Supporting student transitions

To support recruitment, retention, progression and attainment of students

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Cardiff Metropolitan University
Wales
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My study journey

£2500 bank loan debt that took 7 years to pay off

Impacted on pension contributions

Last year to get a grant and fees paid- 1989

Had to work and study as my partner was unable to work due to an injury

Went to a Polytechnic Last year to graduate with a CNNA degree

No help or support from parents

Working class female student

First generation Parents had no educational aspirations for me or my brother

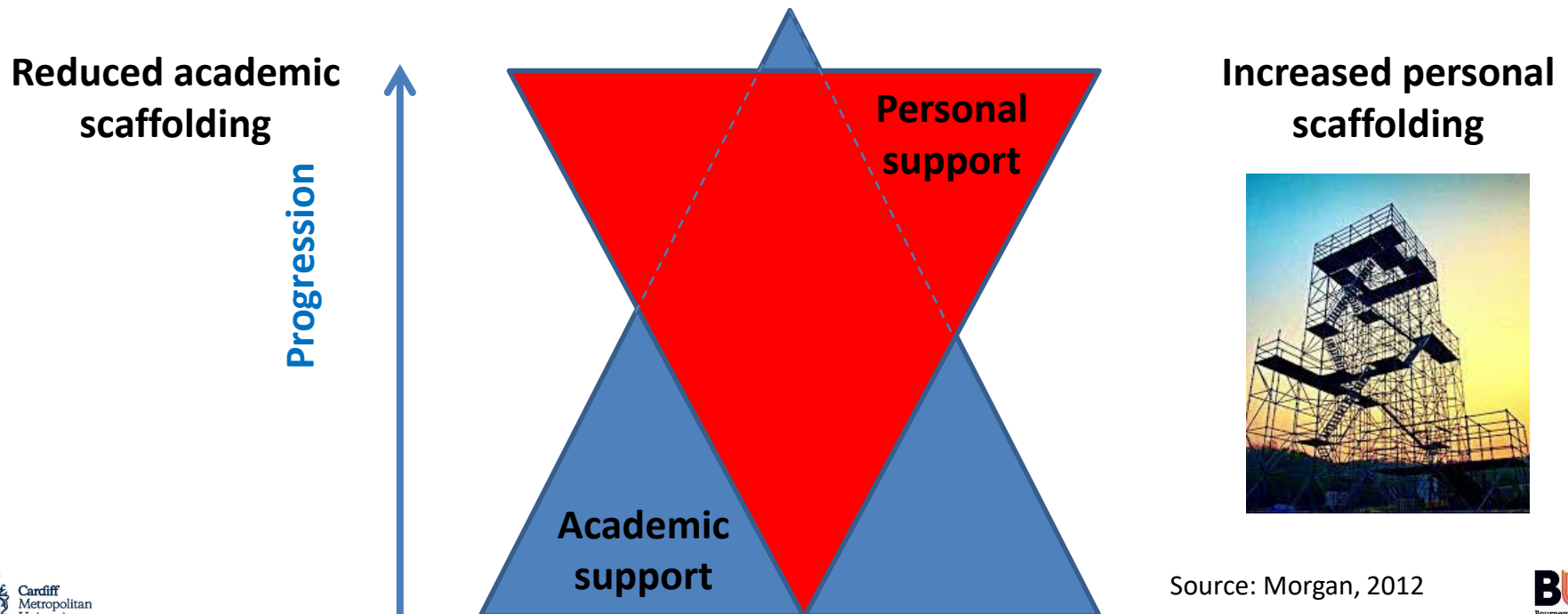**A levels** I did badly C, D, E

My brother inspired me to go because he made it!

