Widening participation: anticipating and supporting successful completion

5-minute 'best practice' presentation

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Overview

- ❑ **Background**
- ❑ **Rationale for revisiting our current practice**
- ❑ **Examples of recent literature**
- ❑ **Your experience**
- ❑ **References**

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Background

Institution focus on reducing 'non-completion'

Ian identified student attributes (predictors of success) to help inform our selection process of predominantly 'non-traditional' applicants via the 'Admissions Toolbox'.

As we are now trying to select applicants who demonstrate that they have these positive attributes, I intend to try to answer the following questions:

➢ **How can we best support and develop these positive cognitive and non-cognitive attributes in our students, in order to enhance the chance of a successful completion both in Foundation and after transition?**

➢ **Are some attributes more 'teachable' than others in this limited timeframe?**

Current Rationale

❑ Smaller cohort from 2017; higher proportion of home WP students returning to education after a significant break from learning, often bringing previous experience

❑ External factors, such as family and financial issues, are difficult for us to resolve

❑ Data on individuals related to non-cognitive and cognitive skills that we gather from Assessment Day activities should support <u>targeted</u> interventions

❑ Take into account that the essential attributes vary according to discipline group (eg. STEM; Humanities; Social Sciences)

❑ Important to ensure that interventions are timely and effective by trying to identify what works…

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Recent literature

Cognitive attributes

The ability to process information, reason, remember, and relate it to other knowledge

Eg. **Recalling and connecting information in a meaningful way**

Use of 'mapping tools' to support learning and understanding has been widely researched by educators (Davies, 2010)

Possible intervention: Direct teaching of mind mapping skills and other appropriate techniques as a cognitive strategy – provide workshops.

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Recent literature

<u>Non-cognitive attributes</u>

Non-cognitive skills are defined as the "patterns of thought, feelings and behaviours" (Borghans et al., 2008, cited in Zhou, 2016) that are socially determined and can be developed throughout the lifetime to produce value (Zhou, 2016).

Eg. **Conscientiousness**

Magidson et al (2014) – Theory-driven 'bottom-up' intervention that targets core behaviours and brings about change in attitude to develop new behaviour patterns. Evidence suggests that:

> 'an intervention that provides detailed structure, a focus on values, guided action, goal-setting, immediate feedback on progress and challenges, clear accountability, and an opportunity for remediation might be especially useful for building conscientiousness.'

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Recent literature

<u>Studies related to successful outcomes</u>

Eg. Demetriou et al (2017) study carried out in USA of first-generation college students

Findings indicated that successful completion could be related to:

'More experienced' peer-mentoring (preferably related to joint participation in research or employment).

'Evidence-based High Impact Teaching' (HIT) activities being used (eg. goal-oriented; collaborative; structured lessons etc)

Closer involvement in student organisations with cultural, ethnic, or religious affiliations

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Your Experience

Over to you…

➢ Has anything worked particularly well in your programme?

➢ Has anything been unsuccessful as an intervention strategy?

➢ What do you think is teachable…and what is difficult to teach?

References

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