grads. Real world.

http://starthere.qut.edu.au/
Snooze!

MAY 24, 2010

by Michael

The early mornings are taking their tolls, that's probably the only certainty in this week... WEEK 13!

My biological clock - that thing inside of you that knows that its dinner time, knows when your favourite show is coming on tv, and even reminds you that its time to go to sleep. I'm just wondering, has anyone seen mine?

Read more...

so no one told you life was gonna be this way...da da da da da da *dancing to the theme song from Friends*

MAY 24, 2010

by Helen

I have had an insane week! I've spent pretty much the past four days straight in my mum's office writing a business plan for Entrepreneurship and Innovation (I have to go to my mum's office
Claire’s Little Secrets to Surviving University

...your very first day..is going to be both exciting and horrifying. I remember stepping into a room of over 500 students, totally overwhelmed. [Then]... my lecturer said: “The class may seem crowded at the moment, but at least 50 students will leave after a month, and only half of you will graduate after four years.”...

So to get you started, I ..share.. tips (I wish someone had told me!) on how to survive your first year at university.

1. Sit next to the best looking person in the room.
What matters to retention

- **Preparedness**
- **Finances**
- **Peers**: learning ‘profoundly a social experience’;
- **Expectations**: mismatch; ‘how things work around here’;
- **3rd Gen Student support**: coordinated and ‘just-in-time’ & ‘just-for-me’;

- **Program choice/ certainty**
- **Staff**: contact with staff & teaching quality
- **Course design**: Clear, coherent, responsive, flexible, relevant, engaging, achievable, & motivating;
- **Assessment for learning**: relevant, consistent & integrated;
- **Feedback**: early, prompt & constructive.

(Eg: Scott, 2006; Yorke & Longden, 2008; Kift, 2009; James et al, 2010)

(Eg: FCYS, 2009; NSSE, 2009)
Support is very important

- **2009 Australasian Survey of Student Engagement (AUSSE)**
  - Based on US *National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)*
  - What engages students in productive learning

- One (of six) scales reported that:
  - **71%** of students felt institutions provide academic support ‘quite a bit’ or ‘very much’

**BUT**

- Only **23%** said got non-academic support (**36%** very little; **41%** some support);
- Only **32%** said supported to socialise (**25%** very little; **43%** some support).

NSSE data, while not quite as stark shows similar patterns with FYs faring better than Seniors. (NSSE, 2009, 42)
2009 Australasian Survey of Student Engagement (AUSSE – our NSSE)


Figure 2  Hours spent preparing for class in a typical seven-day week – USA and Australasian comparison
Common FY Curriculum Complaints (Kift, 2009)

- Lack of clarity and consistency regarding expectations
- Lack of coherence, achievability and relevance
- **Assessment for learning and feedback**
  - UK Yorke & Longden (2008): 29% said feedback not prompt
  - (Aust) James et al (CSHE, 2010): only 35% found feedback helpful
  - AUSSE (2009,76): only 40% FYs often/very often received prompt feedback (cf 80.4% of staff thought feedback often/very often prompt)
  - UK NSS (2008): satisfaction with assessment & feedback lowest
  - US NSSE (2009,38): 42% FYs sometimes/never receive prompt feedback
- **Lack of preparedness** re tertiary literacies: e.g academic; information; IT; numeracy; visual; statistical; professional practices; cultural; + + + ???
- **Group work** – esp group processes
- **Staff interest** – only 26% FYs believe staff are interested in their progress (CSHE, 2010).
Institutional approaches...

- Comprehensive, integrated and coordinated
- For sense of belonging and engagement

Enabled by faculty and professional partnerships informed by research and evidence.

QUT Model, 2002–
What institutional approaches?

Recently, Yorke & Longden (2008) identified a number of broad areas of institutional activity:

- Institutional commitment to student learning & engagement;
- Proactive management of student transition;
- Attention to curriculum
  - For both academic & social engagement;
  - To increase chances of student success;
- Place emphasis & resourcing on the FYE;
- Systematic monitoring & evaluation of student achievement, and acting on the evidence thereby collected;
- Academic (Faculty) leadership.