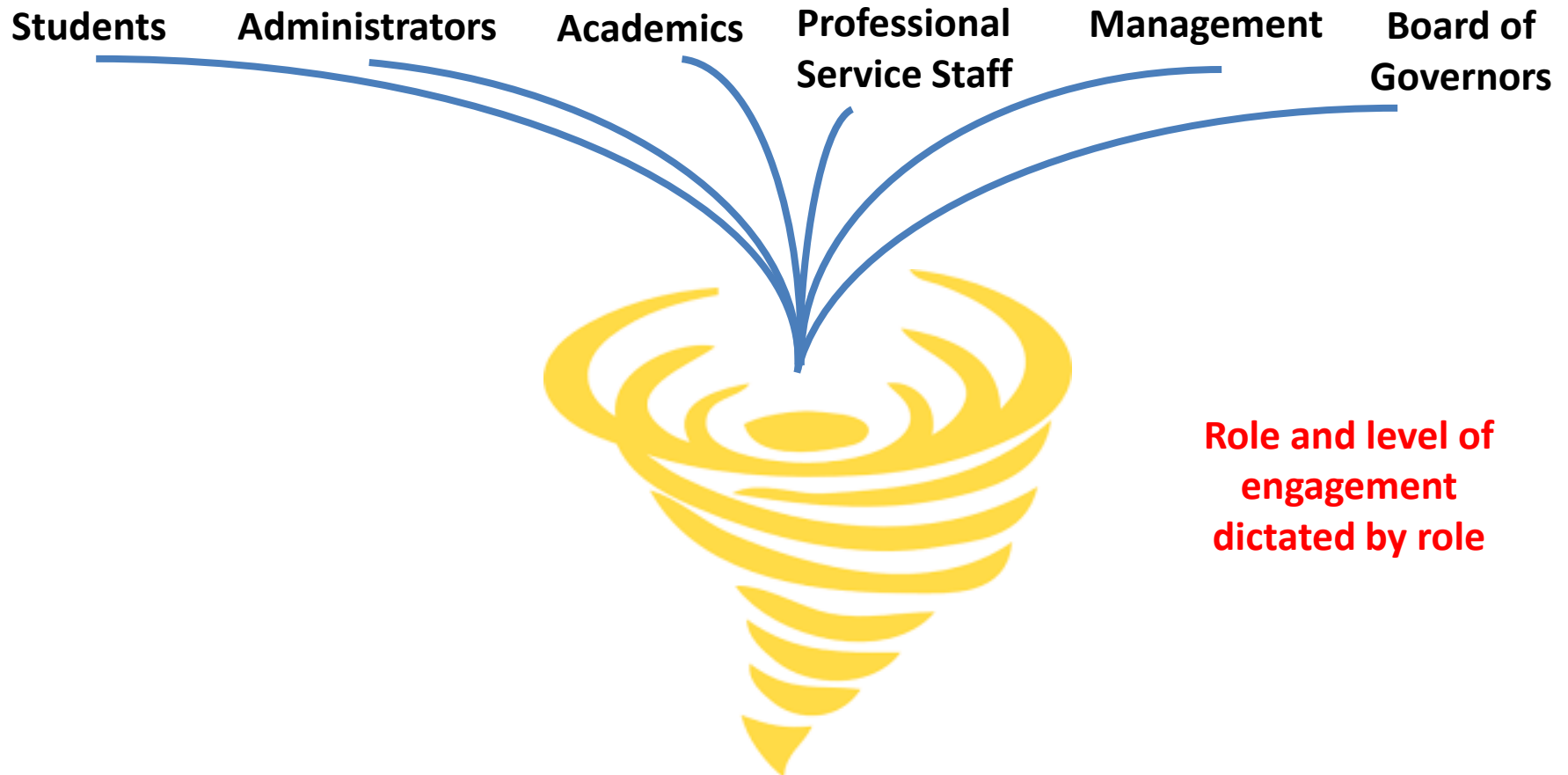**Worked for 4 years before starting my studies**

Mature student 1 of 5 on my course in a cohort of 80

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What I saw..........

- Concentration on 'first 2 weeks' then later 'first year' on the first year of a traditional degree - in practice and literature
- Other years ignored
- Them and us- administrative vs academic
- Silo practices between faculties and the centre
- Increased student diversity but limited awareness of different learning and support requirements

Reduced academic scaffolding

Progression

Personal support

Academic support

Increased personal scaffolding

Source: Morgan, 2012

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What I realised..........

Students   Administrators   Academics   Professional Service Staff   Management   Board of Governors

Role and level of engagement dictated by role

All servants of the academic imperative

Recruitment, retention, progression and attainment of students via the delivery of a high quality student experience in, through and out of the study journey

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Aims and objectives

- Identify the different transitions in the student lifecycle

- Look at how supporting the different student transitions can improve retention rates, student progression and the student experience

- Look at how to plan and develop activities around a diverse student population.

Setting the scene

Higher Educational Benefits

'A diverse student population is essential to vibrant intellectual enquiry and a resilient knowledge economy. It encourages a higher education offer that is socially and culturally diverse, and more representative of local communities', and, *'it is vital in creating a fairer society, securing improvements in social mobility and supporting economic growth'* (HEFCE, 2011:6).

