



“Supporting GLC Students’ Transition to Year 2 on the MA Social Sciences: Acculturation Strategies, Social Media and Mentoring”

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Session outline

- Glasgow International College (GIC) and The University of Glasgow (UoG).
- Background to the project.
- Aim and key project themes.
- Methodology.
- Initial findings.
- Next steps.

Glasgow International College

- Glasgow International College is an educational collaboration between Kaplan International and The University of Glasgow.
- The College supports international students for admission to undergraduate and postgraduate degrees at UoG.
- Foundation students at GIC study 6 subject modules equivalent to UoG level 1, 2 study skills modules and 2 language modules.
- Between 2007/08 and 2013/14 total student numbers increased from 171 to 940.
- Over the same period the number of Business and Social Science Foundation students increased from 42 to 180.

The University of Glasgow

- Founded in 1451, it is the fourth oldest university in the English-speaking world.
- Is rated fourth in the UK for international student satisfaction (among universities participating in the International Student Barometer Summer 2013).
- Welcomes students from more than 120 countries worldwide.
- Has more than 25,000 undergraduate and postgraduate students.
- Is a member of the prestigious Russell Group of leading UK research universities.

Background to the project

- Strong partnership between GIC and UoG.
- GIC key to UoG's Internationalisation Strategy.
- Kaplan and UoG have a long-term partnership.
- Shared commitment to academic quality and the student experience.

Project rationale

- Student attainment and progression figures from GIC to UoG continue to improve and exam pass rates in Business/Social Sciences compare well with other cohorts at both undergraduate and postgraduate level.
- Both GIC and UoG keen to ensure effective transitions for international students.
- GIC foundation students enter year 2 at UoG - effective preparation for Honours is essential.

Aim and key project themes

- Project aims to enhance support for GIC students prior to and during their transition to study in year 2 of the undergraduate MA Social Sciences.
- It explores a number of themes related to the student experience and student retention/progression e.g. assessment, student expectations and the role of social media.
- The main outcomes will be an enhanced understanding of GIC students' expectations of study at UoG, piloting of social media as a support mechanism and co-creation of a student mentoring scheme.

Methodology

Cohort	Description	Research method	Research themes
A	5 x 2 nd year UoG students who previously studied at GIC	Semi- structured interviews	Study and adjustment experiences at UoG
B	26xGIC students entering year 2 at UoG in September 2013	3 focus groups – two in semester 1 and one in semester 2	Transition experiences from GIC to UoG
C	29xstudents entering GIC in Sept 2013	2 focus groups – one in each semester	Reasons for choice of city and university, expectations for study at UoG.

- A dedicated Twitter account and other social media were also used to engage all cohorts in discussion.

Initial Findings (1)

- Choosing Glasgow and Arriving
 - The decision to come to Glasgow and to study at UoG was based on broad concepts such as the university's reputation, the UK is safer than the US.
 - Very few students made the decision to study at UoG themselves.
 - Feelings of isolation on arrival.

Initial Findings (2)

- **Differences**

- Students articulated differences between their home country and the UK and between GIC and UoG.
- Students noted differences between their own educational culture and UK HE e.g. learner autonomy and independent learning required.
- The transition from GIC to UoG involved adjusting to different class sizes, relationships between staff and students, and weekly contact time.

Initial Findings (3)

- **Support**
 - GIC tutors and their support and advice were particularly praised by students.
 - As GIC students transitioned to their UoG course they expressed anxiety about how to engage effectively with the support available there.
- **Students required support in a number of areas.**
 - Engaging with UK academic conventions (critical writing and reading, and forming an argument).
 - Integrating socially with their peers.
 - Time management and prioritisation skills.

Next Steps

- Increased joint GIC/UoG staff training
 - Staff seminar with Professor Elspeth Jones on ‘Inclusive learning and teaching in times of global mobility’, May 2014.
 - Provision of information session to UoG admin staff by GIC about supporting international students.
 - Peer observation between GIC and UoG teaching staff.
- Development of a specific induction for GIC students entering level 2 UoG.

Thank You
Any Questions?