Institutional commitment to FYE

First-Year Goals:
University of Wisconsin–Madison

As faculty and staff at UW–Madison, it is our responsibility to guide students toward meeting certain goals during their first year. The Orientation & New Student Programs Advisory Committee has created the following first-year goals and welcomes your participation in using the goals to enhance your work with new students. No one person, class, or organization can help a student meet all of these goals, but if all UW–Madison community members use the goals as a basis for interactions with first-year students, each student will be able to create a meaningful, productive first-year experience for themselves.

Gaining confidence and competence as a college-level student

If you are meeting this goal you are:
- Gaining competence in reading, writing, oral communication, time management, and research at the college level.

‘...if all UW–Madison community members use the goals as a basis for interactions with first-year students, each student will be able to create a meaningful, productive first-year experience for themselves.’

http://www.newstudent.wisc.edu/publications/firstYrGoals.pdf
C/6.2 The First Year Experience

6.2.1 Policy principles

In line with QUT’s vision and goals (see A/2.1), a key aim is to support all commencing students to adjust successfully to study at QUT by providing a strong transition experience - academically, socially and administratively - according to their varied needs.

QUT is aware of the significant transitional challenges facing first year students and acknowledges the diversity and changing social and educational needs and aspirations of its entering cohorts. QUT believes that a positive and involving First Year Experience (FYE), which connects new learners with their teachers and peers in a community committed to learning, provides the critical foundation for transition to later years’ learning success and career attainment and enhances student satisfaction, course experience and retention.

At QUT, the FYE and successful transition of our students is everybody’s responsibility. QUT focuses on providing the best possible experience for new students in an environment where they are supported to take responsibility for their own learning, and to embrace an active role in succeeding to their full potential (academically and personally) as new learners in our University.

Therefore QUT will deliver a comprehensive, integrated and coordinated approach to the FYE that:

- is mediated through intentionally designed curricula and co-curricula
- is facilitated by a quality learning environment and good teaching and support
- is promoted and supported by all academic and professional staff interactions with students, where staff are developed, valued and rewarded for their FYE-focused perspective and partnerships
- fosters easy access to services and programs that aid academic and social orientation, integration, and support
- is appropriate to QUT’s culture and creates a sense of belonging
- is scholarly, evidence-based and enhanced by regular evaluation, and
- is given a high priority by the University to ensure that the conditions that promote successful student transitions are appropriately resourced and are sustainable over time.
Proactive management of student transition

Drury’s FYE program consists of many elements designed to help new students transition into college such as:

- Alpha Seminar
- Freshman Academic Advisors
- Advising and Registration
- Freshman First Day
- New Student Orientation
- Orientation Leaders
- Student Involvement Fair
- Office of Transitional Programs

http://www.drury.edu/multinl/story.cfm?nlid=232&id=17616
Proactive management of student transition

Orientation & Transition as a process over time.

Whole of institution approaches

‘Getting the context right for staff to get the context right for students.’

(Hunt, 2009)

‘Of ducks and carrots’
‘Of consistency and clarity’

(Kift, 2008)
Of ducks and carrots

Action
Assessment
What is good teaching & support
What is a good student exp
Learning leadership & governance across silos
Local area plans
Top level plan(s)
Vision

Reward & recognition
Staff development
Promotion criteria
Probation
KPIs
Coherent institutional context to support FYE

- **FYE Policy** [MOPP C/6.2](#)
  - Includes Orientation and Transition
  - Supporting Guidelines

- **Institution-wide evaluation/assessment**
  - [FYEQ](#), [AUSSE](#), Course Exit & Orientation, [LEX](#), Individual Program Reports & Consolidated Course Performance Reports

- **Policy statements** relating to FYE in:
  - [Curriculum Design Policy MOPP C/4.2](#)
    - Eg: role of FY curriculum in whole of program design
  - [Assessment [for learning] Policy MOPP C/5.1](#)
  - [Unsatisfactory Academic Performance policy MOPP E/6.7](#)
  - [Supplementary Assessment [for learning] Policy MOPP E/6.4](#)

- **QUT Faculty (Academic) Director, FYE**
- **University-wide FYE & Retention Committee**
- **FYE Network** – FY faculty & practitioners network
- **First Year Coordinators Positions (Faculty)**
2.5 Designing assessment for a whole of course approach from the first year of study

Five key ideas guide the design of assessment for first year students and are also relevant to assessment across the course.

