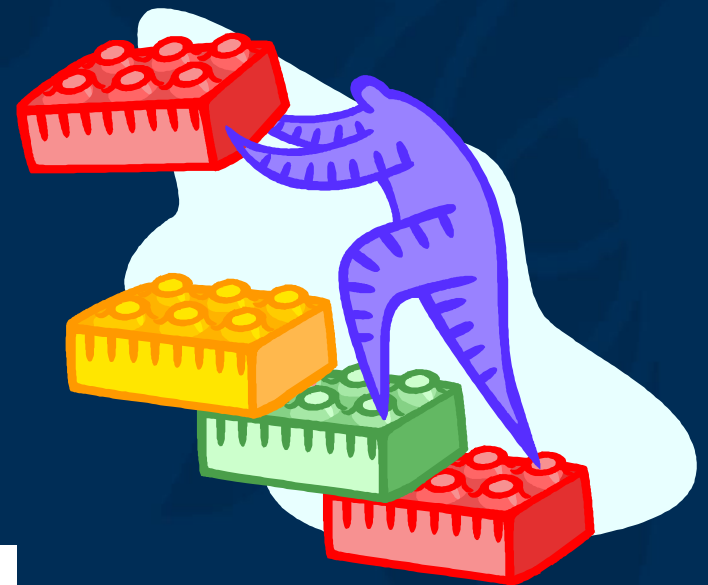


Student Expectations and EngagemenT (SEET) Project

Building the foundations: Foundation Year issues from the “builder” point of view

**Annette Daly
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Overview

- **Background**
 - Why are FY courses of interest?
 - The project so far...
- **Method**
- **Results**
- **Implications**



Why are FY courses of interest?

- Milburn (2012) – call for increased provision of FY courses within HEIs.
- As members of the FYN, we are keen to see them becoming more visible and valued.

University Challenge: How Higher Education Can Advance Social Mobility

A progress report by the
Independent Reviewer on
Social Mobility and Child Poverty

Member of the
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Students' Expectations and EngagemenT (SEET) Project Structure

Phase	When?	Who?	What?		
Pilot:	Summer 2010	Students	Focus groups		
Phase 1:	Autumn 2010	Students	Focus groups	Surveys	
Phase 2:	Spring 2011	Students		Surveys	Exam Board data
Phase 3:	July 2012	Staff	Peer-led focus groups		



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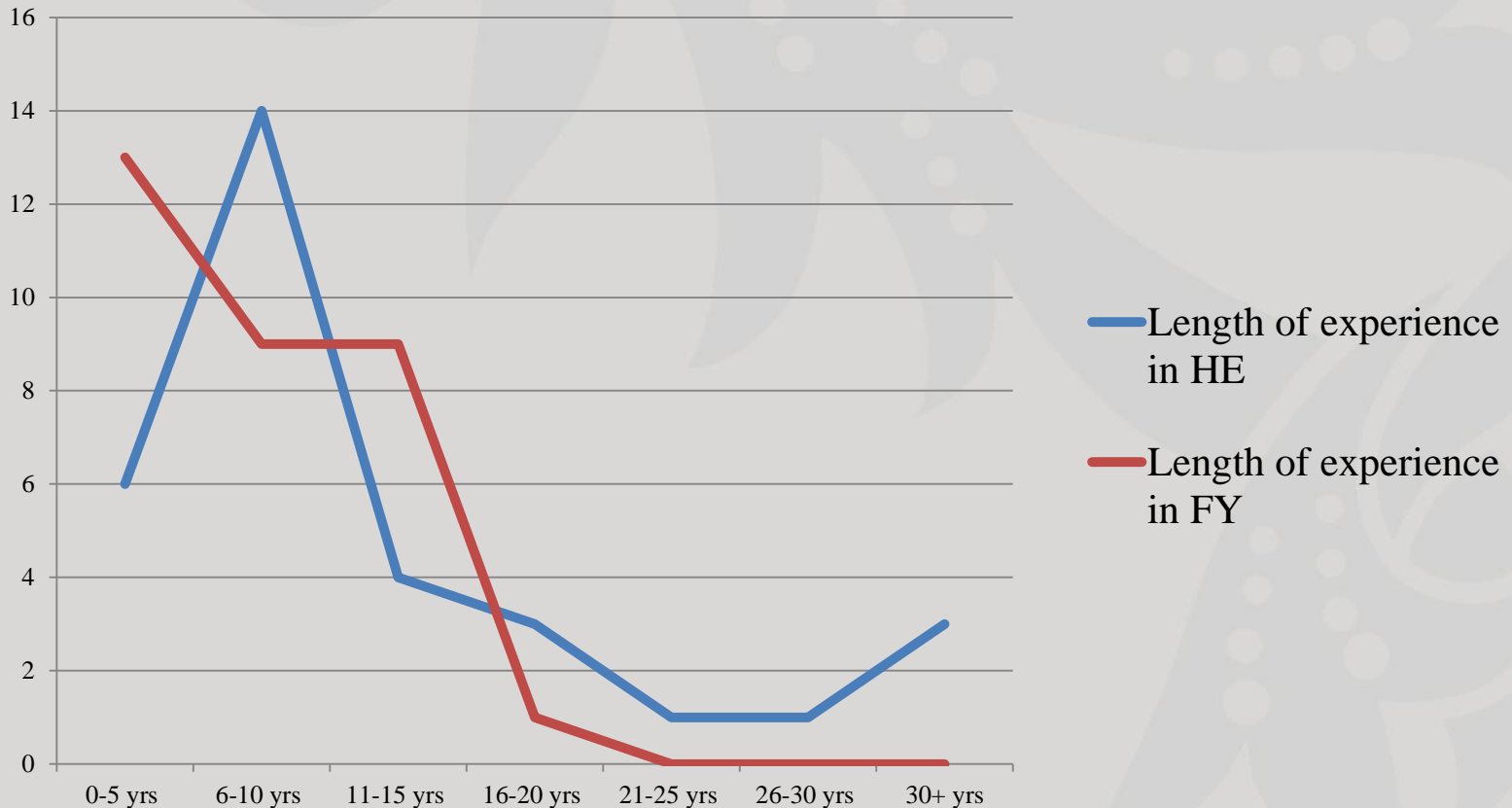


