Investigating the relationship between student engagement and transition

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Abstract

Failure to establish meaningful and effective transition for undergraduates can lead to academic underachievement. Student engagement represents a key component of student success. This study sought to investigate the impact of a bespoke transition programme featuring a wide range of innovative, student-centred activities on enhancing students' engagement with educationally effective practices through examining student relations with others, learning and the discipline. For the study 104 undergraduates on a Sport Development course at a British university undertook a five-week transition programme. Data were collected via weekly questionnaires and focus groups at the end of weeks 1, 3 and 5. The investigation revealed that transition programmes require a high-intensity, novel and varied timetable supported by a student-centred staff team. Effective transition programmes can enhance students' engagement with educationally effective practices. Future research should investigate the longer-term impact of such programmes.

The disconfirmation of induction and transition

Failure to establish meaningful and effective transition for undergraduates can lead to academic underachievement (Kuh et al., 2005; Yorke and Thomas, 2003). The importance of aiding students' transition into higher education is reinforced by appreciating that undergraduates are likely to arrive with learning strategies suitable to school and college life, which are less effective in university environments featuring large class sizes and less easy access to staff (Cook and Leckey, 1999). Yorke and Thomas (2003) label this process 'demystifying', whilst Cook and Leckey (1999: 157) consider transition to be the 'greatest hurdle' in higher education. The literature (Longden, 2006; Yorke and Thomas, 2003) suggests research should also identify students' social and personal journeys as well as academic transitions into higher education. There is extensive literature in the area of student engagement, and the context here is linked to the students' transition into their higher-level studies. Engagement is defined here as the extent to which students are contributing to activities such as 'active learning, involvement in enriching educational activities, seeking guidance from staff or working collaboratively with other students' (Coates, 2005: 26). Therefore, student engagement represents a key component of student success (Kuh et al., 2006) which an effective transition experience helps to construct and develop. Chickering and Gamson (1987) offered seven engagement indicators; the three pertinent to this article are encouraging cooperation between students, encouraging active learning and encouraging contact between students and staff. Attempts to classify these issues into discrete dimensions have elicited numerous frameworks; three relational areas are now discussed in turn.

Relationships with others

Pike et al. (2008) suggest that fostering first-year students' engagement with their peers and the staff can be beneficial to students' success, and should therefore be intentionally designed into student experiences. Peer and social support mechanisms emerge strongly as key determinants of

student success (Thomas, 2002; Young et al., 2007). Allowing students to spend more time in smaller groups encourages a greater sense of belonging and solidarity, aiding student engagement. Etter et al. (2001) support this premise, highlighting peer-group tutoring as a valuable instrument in the integration process. Johnson (2003) reported that smaller groups within larger cohorts exhibited greater cohesion, confidence and assimilation into the institution. Students experience a sense of identity and belonging in an effective group that perhaps is not offered elsewhere (Jacques, 2000). Despite the increasing economic pressures to operate with large undergraduate cohorts (Longden, 2006), the literature supports resisting such strategies, highlighting that students expect smaller group sizes before entering higher education, and their initial perceptions and experiences are undeniably important (Cook and Leckey, 1999).

Personal tutors have a key role to play in facilitating this integration. Billing (1997) suggests that having an acknowledged, friendly point of contact within the institution, and, more importantly, the course, is vital for students to become embedded into the programme of study. Furthermore, staff availability (Longden, 2006) and quality day-to-day interactions (McInnis and James, 1995) may be potential mechanisms to avoid academic underachievement. Kuh et al. (2006) suggest positive interactions with staff may foster extremely profound, even life-altering experiences. Despite the importance of strong peer, staff and social networks discussed above, the personal tutor system has not flourished, and is sometimes referred to as tokenism (Yorke and Thomas, 2003). There is some evidence suggesting improvement (HEQC 1994, cited in Billing, 1997), although more current and rigorous investigation is required. Furthermore, despite the growing body of knowledge surrounding effective transition into higher education, the vast majority of work features investigations of very short-term strategies (usually one or two weeks), or a rather piecemeal approach constructed around the academic modular structure. The lack of bespoke, transition-focused programmes is starkly apparent.