1. **Variety** – provide types of assessment that feature different aspects of learning relevant to the discipline to engage students, cater for diversity in learning styles and to broaden students’ learning preferences.

2. **Consistency** – be consistent with the use of assessment terms within a unit and across the first year (e.g. descriptions, weighting and criteria) to reduce confusion for students new to university study. Provide consistency in terms of expected workload and weighting for similar assessment tasks across first year units.

3. **Relevance** – create relevance between the assessment task and unit activities and between the assessment task and the real world to motivate and engage students. Relevant assessment items should provide evidence of graduate capability development and should be suitable for inclusion in the students’ QUT or personal portfolio.

4. **Scaffolding** – ensure the process skills as well as the content knowledge that students need to complete an assessment item are taught or practiced and that early feedback and extra support is provided so that students can overcome any areas of difficulty they experience. An assessment related activity should be scheduled within the first four weeks of the semester to provide students with feedback on how they are progressing in the unit. Advice should be provided to students about what to do with the feedback they are given. First year assessment should provide opportunities for peer and self-evaluation.

5. **Monitoring** – ensure that assessment items within a unit and across a course are designed and scheduled to facilitate the monitoring of student engagement in learning. The assessment pattern must be organised so that all first year undergraduate students encounter at least one individual item of formative or summative assessment aligned with unit learning outcomes prior to the withdrawal without financial penalty date.

The course coordinator is responsible for oversight of the curriculum architecture (see MOPP C/4.2) including assuring that the assessment patterns are mapped across the course from first year to the final year and seek to maximise the range of assessment types. This range is not only relevant for variety, consistency, relevance, scaffolding and monitoring, it is also an important equity principle.

Engagement in early learning...

What would a good week 1 lecture in the First Year look like?

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PUzjIsP1yxc&feature=PlayList&p=F2C026529F7622DC&playnext_from=PL&playnext=1&index=10
Focus on

A Transition Pedagogy and
The First Year Curriculum
Some recent work re FY curriculum

- STAR (Student Transition And Retention): Sub-project on Curriculum Development
  http://www.ulster.ac.uk/star/curriculum_development/curriculum.htm

  http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/York/documents/ourwork/research/FYE/web0580_the_first_year_experience_review_of_literature_for_the_higher_education_academy.pdf

- Heagney & Ferrier (2008) Higher Education in Diverse Communities: Global Perspectives; Local Initiatives, EAN
Why focus on curriculum…


• Because in all their diversity, with multiple identities and changing patterns of engagement, curriculum is
  – What students have in common
  – Within our institutional control
  – Only place we have contact with all students and can mediate that diversity, especially in preparedness & cultural capital

• Because otherwise our interventions are not comprehensive and their effect is left to chance
  – Will be bolt-on, piecemeal, and de-contextualised
  – May lack integration across processes & organisational areas
A principled approach

Six First Year Curriculum Principles –

– **Generic** curriculum principles that are supportive of first year learning engagement, success and retention.

– Interconnected organising principles that –
  • Are research-based (but move *from* theory *to* action);
  • Can help guide and inform holistic FYE practice;
  • Are supported by practical tips, checklists, examples & strategies for implementation (to move *from* principle *to* practice).

– Require cross-institutional partnerships to enact & enable.