Method - participants

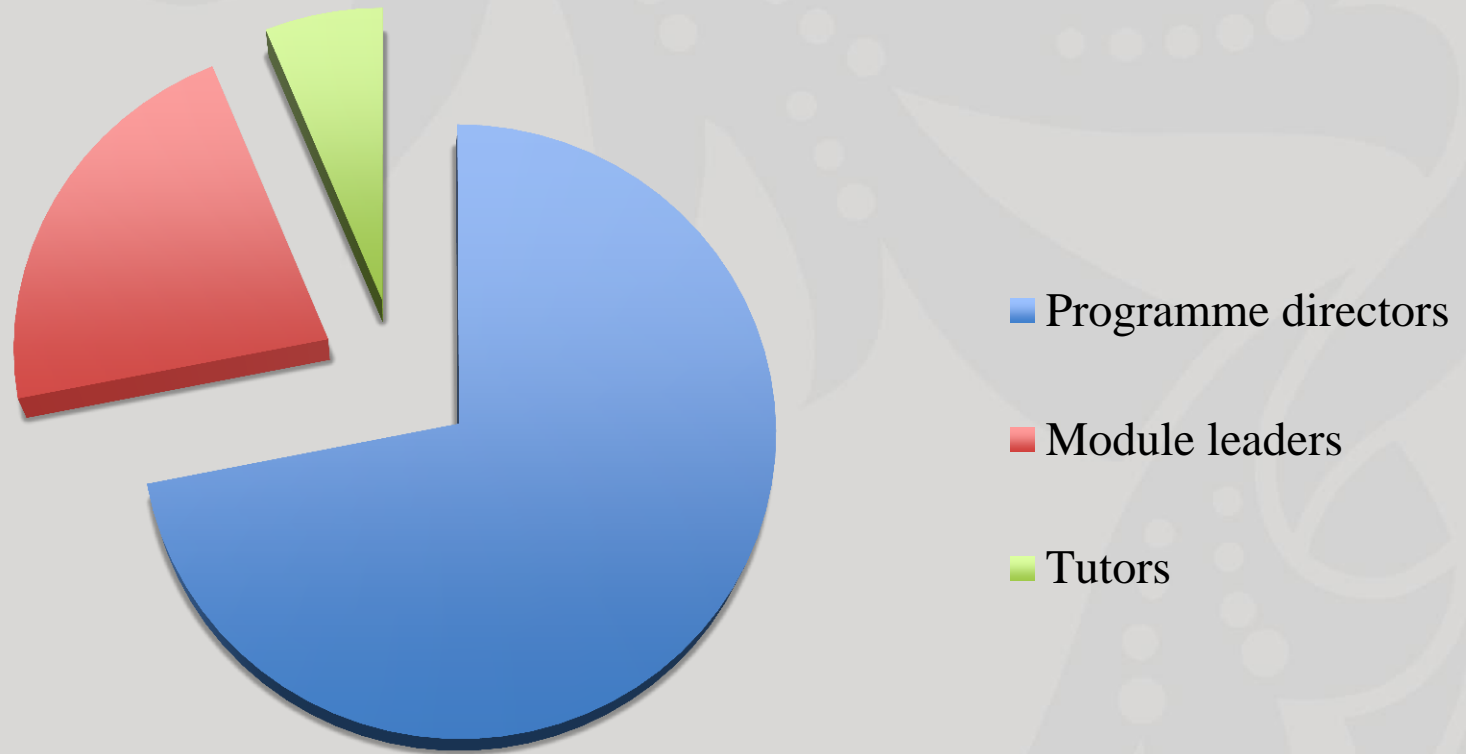
- 8 groups of 5-6 Foundation Year Network participants (n=38; demographic data n=32)
- Mixed groups across:
 - Institutions (n=17)
 - Staff roles within FY programme
 - Length of experience in HEI
 - Length of experience in FY programmes