Social

- Increases social mobility (Watson,2005; Bourdieu, 1977,1984)
- Increases community engagement (IHEP,2005)
- Reduction in crime amongst graduates (Stephen, 2004)
- Lower debt and health issues (Baum et al, 2004; OECD, 2010)
- Greater social tolerance (Lloyd, 2010)

Economic

- Often largest local employer
- Generate £45b output a year
- Largest part of the economy (Universities UK,2007)
- Higher income over lifetime (Universities UK,2007)
- Unemployment lower amongst graduates (Bynner et al, 2003; Baum et al, 2010)

Political

- Graduates more engaged in politics and vote in elections (Bynner et al, 2003; Baum et al, 2010)

Contributory reasons for UG and PG growth.

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Source:Morgan, 2013

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HE Disadvantages for consideration

Social

- Over qualified
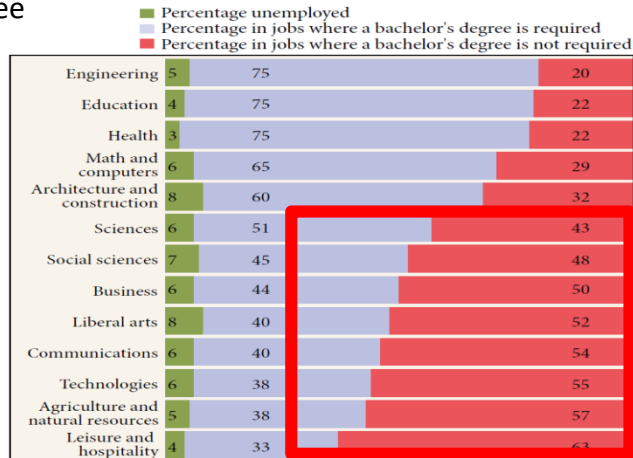
(Coldwell W., 2013 cited by Lister, 2014)

- Negative intergenerational mobility

(Watson, 2005; Kamenetz, 2006)

- Boomerang Kid-ult generation

- Under-employment

U.S. Employment Outcomes for Recent Graduates 2009-2011: By Degree

(Abel et al, 2014 cited by Lister, 2014)

"My name is Benjamin Serra, I have two bachelor's degrees and a master's degree and I clean toilets. No, it is not a joke. I thought that I deserved something better after so much effort in my academic life. It seems that I was wrong." 2nd October 2013 ReTweeted 32,000 times – taken up by World's Press.

Political

- Disengagement

Economic

- Job displacement
  - IT reduces educational need
  - Graduates performing non-graduate jobs
  - Postgraduates performing graduate jobs

- High levels of study debt (fees and cost of living) impact on:
  - Home ownership
  - Pension investment
  - Private healthcare
  - Disposable income to put back into the economy

- No future investment in lifelong learning

- End of parental cash cow generation.

Source: Morgan (2014)

Study debt for Welsh students

- Fees £9,000 at a Welsh institution
- Grants available up to £10,124
- Eligible for loan up to £10,250 a year towards living costs
- Loans for fees up to £9,250

Challenges of supporting our students

Diversity

- Academic qualifications, domiciled status, social class, students with disabilities, mature students, mode and type of study

- 2018 pivotal year- most 18 year olds born in 21st Century, most educators born in 20th Century- changes dynamics and interaction

Expectation

- A degree will provide employment skills lacking
- Provide better employment chances
- HE is no longer a choice but an expectation
- Promises and claims made that are inaccurate

> If the traditional student ever existed....it certainly doesn't now!

> **Expectation is the root of all heartache.**
> *William Shakespeare*

'A masters won't just help you to get a job after university – it will also help you to earn more money in the long term'.

The Telegraph

News

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PREMIUM

News

Graduate sues Anglia Ruskin University claiming she ended up with a 'mickey mouse' degree

'Since graduating ... it has been proven that the degree … does not play a role to help secure a rewarding job with prospects'.

She claims that the prospectus fraudulently claimed the business school was a 'renowned centre of excellence' and students would be 'well equipped' for jobs - despite it ranking poorly in four university guides between 2010-11.

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Challenges of managing expectations

Positive images in university prospectuses

Fun in study.......
Reality: *Common issues with conflict in the study group*

Happy flat mates.......
Reality: *Issues with living with new people- transfers common in first few weeks*

Be mindful that students need 'real' models not just 'role' models

Fun in free time...
Reality: *Students don't always get the time*

Land a dream career.......
Reality: *Disappointment that a degree may get a 'basic' job.*

Challenges of supporting our students

Diversity

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Expectation

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Complex student life which is not always obvious

Wheel chair user commutes over 25 miles

UK domiciled, Single parent English not 1st language

UG, Visiting, International

Veteran Mental health PT study eve

PGT International, transgender

One size fits all

- Part-time have to attend fulltime classes during the day
- Evening part-time/DL students do not have easy access to support services
- Students fit around the needs of the university, not the university fitting around the needs of students
- *And it can feel that when you try to make change..................................*

Staff won't go for it

It's not in the budget

It isn't going to happen

That's not our problem

It is not the way we do things around here

Now is not the right time..............