– Have been evaluated and are **evidence-based** (>150 Fellowship presentations to approx 7000 faculty & professional staff in Australia and internationally).
Six (6) Curriculum Principles

[HE word bingo]

[Concurrent with good teaching and good support]

- Transition
- Diversity
- Design
- Engagement
- Assessment [for learning]
- Evaluation/Assessment and Monitoring

A curriculum that does serious transition and retention work!

http://www.fyhe.qut.edu.au/transitionpedagogy/
## Key Questions for FY Curriculum Design

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Design</th>
<th>Has the whole-of-program first year design been mapped? Are knowledge, skills, attitudes &amp; academic literacies required for later years in program well articulated, integrated and sequenced?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transition</td>
<td>Which groups entering this course may need particular attention during their orientation &amp; transition to university life &amp; procedures?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity</td>
<td>Is there a strategy in place for identifying, communicating to FY teachers, and responding to diversity characteristics of this cohort?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement</td>
<td>Are opportunities provided for students to make personal connections between their previous experiences, the program content and professional skills that are important to the discipline? Engagement with staff and peers designed in?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation/Assessment for learning</td>
<td>Evidence-based approach to design and practice. Does the program / suite of FY units have affordances for ‘monitoring engagement’ and the support / resources available to make interventions where indicated?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Which FY units have an appropriate assessment item scheduled in the first four weeks of semester? Assessment literacies explicated?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
High Impact Educational Practices
Kuh (AAC&U, 2008)

- First-Year Seminars and Experiences
- Common Intellectual Experiences
- Learning Communities
- Writing-Intensive Courses
- Collaborative Assignments and Projects
- Undergraduate Research
- Diversity/Global Learning
- Service Learning, Community-Based Learning
- Internships
- Capstone Courses and Projects

http://www.aacu.org/LEAP/hip.cfm
Common intellectual experiences

RUSH-A’s PRIMARY GOALS

• Providing a common academic FYE
• Strengthening CSUB’s academic atmosphere
• Connecting students to peers and teachers
• Getting students involved in campus activities
• Involving the whole campus community in a shared learning experience.

The Runner Reader
A Common Reader Program at California State University, Bakersfield

The Runner Reader Common Reader Program seeks to engage first-year freshman students and transfer-entry students “in transition” in an academic discourse through the shared experiences of reading a “common reader” throughout the first academic term of the year. The selected reading will be linked to specific classes, especially CSUB 101 and English 110.

Program Philosophy

• Place, at its core, an emphasis on reading as an intellectual skill central to student achievement and will promote learning with and from others.
• Reinforce the notion that learning occurs both inside and outside the classroom, encouraging students to participate and recognize the educational value of their involvement.
• Balance academic and social activities.
• Promote peer engagement by helping students understand the value of talking about academic matters outside the classroom.
• Enhance critical thinking skills.
• The program will engage students in higher-order, integrative, and reflective learning.
• Help students learn to make judgments about the validity of what they read, discuss these ideas with others whose views may differ from their own, and consider alternative perspectives.
• Help students connect what they read to previously acquired knowledge and to the new knowledge they are acquiring in college.
• Focus on sending the message - early in a student’s transition - that reading and discourse are expected in college.
• Emphasize the involvement of all members of the university, as well as surrounding community members.

http://www.csub.edu/rush-a/reader.shtml
Kift ALTC Senior Fellowship
FYECID Symposium 2009

Symposium – the Movie

An Extract

EG, intentional **whole-of-program** design (1)

- 1\textsuperscript{st} week of Sem takes up where orientation leaves off
- Opportunity to self-assess entering diversity of knowledge, skills & attitudes against discipline expectations (with development opportunities consequently provided)
- Identify first year curriculum objectives
- Make explicit to students whole-of-program roadmap
- Design-in discipline co-curricular and socialising activities (eg SI)
- Physical or virtual space available for social interaction
- Assess/ evaluate whole-of-program, including orientation, especially for patterns of attrition amongst sub-cohorts.
- Monitor for current student (dis)engagement across program and support/ intervene with identified at-risk students
ePortfolio: Overview

What it does

ePortfolio is a suite of tools available through OnCourse CL that allows faculty and administrators to guide students through learning, assessment, and presentation portfolios.

Key concepts

Access: ePortfolio provides students with tools to create an online archive of their work, which can be accessed from anywhere. Instructors can access ePortfolio to provide feedback and assess a student’s progress.