Relationship with self and learning

All students beginning university are in a stage of transition; students will hold certain preconceptions, which may affect their involvement in educationally effective practices (McInnis and James, 1995). These preconceptions may form as a result of parental attitudes or understanding of university information gleaned from discovery days, comments or experiences from peers or other family members. However, student preconceptions are often ill-founded, leading to anticipated learning journeys based on school experience which often fail to provide the student with firm understanding of key concepts or appropriate, independent study skills (Cook and Leckey, 1999). The feelings associated with transition include excitement, anxiety and confusion (Brookes, 2003). This seminal initial stage of the first few weeks at university can have a substantial effect on students' eventual socialization into university culture and therefore their engagement with educationally effective practices. There is therefore a need for clear and accessible information about the institution's values, goals and programmes (Berger, 2002; McInnis and James, 1995; Yorke, 1999) if students are to stay committed to the university and the programme of study, although the extent to which students should be expected to conform to institutional norms and values is a matter of contention (Kuh et al., 2006). The debate about departure and assimilation is influenced by students' perceptions of how well cultural attributes are valued and accommodated, in addition to how differences between undergraduates' cultures of origin and immersion are bridged (Zepke and Leach, 2005).

Zepke and Leach (2005) argue that an individual's sense of belonging improves when students are provided with personal tutor contact and there is a focus on the student's holistic wellbeing. Tierney (2000) cautions that, in order for student integration to be successful, higher education must reflect on institutional processes and culture. Tierney (2000) suggests that higher-education institutions are often inflexible in adapting to students, attempting to 'mould' them into the university's cultural

norms, often resulting in a confusion or loss of self-identity. However, Porter (2006) argues that student engagement is affected by the human, social and cultural capital that students bring to their place of study as well as their experiences whilst there. Student learning needs must be accommodated in orientation programmes, in relation not only to academic adjustment, but to the emotional and personal learning that is expected to take place. Longden (2006) suggests that this might be particularly relevant for students who do not have a strong academic profile, where learning autonomy is unlikely to have been developed before entry into higher education.

Cook and Leckey's (1999) findings suggest that student perceptions of academic competence may diminish from entry to the end of the first semester, once an aspect of relative comparison to peers and university demands has been made. Nevertheless, students are often challenged by not feeling ready for the academic requirements of university. As part of a progressive approach, student individual learning needs should be addressed (Zepke and Leach, 2005). Involvement in educationally effective practices such as reflection, formative assessment (Longden, 2006), group working skills (Yorke and Thomas, 2003) and different learning styles should be offered to aid transition. These not only provide opportunity for self-capacity building and collaborative learning but, as Yorke (2001: 122) suggests, 'are key components of the capable person'. Therefore, all these should be embedded into the curriculum to provide opportunities for students to develop. Longden (2006) uses Tinto's (1993) non-completion model to structure analysis and interpretation of pre-course, academic and social engagement with, and around, the university. 'The challenge is to develop ways in which an individual's identity is affirmed, honoured, and incorporated into the organisation's culture' (Tierney, 2000: 219). Yorke and Thomas (2003) consider that the belief that the institution will enable the accomplishment of personal goals will result in enhanced perceptions of student belonging and, subsequently, academic success.

Whilst this pedagogic literature has yielded considerable understanding of good practice, the literature is commonly focused on student competence or retention (Yorke and Thomas, 2003; Zepke and Leach, 2005). Furthermore, Cook and Leckey (1999) suggest that students commence study with high confidence in some personal skills, such as communication and working with others, but for many 'learning to learn' is an alien topic. A 'gap' or 'gulf' is often experienced when aspirations and expectations of university are compromised by the students' actual experience in the first few weeks of study (Kuh et al., 2006; McInnis and James, 1995). Consequently, investigation is required into transition programmes which are focused on reducing or eliminating this gap, whilst providing opportunities for students to learn how to learn and to share cultural identifiers with those of the institution through engagement with educationally effective practices.