Driven by metrics

TEF

REF

KEF

NSS

PTES

DHLE

LEO.....................

The pressure on everyone is immense in this 'brave new world' of HE

High student expectations

Academic pressure to be a teacher, researcher, administrator

Declining resources

Reduced funding

*Increased administrative tasks*

We need to remember

- Students lives are complex as is student learning

- Student skills on entry have changed

- Student resilience and grit is different

- Reasons for going to university are changing
  - Not sure what I want to do
  - Parental expectations
  - A degree will get me a better job. I am not interested in the journey
  - I need a degree as a bare minimum
  - No longer for the love of studying and self development

- A student's reason for going to university and prior learning experiences (personal/formal) is likely to have a big impact on their expectation and experience

- Everyone regardless of fee level deserves a high quality student experience

- We want our students to be successful!

- We need to support our student in, through and out of the student lifecycle.

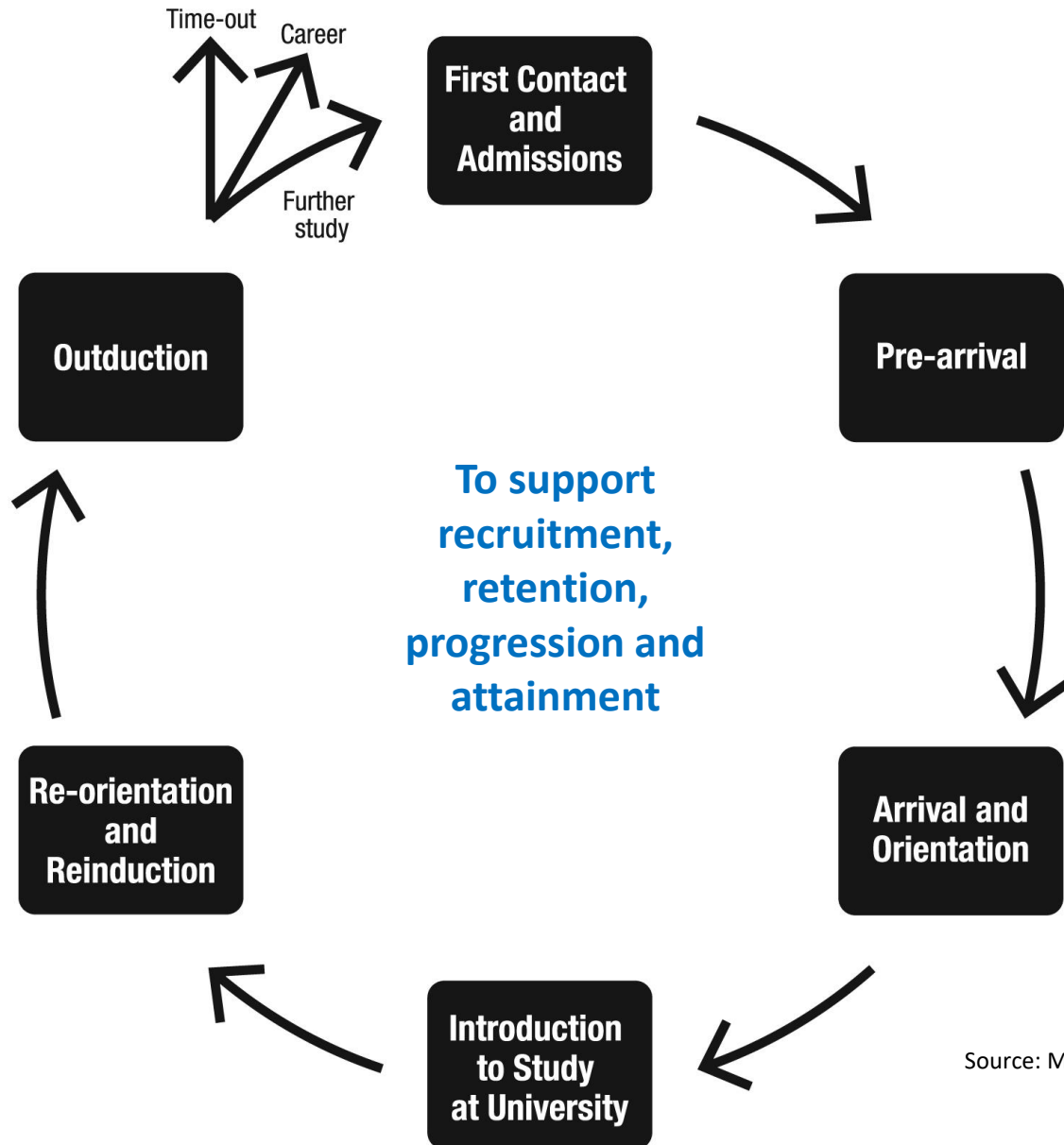# Supporting student transitions
Developing a transitions model
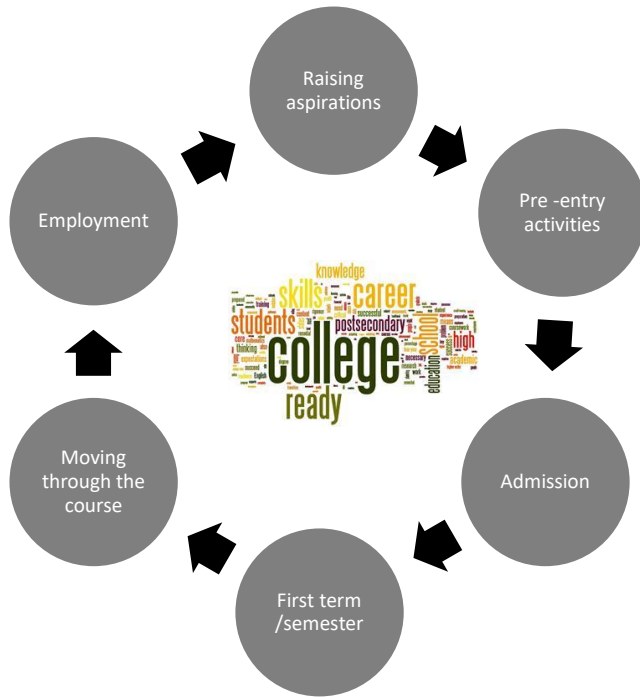
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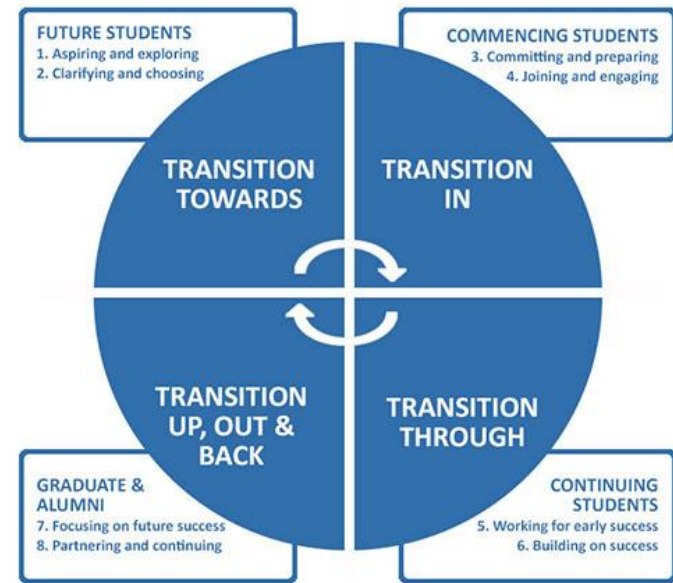
Source: A. Lizzio (2011)