Learning tool: By helping students to recognize connections between assignments, and the knowledge and skills needed for those assignments, ePortfolio encourages learning habits that can be applied to other aspects of life.

Curricular framework: In many cases, ePortfolios are aligned with course or program objectives and/or institutional standards.

Help documentation

Preparing Items for ePortfolio, For Students

How to prepare, organize, and store items that will be used in ePortfolio

What kinds of items can I use in ePortfolio?

You may include all types of work in your ePortfolio. While some of your class work will consist of word processing documents, it is also possible to upload other digitized materials, such as videos, sound files, and graphics. The important thing to remember is that all work must eventually be in a digital format. Thus, you can paint a picture, but you must scan it or take a digital photograph of the picture before you can upload it to an ePortfolio tool in OnCourse.

Where should I store items that I plan to upload?

It is a good idea to place a copy of every piece of completed work into your Resources folder in the My Workspace section of OnCourse CL. That way, all of your work is saved, is accessible from any networked location, and may be used in the future.

To upload files to your Resources folder, follow these steps:
1. Log in to OnCourse CL
2. Click the My Workspace tab at the top of the page
3. Click Resources in the menubar on the left side of the screen
   A list of the files in your Resources folder will appear.
4. Find the folder called My Workspace at the top of the list
5. Click the drop-down arrow next to the Add field -> Click Upload Files
   The upload files screen appears.
6. Click Browse
   The Choose file dialog box opens.
7. Select the file you want to upload -> Click Open
8. To upload multiple files at the same time, Click the Add Another File link -> Repeat steps 6 and 7
9. Repeat step 8 until all the files that you want to upload are listed in the File fields
10. Click Upload Files Now

http://kb.iu.edu/data/arii.html
Peer-to-peer interactions

http://www.umkc.edu/cad/si/
EG, intentional whole-of-program design (2)

Intentional mapping & coherence across FY subjects: eg

- As much as possible, whole FY program is coherent & integrated
- Make links/connections between subjects explicit
- Diversity in T, L & A approaches across subjects
- Assessment for learning strategy coherent, integrated & manageable across subjects for students and staff
- Make no assumptions about entering knowledge, skills & attitudes
  - map subject responsibility for academic literacy development to assist transition to tertiary study, scaffold learning, and make explicit what is required for success (eg re academic writing, referencing, teamwork, etc).
- Consistency in communications of expectations/ responsibilities
- Develop early assessment for learning literacies
EG, intentional subject design (1)

• Attend to program-choice uncertainty by embedding career modules/planning and/or investigating what it is to be a XYZ professional (IT Case Study, Nelson 2008)

• Scaffold academic skills & learning processes (e.g., scaffold reading through workbooks; discipline writing workshops in class time: Law Case Study, Westcott 2008)

• Communicated Feedback Strategy (e.g., as at http://www.ljmu.ac.uk/lid/ltweb/84079.htm)

• “Correct” a piece of writing in large class using track changes function for immediate feedback (Education Case Study, Healy 2008)
Career Advising

University of South Carolina's Four Year Student Plan:

- Progression and

- Coherence

http://www.sc.edu/career/studentplan.html
Six Career Development Modules at QUT

- Developed to underpin current curriculum and assist students to:
  - make sound course and career choices;
  - make successful transitions to life as a student; life at University; and post University;
  - make connections between their course of study and where that might lead; and
  - further develop career pathways.
QUT Career Development Modules

**University Preparation** (for students prior to QUT)
- Defining Myself (Self Understanding 1)
- Course Exploration & Decision Making
- Awareness of Influences
- Assessing Readiness for Study
- Introducing the Student ePortfolio

**Career Preparation** (for first year students)
- Defining Myself (Self Understanding 1)
- Thriving at University
- Choosing Majors/Electives
- Defining My Opportunities (Career Research & World of Work)
- Using the Student ePortfolio

EG, intentional subject design (2)

- All Biology students attend two *Science 101* workshops & study groups (Weeks 2-3), collaboratively convened by faculty, & professional (with University transition staff). Includes student-staff panel to which FY students can address questions. Specific encouragement of help-seeking behaviour. (Biology Case Study, Gleeson, 2008)

- Multimedia subject presents as virtual town to achieve learning objectives in persuasive writing and career-related writing tasks (eg, media releases, job applications, reports, proposals, newspaper feature articles). Links to support material, guidelines, models etc. (Writing and Communications Case Study, Radbourne & LeRossignol, 2008)
First Year Assessment for Learning
First year student who would rather write a song than do his KKB101 essay.