Relationship with the discipline

Billing (1997) maintains that a student-centred, gradual approach to induction should reflect the widening diversity of students' needs, emphasizing the importance of articulating personal roles and responsibilities to students, avoiding information overload and connecting the induction activities to programme content and ethos. Stephenson and Yorke (1998) suggest that the early weeks of university courses should focus on providing a combination of subject content and personal development activities such as learning styles or study skills. This sea change as an approach to the curriculum is echoed by Parker (2002), who suggests a more radical rethinking of the whole approach to teaching and learning in higher education. Parker is concerned with making a distinction between:

> A 'subject', which is taught and assessed in a variety of ways, and a 'discipline', which is practised and engaged with. Phrases like 'passive, taught, learned, delivered' are used when citing subjects but disciplines are referred to as 'engaging, transforming, informing'. (2002: 374)

Parker's (2002) research articulates students' often reported disillusionment with undergraduate courses, whilst the engagement literature (Umbach and Wawrzynski, 2005) reports that students talk about higher levels of academic challenge where the staff indicate that they challenge their students. When coupled with Longden's (2006) findings relating to 'academic boredom' caused by low contact hours and an inability to make good academic use of free time (Aldridge and DeLucia, 1989), Parker's (2002) assertions take on added significance and demand an institutional response to create engaging, student-focused, high-contact transition programmes. Longden (2006) highlights the need for institutions to understand the impact of non-academic issues and problems on subject-based engagement. The increasing need for undergraduates to commit to part-time employment appears to be contributing to increasing non-attendance at lectures and seminars (Longden, 2006; McCarthy and Kuh, 2006).

The concept of academic boredom is under-represented in the literature. So far, no investigation has targeted this concept as a means of enhancing student engagement with educationally effective practices. Furthermore, the majority of studies lack the ability to generalize connections between perceptions of academic boredom and academic engagement based on interventions featuring student-focused, high-contact transition programmes.

The literature on transition and induction has developed substantially since the early 1990s. Laing et al. (2005) highlight recent pedagogical discourse suggesting that institutions should enhance current induction and transition processes, creating greater cultural understanding of higher education. Umbach and Wawrzynski (2005) report that the behaviour and attitude of the institution and its members affect students profoundly and suggest that this may be the single most important role in student learning. Cook and Leckey (1999: 159) even suggest that 'no mission is more vital to the success of higher education than ensuring rapid transition of these new students to a university culture'. Whilst institutional, staff and student perspectives relating to this process are undeniably crucial, the student perspective is particularly under-represented within academic discourse. Brookes (2003: 17) proposes that incorporating student views on 'their broader educational experiences' is a vital aspect of building and facilitating a quality learning journey. McInnis and James (1995) argue that institutions are challenged to acknowledge and address issues related to transition and retention, whereas students are presented with the challenge of assimilating and understanding a new environment that is 'university'.

This study seeks to address the inherent gaps within the literature discussed above, investigating the relationship between bespoke transition programmes and the university-based peer and social networks of undergraduates. Furthermore, this investigation will examine whether such programmes, when suitably student-focused, are capable of closing the gap that some undergraduates suffer between aspiration and experiential perception. This research will also investigate how such programmes relate to the concepts of academic boredom and student engagement with educationally effective practices.

Methods

All 104 September-entry undergraduates onto a Sport Development course at Liverpool John Moores University, in the north-west of England, UK, undertook a five-week transition programme. The students were drawn from a range of educational backgrounds, predominantly from the state sector. The cohort comprised 42 females and 62 males, none of whom were international students. Students were randomly assigned a group tutor (approximately 10–11 students per member of staff) and to one of three colour groups. These colour groups enabled the facilitation of practical sessions and comprised approximately 35 students each.

The transition programme comprised five weeks of intensive activities. The first week focused on the students' personal beliefs and identity pertaining to the discipline, whilst the remaining four embraced core elements of the programme. Each week featured three or four days of intense student contact, leaving Wednesdays free for university sport. The programme included innovative learning environments (ILEs) (for example, cartooning, smoothie making, Google mapping), movies, non-traditional physical activities (for example, free running, Speedminton and Rock-it-ball), lectures, website construction, mini research projects, guest speakers, debates and daily reading tasks. Additionally, students spent on average four sessions each week in personal tutor group seminars.