What are the key transitions?

The Student Experience Transitions Practitioner Model

Time-out
Career
Further study

First Contact and Admissions

Pre-arrival

Outduction

To support recruitment, retention, progression and attainment

Arrival and Orientation

Re-orientation and Reinduction

Existing theories can operate in both models

Introduction to Study at University

Source: M Morgan (2008)

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Course mapping

A student on a one year course

- Induction to study by the end of semester 1 or term 1

- Reorientation and reinduction at the start of semester 2 or term 2

- Outduction just after the start of semester 2 or the beginning of term 3.

A student on a three/four year full-time degree

- Induction to university study during level 1

- Reorientation and reinduction in level 2

- Outduction starts semester 2 of Level 2 and continues into Level 3

A student entering as a direct entry/articulated student into level 2

- Orientation and Induction to study in semester 1 level 2

- Reinduction to Level 2 will have to run alongside or be incorporated into their programme

- Outduction starts semester 2 of Level 2 and continues into Level 3

First contact and Admissions

- Setting expectations

- Managing expectations
  and aspirations

- Academic integration

- Social integration.

- Why should I go to university?

- How and why will university study be different to previous types of study?

- What is expected of me as a university student?

- How are students treated at university?

- What happens in each academic level of study?

- What support advice and help is available both academically and personally throughout the lifecycle?

- Is university suitable for me?

- What will the university experience give me in terms of benefits?

- What are my options after university?

Arrival and orientation

- Expectations set during the first contact, admissions and pre-arrival stages need to be delivered

- Focus on academic and not administrative activities

- Opportunity to make friends

- Appropriate information and support

- Often a temptation to overload with information

- Settle into their university life and studies as soon as possible

- How do I enrol?

- Where is my departmental student office?

- When will I get my timetable?

- How do I use my timetable?

- What extra curricula activities can I get involved in?

- How do I navigate myself around campus?

- When do I meet my course leader/personal tutor?

- When do lessons start?

- What support services do I have access to?

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Induction to Study

- Settling into studies

- Coping with the demands of academia

- Managing pressures of life

- Induction period
  - A full academic cycle
    - Minimum of 1 semester
    - Maximum of 1 academic year.

- Where and how do I find academic information?

- What do I do if I miss a lesson?

- What do I do if I don't get on with my personal tutor?

- What do I do if I seem to be the only one struggling?

- What do I do if I want to change accommodation?

- What do I need to do in the first few weeks at university?

- What will be expected of me academically in the first few weeks?

- What support services do I have access to?

- What if I don't settle in and I want to leave?

Re-orientation

- Takes place at start of new academic year

- Reminder of academic and personal support available

- Reorientation session for all returners

- Update on what's changed.

- How much of this year counts towards my final grade?

- What are the assignments and when are they due?

- What skills do I need to develop/improve for this level of study?

- What do I need to do in the first few weeks?

- What will be expected of me academically?

- What support services do I have access to?

- What do I do if I start to struggle and fall behind?

- What do I do if I am not getting on with my allocated assessment group?

- How do I get work experience?

- What extra curricula activities can I get involved in to help with skills?

Reinduction

- Ongoing reminder of academic and non-academic support available

- Identify academic areas for improvement and support available

  – Reminders of academic requirements for current level of study

  – Refresher on support available
    - PAL
    - Mentors
    - Academic and non-academic support

- Opportunities to engage in

- Academic support
  - Ongoing study skill development
  - Revision sessions, past exam papers
  - Work returned more quickly
  - Project help

- Employability skills
  - Access to employability advice and support whether via the curriculum or extra curricula
  - Presentation and report writing skills
  - CV writing, job interview help
  - Careers advice
  - Opportunities to engage in

- Involvement in community and citizenship activities.
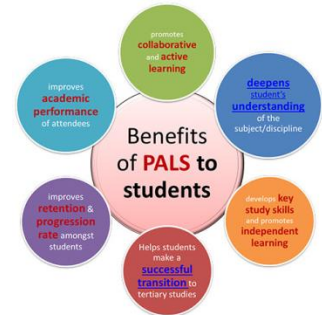
OUTduction

'Getting students through the student lifecycle involves more than simply getting them to complete their course. It should support students in the transition from the world of study into the world of life'.

'OUTduction' starts during INduction when students are introduced to the key skills and knowledge they will build upon and utilise during and post study'.

Source: M Morgan, 2008

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OUTduction activities

- Focused employability skills
  - Debating skills
  - Project management
  - Time management
  - Report writing skills
  - How to get a job

- What to do with the degree?
  - Career route options
  - How can skills learnt at university be transferred to life post study?
  - Future study and its value?

- Transitioning to life post study
  - Adapting to life outside of university
  - Uncertain economic, social and political environments
  - Coping with feelings of loss, uncertainty, disappointment.

- When will I get my results?

- When should I start applying for jobs even though I don't know my classification?

- Who do I get a reference from?

- Where do I go if I am not coping with my academic studies?

- Where do I go if I have problems outside of university?

- What do I do if I am not getting on with my allocated assessment group?

- Where can I get funding for further study?

- When do I have to start paying back my loan?

The key to a quality student experience

- Supporting students in, through and out of each stage

- Key service providers need to talk to one another and coordinate and join up their activities

- Effectively combining aspects one and two

- Academic imperative must be heart of all activity

- Must be owned by the Student's home unit (faculty, school, department).

