

Changing Induction to Transition for L1 Students: A Staff Perspective

Keywords – Induction, staff perceptions, engagement

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Activity – Staff perceptions of the strengths and weaknesses of a five week transition period for L1 BA (Hons) Sport Development students.

Group – Ten members of the programme team for the BA (Hons) Sport Development with PE programme.

Aim

- To support the students in a different way through the first few weeks of university.
- To assess whether more small group interaction had an effect on student engagement and learning.
- To investigate staff views on the future development of the process.

Context / Background

The programme team of the above degree were concerned about L1 student induction and the amount of engagement and curiosity that the students were showing regarding the subject. After discussion, the decision was made to radically overhaul the previous approach and to put together a 5 week transition programme to introduce the new students to the university, each other, the staff and the subject. The curriculum was split into core themes and then a variety of activities was developed in order to both ensure subject content was covered and also to introduce the students to study skills and other learning strategies. Personal tutor groups were used as the basis of each day where the students met their tutor, collected their reading material for the day and checked in on their development.

Example

All staff on the programme team are personal tutors and also have responsibility for their subject area. The transition programme was split into areas and a smaller group of staff become responsible for the logistic and overall running of

the period. Individual staff were responsible for their subject input and meeting their personal tutor groups.

Staff met their tutor groups on average 4 / 5 times per week and also delivered some of the sessions; however, it must be noted that during this period there was no module teaching for L1 students, so staff were not required to facilitate considerably more directed student contact time than is usual during this time of year.

Below is a typical example of the individual personal tutor meetings during one week.

Monday

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|--------------|--|
| 9.30 – 10.00 | Tutor group meetings on 'what is sport' Intro to the week. Check in on reading and issues from the previous week |
| 4.00- 5.00 | Tutor's review - discussion on task undertaken for the day and feedback from the group |

Tuesday

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|-------------|---|
| 2.30 – 3.00 | Review in Tutor Group – presentation of work completed during the discussion on the reading |
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Thursday

| | |
|-------------|---|
| 4.00 – 4.30 | Review in Tutor Group - – presentation of work completed during the discussion on the reading |
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Results / Feedback

At the end of week 3 all staff (n=10) were asked about their perceptions of the transition period. The results have been condensed to show key themes.

Initial staff perceptions of students

40% mentioned that the students were engaging with the activities and they were perceiving a positive change in the way students were completing the tasks set. One person commented that they thought that the students were “showing some level of critique already.” And another stated the work was “impressive”. In relation to student bonding, 70% of the staff noted that this was happening, “They appear to have gelled in the different groups they are in.”

Strengths of the transition period

One staff member commented that they thought it was “intensive, focused, innovative, exciting, thought-provoking.” While 70% highlighted the variety of activities on offer as a strength, 50% talked about the staff support for the process being positive, “close student contact with the tutor has made a difference in the ability to follow up on absentees and any problems.”

Weaknesses of the transition period

All staff commented on the complexity of the programme: “students have had a great time, staff are extremely frazzled.” On the level of confusion and buy-in one staff commented on “not all the staff have fully engaged in the process.” 20% of the staff commented that they would like to get to know other students rather than just their tutor group.

Other comments

All staff also felt there was room for improvement and development, such things as getting “hours for the process”; “maintaining enthusiasm and motivation.”; “length of time over 5 weeks.” Overall the overwhelming majority, 90%, of the staff perceived the transition period was a positive development an exciting step towards the future.”

Other comments

This case study relates to two other case studies, “**Using Movies to Stimulate Learning in Sport Subjects**” and “**A Change from Induction to Transition, Can this Affect Student Engagement and Learning?**” both of which can be found on the HLST website in the case studies areas under the themes of Groupwork and Curriculum Development, among others. <http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/hlst/resources/casestudies>

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