Data were collected through student focus groups and questionnaires, reflecting a blended approach, although with an interpretivist foundation. Review questionnaires were completed each week by all students attending a Friday afternoon summary session, and featured Likert scale items relating to student perceptions of the sessions during that week. Students were asked to rate the overall quality, facilitator competence, enjoyment and purpose of each element of that week's programme. Students were also asked to rate the strength of belonging to tutor, practical and year groups. Questionnaires were administered in the most convenient tutor group meeting towards the end of each week and were completed within the session. Open questions at the end of each review questionnaire enabled students to articulate feelings about any particular session or the overall experience to that point.

Focus groups were conducted with two groups of students at the end of the first, third and fifth weeks. Focus group question templates were constructed by the research team and were based upon the core themes derived from the investigation's research questions: peer and social networks; discipline-based study skills and learning to learn; academic boredom and engagement. Focus groups comprised between 6 and 10 students and lasted 20–40 minutes, with the resulting discussion transcribed verbatim, uploaded to NVivo and thematically analysed. The focus groups were facilitated and transcribed by the two members of the research team external to the core programme staff. Data were analysed thematically. The questionnaire data were analysed using SPSS for Windows version 14, calculating percentage responses in each category of the review questionnaires. Correlations and chi square measures of association between certain elements of the questionnaires were calculated and are detailed in the following section.

Results

Following the thematic analysis detailed above, core elements of engagement were constructed as detailed in Table 1.

Introspective and discipline-based engagement with scholarship

Evaluation of enjoyment across the activities revealed a fairly positive overall perspective of the transition programme. The majority of the students either strongly agreed or agreed with statements related to enjoying individual sessions. By pooling these findings, Table 2 reveals the mean percentages of the overall picture, alongside activities categorized as practical, lectures or ILEs.

Table 2 reveals theory lectures to be the activities students enjoyed most (pooled mean of 'agree' and 'strongly agree' = 63.3%), followed by practicals (58.0%) and ILEs (48.2%). Examining the total mean, just 11.53% of students disagreed or strongly disagreed with statements relating to enjoyment of sessions. When asked to articulate the most enjoyable sessions across the five weeks, the majority of students highlighted the practicals and movies.

Thematic analysis of the qualitative data reveals three components which would appear to directly impact on the enjoyment of sessions: purpose, variety and novelty. A number of students linked statements of enjoyment with understanding why sessions were conducted: 'I like the fact that we have been watching the films a lot, they have a purpose and we have been learning though watching them' (focus group, week 3).

The relationship between purpose and enjoyment of the transition activities was calculated via Spearman's rank correlation, following preliminary analysis which demonstrated a violation of the assumption of normality. The purpose and enjoyment scores of all the various activities were analysed together. There was a strong, positive correlation between the two variables ($r_s = 0.62$, $n = 1,232$, $p < 0.001$) indicating that high levels of enjoyment are associated with understanding the purpose of activities. When asked what aspects of the transition programme had been particularly enjoyable, students cited both variety and novelty of activities: 'I like the fact we have done lots of unusual sports like Rock-it-ball . . . things that we have not tried before, it was interesting and I enjoyed it' (focus group, week 3). 'A variety of activities meant that there was always something different to do' (questionnaire, week 5). All students reported feeling that they had been involved in a variety of innovative experiences during transition and they did not suggest that such activities had violated expectations of academic life. The intensity of the transition programme did appear to contravene student expectations of the early weeks of university; this seemed not to have a negative impact on the student experience:

> I was not expecting to do so much work in the first week but maybe that's a good thing, I needed the extra push . . . I thought it was going to be sitting down, doing all the admin stuff and getting lectured on what they expect from us all the time. They have done it through lots of little practicals . . . made it clear you get out what you put in. (Focus group, week 1)

Variety and novel activities were also cited by students in relation to enabling and facilitating learning:

> Some of my friends at other [universities] have gone straight into three hour lectures and dread going to uni . . . they ask me what I have been doing; 'Oh, I did Rock-it-ball today and some other sports' and they say 'are you just messing around?'; some of them did not get an induction or only a day and we get six weeks of it. It is very enjoyable. Not messing around, practical learning. We have learnt more through the practicals and the different activities we have been doing than what we would just being sat in a lecture hall making notes. It is letting us realise that we do know the answers to some of the questions we just need to broaden our knowledge. (Focus group, week 3)

Furthermore, students commonly cited this broadening of understanding in relation to challenging preconceptions. Learning the differences between certain terms which students have either not previously considered or thought synonymous is widely evident within the qualitative data.