So he did!

I don’t know if he passed or not. ;-)

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ccOoldztCss
Early tertiary assessment literacies: e.g.

• Explanation and consistent use of assessment verbs; consistent naming of assessment tasks;

• Explicit clarification of assessment expectations: eg, how to write, research, orally present in different discipline genres;

• Explicit & consistent advice & assistance with referencing & paraphrasing expectations;

• Instruction & proactive support re group/team work;

• Assist students to make use of examples & model answers;

• Well written criterion referenced assessment (CRA) sheets AND ‘dialogue’ about way criteria and standards will be applied (ASKe, 2008: http://www.brookes.ac.uk/aske/documents/ASKe%20Intervention.pdf);

• Assistance with ‘what feedback is’ & how to make the best use of it (Race, 2009: http://www.leedsmet.ac.uk/Feedback_Booklet_Phil_Race.pdf).
Understanding academic languages & conventions

Example: A Psychology degree program uses the same assessment [for learning] definitions and criteria throughout the entire program. A written assessment guide formally articulates these to students and staff (Gibbs, 2009)

Example: In a FY Education subject, small student groups are given a copy of the same written excerpt and each group is asked to respond in a specific way: reflectively, analytically, critically, etc. Responses are shared with the class to highlight the differences between cognitive levels (Healy, 2008)
Assessment for learning expectations...

http://www.dlsweb.rmit.edu.au/lsu/content/1_Stu
dySkills/study_pdf/Blooms%20taxonomy.pdf

Help student understanding of criteria

http://www.brookes.ac.uk/aske/documents/ASKe%20Intervention.pdf

**ASKe (Assessment Standards Knowledge exchange)** is a Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) based in the Business School at Oxford Brookes University. It was set up in summer 2005, with a 0.45 million award from HEFCE in recognition of good practice based on pedagogic research into aspects of assessment.

The work of ASKe has been organised into three strands of activity:

**Strand 1: Replicating proven practice through:**
- A pre-assessment intervention which the ASKe team has shown to work. A simple intervention such as a marking workshop prior to undertaking an assessed task can significantly increase student understanding of the assessment criteria and improve their performance on the task.
- The Academic Consultant Officer (ACO) system which the ASKe team is further developing.
- In addition to researching effective ways of encouraging and promoting academic integrity.
- The Peer Assistant Learning (PAL) programme, long used by the Business School, which ASKe has extended across the School. Support is also offered to help at least three other Schools plus the partner institutions.
- The Academic Consultant Officer (ACO) system which the ASKe team is further developing.
- In addition to researching effective ways of encouraging and promoting academic integrity.
- The Peer Assistant Learning (PAL) programme, long used by the Business School, which ASKe has extended across the School. Support is also offered to help at least three other Schools plus the partner institutions.

**Strand 2: Pioneering evidence-based practice:**
- Appropriate Development projects will be funded, both within the Business School and across the whole University. Projects will assess and support ways to develop and enhance assessment practices.

**Strand 3: Cultivating a community of practice:**
- This ASKe team has developed a novel £2 million building on Oxford’s Wheatley Campus.
- This provides a physical environment to support student learning outside structured class time.
- In which staff and students can meet to develop a shared understanding of academic standards.
- It’s more than just a building. The ASKe team argue that only a true community of practice will ensure shared understanding, as ASKe (in conjunction with other parties at Brookes) is also developing the social environment necessary to realise this physical space.