Areas to consider when developing practical initiatives
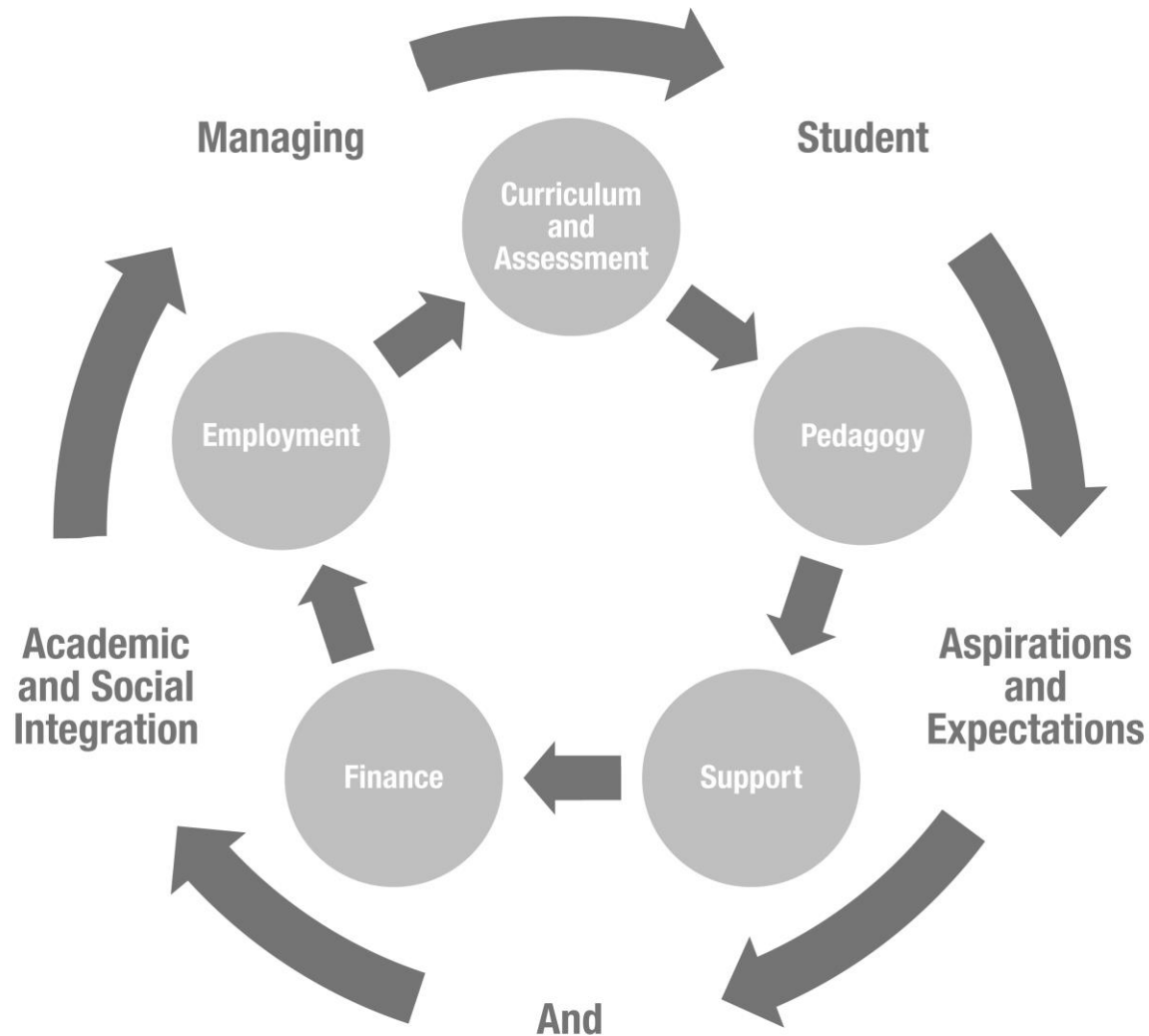
Where does learning happen?

Part-time work
Placements
post study
(e.g. writing a CV)

Classroom, placements,
volunteering, clubs and societies,
academic roles (e.g. course rep)

Managing

Student

Curriculum and Assessment

Employment

Pedagogy

How to learn and
transfer learning to
different environments
(e.g. classroom to
placement)