Table 3 illustrates the results, by session, for the extent to which students' preconceptions were challenged. There was no association ($c2 = 13.39$, $p = 0.20$) between the various types of session and the ability to aid diversification or broadening of thinking. All types of sessions appear to have benefited these aspects to a similar extent.

However, students did differentiate between the types of session in relation to stimulating interest. The overwhelming majority of respondents (79.5%) reported practical activities to have greatly stimulated interest. There is little to distinguish the results for the other sessions, except that a smaller percentage of respondents (19.2%) cited theory lectures as having greatly stimulated interest than any of the other categories, the majority (71.8%) opting instead for 'somewhat' stimulated.

Inter-relational engagement

Staff. Overall, the findings show that the students connected with the staff from week 1, and the major categories cited by students were enthusiasm, 'We are going to be close with our tutors, [they] seem enthusiastic and help to get you motivated' (focus group, week 1), and time commitment, 'they all seem like they are here for us' (focus group, week 1). This perception continued through the first few weeks. However, by week 3, students noticed that staff contact was not equal among members of the programme team: 'There [are] obviously some that you get on with more, like your tutor that you see more. But people like your year tutor you don't get to see too much' (focus group, week 3). At the end of the transition period, the students commented on staff helpfulness, 92.3% rating helpfulness as good or very good at week 5. Students also highlighted the importance of availability: 55.1% of the sample felt a sense or a strong sense of connection with staff. Comments included: 'I think the staff have done a brilliant job, whilst being very entertaining and helpful' (focus group, week 5); 'The staff have helped you when you needed help' (focus group, week 5); 'I feel we have been well looked after by our tutor' (focus group, week 5).

Peers. Over the five weeks, students rated their sense of belonging to various groups: Table 5 reveals that the majority quickly had a sense of belonging to their tutor group. This developed for this first three weeks, before a plateau during week 4 and then improving again by the end of the transition programme.

Comments from the students included: 'I like that they put us in our tutor groups on the first day so we have started to get to know people as well – which has been a key thing for me, getting to know everyone first week'; 'I do know everyone from my group' (focus group, week 1). A small percentage were consistently less positive about the tutor group; this appears to be related to the quality of the relationship with the member of staff who was running the group, rather than relationships with peers in the group, and complements findings reported in the staff section above. One individual commented that they didn't value 'tutor group meetings because I feel I don't know my tutor' (questionnaire, week 5). One issue that did come to light was some inconsistency between staff in relation to availability: 'It would be better if my tutor was there more often'; 'rarely see them' (questionnaire, week 5).

The remainder of the transition period programme was either delivered as a whole year group or in the three colour groups. Findings show that the relationship with the colour group (Table 6) was strong, but not as strong as with tutor group. This connection seems to come mainly from engaging in activities with others: 'Thoroughly enjoyed the first few weeks, the activities have helped me settle in and make friends quickly and easily' (questionnaire, week 3). The relationship with the year group also showed some sense of belonging but this was not as strong as with the colour group. One comment at the end of week 5 echoes this: 'would be nice to get to see more people in different groups' (questionnaire, week 5). However, the majority of the comments show that the students liked being split up into the different group sizes: 'I think it is good that they do colour groups and tutor groups so that you are meeting lots of different people'; 'It's good how they split the year group into different colour groups, and split the colour groups and [you] get to know people that are not in your form. It helps you to build new relationships' (questionnaire, week 3).

Discussion

Introspective and discipline-based engagement with scholarship

Crucial to the understanding of educationally effective practices and academic boredom is the investigation of activities from which students derive enjoyment and engage with active learning

(Chickering and Gamson, 1987). The results of the study reported in this article, concerning the importance of purpose, variety and novelty, extend the understanding of this topic that can be currently derived from the literature. Failing to see the purpose in subject-based sessions has not been commonly reported in the transition or retention literature, but is more commonly apparent within certain aspects of study skills such as the teaching of statistics (Lane et al., 2004). The relatively favourable findings of the current study in relation to all categories of learning environment also extend existing research on transition programmes. These findings suggest that failure to understand the purpose of sessions could impact on student learning and increase the likelihood of the onset of academic boredom, complementing and extending Longden's (2006) results on this phenomenon. This also appears true for personal learning experiences: 'I'm confused about 50% of the tasks, why we are doing it, specifically the shield for the E-portfolio' (focus group, week 3). The importance of understanding the purpose of discipline-based and personal learning sessions can be considered as supplementing Yorke's (1999) findings highlighting the importance of unpacking institutional considerations of values and goals.