---

1. **Pre-submission**: students mark 2 sample, similar assignments (good, average) using CRA sheet

2. **Attend 90 min workshop**: re-mark in groups; discussion & tutor feedback; review marks; get annotated versions of sample assignments

3. **Submit work + student self-assessment** on CRA sheet

---

Do you feel that your students are underperforming due to their poor understanding of your assessment standards?

Are you concerned that they don’t really understand your assessment criteria?

Have you ever experienced blank looks when students read your feedback comments on their work?

If so, why don’t you try our pre-assessment intervention?

It takes just 90 minutes of your time, and it works*...

*Business School students at Oxford Brookes University who completed the intervention showed significant improvements in performance, with improvements sustained at a similar level one year later (Rust et al., 2003).
Taylor (2008, 23) Strategies for assessment

http://ro.uow.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1059&context=jutlp

Assessments for development
- Low weight, high marking
- Draft essay
- Reading log
- Notes on literature review
- Components of portfolio

Assessments for transition
- Low weight, low marking
- Reflective activity
- Study Plan
- Contract

Assessments for achievement
- High weight, low marking
- Examination
- Final report / essay
- Portfolio

Weeks from beginning of semester

Self assessment (formative or partially summative) – no or minimal marking time
Helping students to make use of feedback

**ASKe (Assessment Standards Knowledge exchange)** is a Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) based in the Business School at Oxford Brookes University. It was set up in summer 2005 with a £4.5 million award from HEFCE in recognition of good practice based on pedagogic research into aspects of assessment.

The work of ASKe has been organised into three strands of activity:

**Strand 1: Replicating proven practice through:**
- A pre-assessment intervention which the ASKe team has shown to work. A simple intervention such as a marking workshop prior to undertaking an assessed task can significantly increase students’ understanding of the assessment criteria and improve their performance on the task.
- ASKe has supported the development of this kind of intervention on all Business School programmes, as well as in three other Schools (Built Environment, Health and Social Care, and Westminster Institute of Education). This same support is available for the remaining four Schools plus the partner Institutions.
- The Academic Contract Officer (ACO) system which the ASKe team is further developing. In addition to researching effective ways of encouraging and promoting academic integrity.
- The Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) programme, long used by the Business School, which ASKe has extended across the School. Support is also offered to help at least three other Schools introduce PAL.

**Strand 2: Promoting evidence-based, focused practice:**
- Appropriate development projects will be funded, both within the Business School and across the whole University. Projects will seek out and support ways to develop and enhance assessment practices.

**Strand 3: Cultivating a community of practice**
- The ASKe team has developed a new £12 million building on the Oxford Wheatley Campus.

To find out more about ASKe’s work, please contact:

**Assessment Standards Knowledge exchange**
Oxford Brookes University, Business School
Wheatley Campus, Wheatley, Oxford, OX33 1HX
Tel: +44 (0)1865 485630 Email: ask@brookes.ac.uk
www.business.brookes.ac.uk/aske.html

1. **Prepare students to receive feedback** (eg align staff & student expectations to agree purpose)
2. **Reduce emphasis on written feedback** – supplement with dialogue
3. **Provide timely feedback** (eg generic feedback ASAP)

http://www.brookes.ac.uk/aske/documents/Make%20FeedbackWork.pdf
The Student Success Program
Partnerships to Monitor Student Engagement

• An ‘organisational (infra)structure’ consisting of people, protocols & processes, information, and institution-wide partnerships.

• Four campaigns
  – Follow up of non-acceptances of offer
  – Welcome calls – cohort & discipline
  – In-curriculum monitoring
  – Unsatisfactory academic performance processes

Nelson, Duncan, Marrington & Clarke, 2009 [http://eprints.qut.edu.au/28331/]
A QUT professional & faculty partnership

Student Success Project Overview

1. Identify target subjects and relevant at-risk indicators
2. Collect descriptive and academic performance data
3. Create call / contact lists of at-risk students
4. Contact students on list by phone (email back-up)
5. Possible ‘warm hand-off’ or referral to existing services
6. Email all students attempted to contact with plan
7. Follow up after 2 weeks
8. Evaluate outcomes: student persistence & success