Method - participants



Method - participants



Method – design/materials

- Peer-led focus groups
- Focus group pack
 - Facilitator prompter page
 - Large group summary note pages
 - Individual demographic data forms



Focus group questions:

1. What do you consider to be good/not so good about teaching on the FY programme in your institution?

2. What is your perception of the types of students who enrol for FY courses?

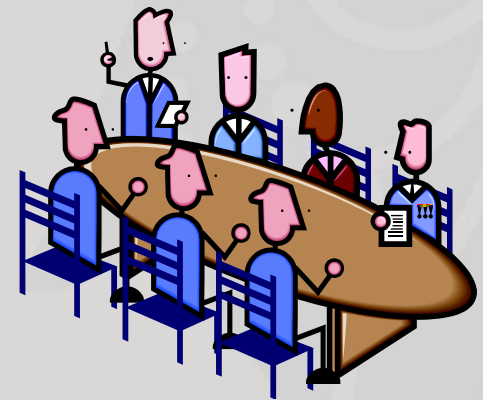
3. What are your perceptions of how peers view FY courses?

4. What other points, from a FY staff point of view, do you feel should be raised in this forum?



Method – procedure

- Participants assigned to one of eight groups on arrival and directed to associated table.
- Facilitators provided with Focus Group packs
- Brief introduction and verbal guidance
- 20 mins for discussion
- Plenary feedback
& auditory recording



Processing & Analysis of data

- Individual demographic data forms
 - Processed with SPSS for descriptive data
- Large group summary note pages
 - Typed up & verified /supplemented through auditory recordings
- Inductive Thematic Analysis



Some of the main emerging themes:

Student transformation

Increased interaction with students

Challenge of student diversity

Perceived low status

Uncertainty about the future



Student transformation

- Mentioned by 7 out of 8 groups
- Clearly linked to what makes teaching on FY “rewarding” and “fulfilling”

“heart-warming progress”

“watching the transformation”

“only a one year programme, so you can see the results at the end of each year”



Increased interaction with students

- Reported by 4 groups; second most commonly reported positive attribute
- Seemed to be closely woven with transformation

“get to know students better”

“sustained interaction with small group of students”

“element of pastoral support not perhaps seen in later years (a people approach)”

“emphasis on teaching rather than lecturing/research”



Increased interaction with students

- Less positive side of the coin

“need a lot of support”

“poor written language skills”

“programmes do not fit the norm in terms of teaching patterns/loads”



Challenge of student diversity

- Recognised by 6 of the 8 groups
 - Positive by 4 groups
 - Potential problem by 4 groups
- Difficult to meet the accompanying variety of student expectations

“interesting with a wide range of students and backgrounds”

“mixed ability biggest challenge”



Perceived low status

- Consistently not so good – how FY programmes are perceived externally by those not involved
- Identified by 6 groups

“frustrating that it is not recognised by other departments”

“colleagues’ perception that it is easier to teach”

“academic arrogance/snobbery”



Uncertainty about the future

- Of the course and jobs of those involved

“Uncertainty in regards to the future of foundation”

“funding related issues with foundation”

- Conflict within institutions

“We have no control over admissions”

“We can’t kick off non-engaged students”



Implications

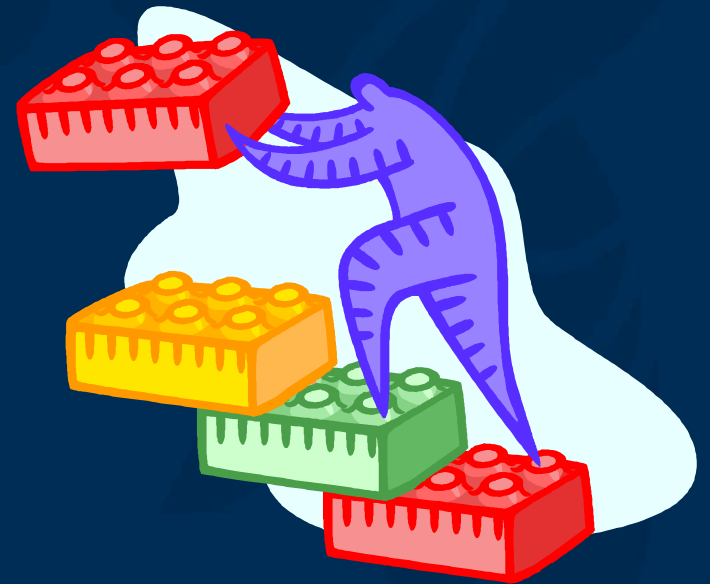
- A number of these emerging themes resonate with some of the themes emerging from the student data
- Evidence underpinning our beliefs around the very real value of FY programmes and the impact they can have.
- Evidence of the threats to FY programmes and our emerging sense of needing to ensure an established rootedness and growth within this key area of HE.



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