The findings of this investigation also suggest that, although a bespoke transition programme featuring high-intensity timetabling and volume of work may violate students' expectations of university life, such learning environments do not necessarily disconfirm McInnis and James' (1995) and Cook and Leckey's (1999) preconceptions of higher education. The positive reactions to timetabling intensity and workload outlined here suggest that it is undemanding aspects of university life which may disconfirm student expectations and lessen the likelihood of engagement with educationally effective practices. Although the students tended to focus on discipline-based learning, the concept of 'broadening' of knowledge was also evident in the form of study skills. Students embraced Parker's (2002) notion of similar discipline-based (as opposed to subject-based) focus of the transition programme by citing several elements of the personal learning sessions as the key aspects of the first few weeks. In particular, students cited goal setting, learning to learn and time management. Despite Cook and Leckey's (1999) assertion relating to the importance of facilitating 'learning to learn', these aspects have not previously been reported with such positivity from a student perspective.

Inter-relational engagement

The social integration of the students has been seen by many (Billing, 1997; Pascarella and Terenzini, 1991; Wilcox et al., 2005) to be crucial to effective transition and adopting new behaviours for success. The findings of this investigation suggest bespoke transition programmes enable the critical elements of constructing and developing staff–student relationships that are beneficial to aiding undergraduate learning journeys, as outlined by Yorke and Thomas (2003) and Longden (2006). Furthermore, these findings develop understanding of Chickering and Gamson's (1987) framework concerning not only cooperation between students, but also interaction with staff, particularly highlighting the importance of staff availability (Longden, 2006) and quality day-to-day interactions (McInnis et al., 1995). The data also reveal that students perceive individual differences in personal tutor commitment and enthusiasm and that such disparity may have a negative impact on student engagement, underlining the importance of unified programme teams and staff 'buy-in'. The importance of staff taking individual and collective responsibility to ensure a student-centred learning environment and facilitate effective transition is also evident, particularly in the immediacy of some statements showing a connection and closeness with the institution and discipline through the medium of the personal tutor.

The findings from this investigation also support the importance of small-group teaching to develop engagement with educationally effective practices (Etter et al., 2001; Jacques, 2000; Johnson, 2003; Longden, 2006). These findings extend the discussions of Yorke and Thomas (2003) and Longden

(2006) relating to belonging to, and engagement with life at, university from an academic and social perspective. In particular, the data reveal the importance of facilitating not only small-group networking and support in the early weeks of university life, but also the transition to larger learning environments whilst maintaining a high level of engagement and support.

Conclusions

This investigation has shown that intensive, bespoke transition programmes can facilitate and enhance student engagement with educationally effective practices. Furthermore, transition programmes should incorporate a wide range of traditional, novel and innovative activities with a strong emphasis on ensuring that the purpose is clearly understood by students. Programme teams should not plan transition programmes with a low volume of timetabled hours and directed study, which may violate students' expectations of university life. Transition programmes should be constructed around small-group working, facilitated by enthusiastic and student-centred staff, with carefully planned transition to larger-group working. Effective transition programmes can enhance cooperation between students and encourage commitment to active learning. It is imperative that personal tutors of first-year undergraduate students are committed to the process of transition, facilitating an enhanced sense of belonging.

Despite the insights of this investigation, the understanding of transition activities is still drawn from relatively short-term research. The potential of the issues discussed in this investigation to impact on students both in the short term and across the undergraduate programme requires much further consideration. Future research should seek to understand the impact of bespoke transition programmes on engagement, academic performance and attendance further into the academic process. Additionally, this investigation has highlighted the critical importance of highly motivated and dedicated personal tutors, inviting future research on the impact of such programmes on the staff team.