Over 2008-2009: >11000 FY students monitored;
2543 determined at-risk; 2400 contacted/supported
“At-risk” Indicators – Examples

**Descriptive**
- Member of a known at-risk cohort
- Failure or ‘at-risk’ in previous semester
- Did not attend faculty orientation event
- Low entry score
- Repeating unit

**Academic Performance**
- Non-participation in course (tutorials)
- Not participating in teamwork activities
- Not submitting / failure of 1st early course assessment
- Non-submission or failure of subsequent assessments
- On-line quizzes & results
Student Success Program (SSP)

Commencing Student Information

Descriptive Information

Target cohort details

"Outreach"

Academic Activity

Indicators of student academic performance

SSP Advisors

General & Discipline Advice

"Warm Hand-Off"

SSP Team Leaders

Weekly "students at risk" reports

Contact Information

Limited information

Specialist Support
- FYE Consultant
  - Life Support
  - Academic Skills Advisors

- Learning Support

Support Services
QUT Specialist Service Providers:
- Counselling, Disability, Equity
- Careers and Employment
- International Students Services

Skills Development Workshops
- Following early diagnostics

QUT Learning Support:
- Kick Start/Study Smart,
- Library Help Desks,
- Scheduled Workshops,
- Academic Skills Advisors

Faculty Learning Support:
- School / Discipline Support,
- Unit specific support,
- FY/Academic Advisors
- Peer Learning Advisors, Duty Tutors, SI schemes,

QUT Student Guild

Limited information
## SSP Outcomes: persistence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FACULTY</th>
<th>PERSISTENCE %</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;At-Risk&quot; Contacted</td>
<td>&quot;At-Risk&quot; Not Contacted</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sem 1 2009</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty 1</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty 2</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>65</td>
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</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Faculty 7</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>90</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Evidence – Impact on Effectiveness

**Longer Term Effect**: SSP interventions have had a positive and sustained influence on the progression of “at-risk” students who were contacted and provided with academic, personal and social support.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ENROLMENT STATUS AT END OF 1/09</th>
<th>AT RISK CATEGORY AT END OF 1/08</th>
<th>STATISTICS</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AR-C</td>
<td>AR-NC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enrolled</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Enrolled</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2008-09 AUD$3.675M
Some ideas in closing …

Much of what we know and practice for improving the experience of first year students is immediately transferable to later years and contexts.

Real impact requires institutional level commitment and institution-wide faculty and professional partnerships.

Good practice in the classroom will enhance the learning experience of all students.
For You: The Principles & three checklists

Low risk, 'do-able' actions that would make a difference ...

First year curriculum principles: First year teacher

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First year curriculum principle</th>
<th>Actions that would make a difference ...</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Transition</td>
<td>- Use curriculum time to discuss expectations and responsibilities of learning in higher education and in the discipline (e.g., identify and explain key university processes and procedures — participation in lectures, attendance at tutorials, of- and off-campus, academic reading, research, student participation, activities, opportunities for independent learning etc.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Diversity</td>
<td>- Practice at-risk or equity group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. First-year curriculum</td>
<td>- Use curriculum time to discuss expectations and responsibilities of learning in higher education and in the discipline (e.g., identify and explain key university processes and procedures — participation in lectures, attendance at tutorials, of- and off-campus, academic reading, research, student participation, activities, opportunities for independent learning etc.).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

First year curriculum principles: Program coordinator checklist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First year curriculum principle</th>
<th>Checklist questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Transition</td>
<td>- Are the key learning outcomes, learning outcomes and learning outcomes clearly stated?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Diversity</td>
<td>- Are the key learning outcomes, learning outcomes and learning outcomes clearly stated?</td>
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First year curriculum principles: Briefing for institutional learning and teaching leaders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First year curriculum principle</th>
<th>What the principle entails</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Transition</td>
<td>- The first year curriculum should support all teaching and learning experiences that are necessary for students to achieve the learning outcomes stated in the curriculum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Diversity</td>
<td>- The first year curriculum should support all teaching and learning experiences that are necessary for students to achieve the learning outcomes stated in the curriculum.</td>
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