Academic and Social Integration

Aspirations and Expectations

Finance
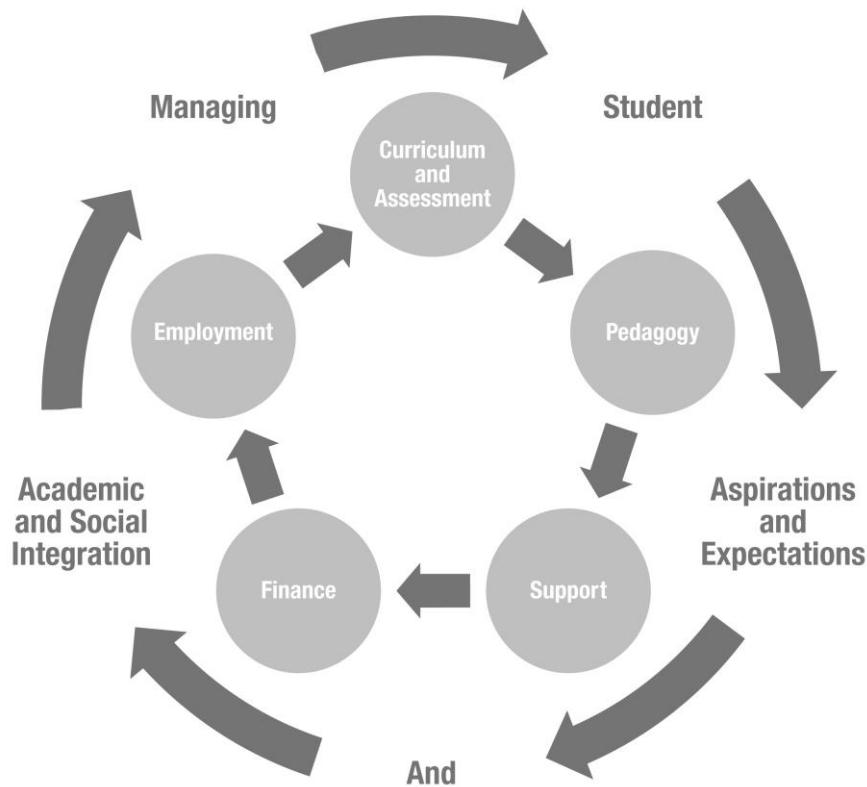
Support

Budget management
(e.g. personal)

And

Academic and non-academic
(e.g. Peer learning, learning zones, disability)

Areas to consider when developing practical initiatives

Managing • **Student** • **Aspirations and Expectations** • **And** • **Academic and Social Integration**

Cycle diagram: Curriculum and Assessment → Pedagogy → Support → Finance → Employment

Activity for the workshop

Stage = Reinduction
Theme = Curriculum and Assessment
Activity within the theme = Placement/internship

Themes	Considerations
Curriculum and assessment	Credit value of placement Type of assessment
Pedagogy	Transferability of learning into work Transferring work learning into the classroom
Finance	Costs related to placement year (e.g accommodation, uni fees, money management advice)
Employment	Getting a placement Utilising current employment skills post study
Support	Providing support to placement students (e.g. mental health and wellbeing, disability)

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What to ask?

For every initiative developed within a stage or theme, the following questions need to be addressed.

- What is the aim and objective of the initiative?
- Who needs to be involved in the development of the initiative?
- Who is the target group?
- What do they need to know?
- What information is going to be delivered?
- Who will deliver it?
- When is it going to be delivered?
- Is the timing appropriate?
- How will it be delivered?
- What is the cost of the initiative?
- What is the timeline for the initiative?
- Is it financially viable?
- Can the initiative and information be adapted for another group of students?
- How will it be evaluated and monitored? .

Summary

- Students lives are complex
- Student Experience is multi-dimensional
- Supporting transitions is applicable to all UG and PG
- Do not silo students or unit functions
- By creating and delivering a high quality student experience, retention, progression, attainment and satisfaction scores will improve.

Last thought…………..

'We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them'

Albert Einstein

Don't go out to improve the NSS, PTES and other satisfaction scores, but work on providing high quality continuous improvement for all stakeholders and the rest will take care of itself!

Conclusion

'We need to inspire new generations to engage in higher education, to believe in the benefits of HE and to invest in it. By ensuring that no student is forgotten or left behind, through adopting an inclusive strategy in all its activities, sustainability should be achievable'.

Morgan, 2013

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Thank you for listening
Any questions?

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Creator of the Student Experience Transitions Practitioner Model

Editor and Contributor to *Improving the Student Experience-A practical guide for universities and colleges* (Routledge, 2012) and *Supporting Student Diversity in Higher Education* (Routledge, 2013)

Most recent publication:

Morgan, M. and Direito, I. (2016) *Widening and sustaining postgraduate taught (PGT) STEM study in the UK: a collaborative project. Creating change through understanding expectations and attitudes towards PGT study, experiences and post-study outcomes from the perspective of applicants, students, universities and employers*. Available at: http://www.postgradexperience.org/project-docs/

Morgan, M. and Anderson, D (ed.) (2016) *The Good Practice Guide-Developing and acquiring employability skills, competencies and attitudes at postgraduate taught STEM level through collaboration*, London: Kingston University and HEFCE. Available at: http://www.postgradexperience.org/project-docs/

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