

Title: **How online study skills support can help students in transition**

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Abstract:

Session Learning Outcomes

By the end of this session, delegates will be able to:

- Assess what types of study skills support different students need
- Recognise when is the best time to provide help with study skills
- Identify how to engage students with online transition resources

Session Outline

This paper discusses the development of online transition support at the University of Sussex via the Study Success at Sussex (S3) website (www.sussex.ac.uk/s3).

S3 was first launched in 2009/10, building on findings from research about the first-year experience (Harvey *et al* 2006, Yorke & Longden 2008). The site was designed as a university-wide study skills resource to be used independently by first-year undergraduate students to help them prepare for university. Positive feedback from staff and students and high numbers of website visits prompted further development of S3. In 2010/11 S3 incorporated support for international students, a group that may find settling into the UK HE system challenging and may therefore need transition support and help with pre-arrival preparation (Jones 2010, Carroll & Appleton 2007). This year, S3 study skills workshops have been developed and piloted with year 12 and 13 school and college pupils as part of a series of widening participation activities. Further work to develop the online pre-arrival information for students who are considering coming to university is also underway.

This session will share the learning from the S3 project and explore how HEIs can best use online resources to help students prepare for university. Participants will: assess what types of study skills support different students need; recognise when is the best time to provide help with study skills; identify how to engage students with online transition resources.

Session Activities and Approximate Timings

Presentation (20 minutes) Background to the S3 project, a demonstration of the website and findings from student evaluation.

Small Group Activity (10 minutes) Mapping online study skills support on the student journey. It is often said that students are provided with the wrong information at the wrong time (e.g. referencing information during freshers' week). However, the timing of this support is complicated by, for example, the different needs of a varied student body. In this activity participants will be provided with a list of online study skills support resources and asked to plot when they think is the most appropriate time to provide this support. This activity is designed for 3-4 small groups of 4-8 (it can be adapted depending on numbers and it would be useful for me to know the expected numbers so that I can bring enough materials).

Discussion (15 minutes)

The following questions are suggested for discussion in relation to the group activity:

- Should we provide different support for international students, for PGT students, for WP students? And do different students need study skills support at different times?
- Students often say that they don't need help with study skills – how can we engage students? And can social networking sites help engage students in transition?

The discussion section will provide an opportunity to feedback from the small group activity. The whole group will guide the discussion topics and these questions are provided as prompts but participants may choose to focus on one area in more detail.

Evaluation A short questionnaire will be completed to assess if the session has met the learning outcomes described above.

References

Carroll, J. & Appleton, J. (2007) 'Support and guidance for learning from an international perspective', in E Jones and S Brown (eds) *Internationalising Higher Education*, London: Routledge.

Harvey, L. Drew, S. Smith, M. (2006) *The first year experience, a review of the literature for the Higher Education Academy*, http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/York/documents/ourwork/research/literature_reviews/first_year_experience_full_report.pdf (accessed 10th November, 2011).

Jones, E. (2010) *Internationalisation and the Student Voice*, New York and London: Routledge.

Yorke, M. & Longden, B. (2008) *The first-year experience of higher education in the UK*, York: The Higher Education Academy. <http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/York/documents/ourwork/research/FYE/FirstYearExperienceRevised.pdf> (accessed 10th November, 2011).