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Table 1: Core elements of engagement

Core theme	Major categories	Minor categories
Introspective and subject-based engagement with scholarship	Enjoyment	Purpose Variety/Novelty
	Subject knowledge	Challenging preconceptions Stimulating interest
	Self understanding	Study skills Learning to learn
Inter-relational engagement	Staff	Enthusiasm Time Commitment Helpfulness Availability
	Peers	Learning group size

Table 2: Mean frequency of respondents for enjoyment of session by category (%)

	Strongly Disagree N (%)	Disagree N (%)	Neutral N (%)	Agree N (%)	Strongly agree N (%)
Practicals	0.50 (0.8)	3.75 (7.5)	20.25 (33.7)	24.50 (41.6)	9.50 (16.4)
Theory lectures	2.53 (1.3)	5.90 (9.7)	13.50 (22.5)	21.54 (36.1)	16.00 (27.2)
Innovative learning environments	1.75 (3.4)	7.75 (11.9)	18.25 (33.8)	15.00 (28.0)	11.00 (20.2)
Total mean	1.59 (1.8)	5.80 (9.7)	17.30 (30.0)	20.35 (35.2)	12.16 (21.3)

Table 3: Frequencies (%) of students being made to 'think in a different way' by session category

	Not at all	Somewhat	Greatly
Movies	11 (14.1)	32 (41.0)	35 (44.9)
Practicals	2 (2.6)	35 (44.9)	41 (52.6)
Theory lectures	4 (5.1)	38 (48.7)	36 (46.2)
Tutor group meetings	6 (7.6)	42 (53.2)	30 (38.0)
Group study	9 (11.5)	41 (52.6)	28 (35.9)
Guest speakers	8 (10.3)	38 (48.7)	32 (41.0)

Table 4: Frequencies (%) of students citing stimulation of interest by session category

	Not at all	Somewhat	Greatly
Movies	8(10.3)	40(51.3)	30(38.5)
Practicals	2(2.6)	14(17.9)	62(79.5)
Theory lectures	7(9.0)	56(71.8)	15(19.2)
Tutor group meetings	8(10.3)	42(53.8)	28(35.9)
Group study	9(11.5)	45(57.7)	24(30.8)
Guest speakers	10(12.8)	39(50.0)	29(37.2)

Table 5: Frequencies (%) of students reporting level of tutor group belonging

	Not at all	Starting to feel like I belong	I have a sense of belonging	I have a strong sense of belonging
Week 1	3(5.9)	3 (5.9)	23 (45.1)	25 (49.0)
Week 2	0.(0.0)	2(3.5)	26 (45.6)	29 (50.9)
Week 3	0(0.0)	4(6.3)	17 (26.6)	43 (67.2)
Week 4	0(0.0)	4(7.7)	13 (25.0)	35 (67.3)
Week 5	0(0.0)	6 (7.7)	18 (23.1)	54 (69.2)

Table 6: Frequencies (%) reporting level of colour group belonging

	Not at all	Starting to feel like I belong	I have a sense of belonging	I have a strong sense of belonging
Week 1	1 (2.0)	18 (35.3)	26 (51.0)	6 (11.8)
Week 2	0 (0.0)	8 (14.0)	40 (70.2)	9 (15.8)
Week 3	1 (1.6)	9 (14.1)	34 (53.1)	20 (31.3)
Week 4	0 (0.0)	6 (11.3)	31 (58.5)	16 (30.2)
Week 5	2 (2.6)	15 (19.2)	45 (57.7)	16 (20.5)

Table 7: Frequencies (%) reporting level of year group belonging

	Not at all	Starting to feel like I belong	I have a sense of belonging	I have a strong sense of belonging
Week 1	4 (7.8)	18 (35.3)	26 (51.0)	3 (5.9)
Week 2	2 (3.5)	16 (28.1)	35 (61.4)	4 (7.0)
Week 3	4 (6.3)	13 (20.3)	39 (60.9)	8 (12.5)
Week 4	1 (1.9)	14 (26.9)	30 (57.7)	7 (13.5)
Week 5	1 (1.3)	28 (35.9)	39 (50.0)	10 (12.8)