

Title: "Beam them out of there, Scotty!": entering the parallel universes of staff and student transitions

Presenters: Helen Corkill, Sam Elkington and Lesley Lawrence
University of Bedfordshire

Abstract:

Session Learning Outcomes

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

- Identify a range of transitional experiences impacting upon new and existing staff;
- Apply knowledge of staff transitions gained from the discussion to supporting staff through key transitions in their own institutions;
- Compare and contrast student and staff transitions, and identify common processes and challenges;
- Weigh up the advantages of a personalised learning approach to helping academic staff prepare for a range of transitions in HE.

Session Outline

Key issues to be addressed relate to: the conference theme of 'Preparing for academic practice', with specific focus upon staff transitions.

Over the last few years, challenges within student transitions in HE have been emerging, such as: Field, 2010; Kraus, 2005; and Tinto, 2008. Much less is known about the various transitions staff experience in becoming effective academics in HE in the 21st century. We focus upon two staff scenarios: transitions facing new staff entering an institution and transitions when the role within an HE institution changes (Chappell et al., 2009). For both, literature is fairly limited tending to pertain to specific adjustments, for example: 'practitioner to lecturing' transitions (Bloxham et. al., 2005; Boyd, 2010); existing academics adjusting to a more commercial environment (Harman, 2003); and early-career academics transitions compounded by moves to a new institution or country (Kahn, 2009).

Brief transition cameos will be presented followed by activity aiming to identify: 'How are these staff prepared to cope with the identified transition'?

Scenario One cameos (world café activity):

Staff transitions into a UK HE institution from employment in:

- business/industry;
- a school/ FE college;
- a non-UK HE institution;
- a traditional/pre-1993 UK HE institution or vice-versa.

Scenario Two cameos (small group discussion):

Staff transitions where the role of the academic within an institution changes:

- o from the comfort of specialist to non-specialist teaching;
- o from a didactic teaching style to student-centred approaches;
- o technology literacy expectations increase;
- o conditions of service change.

The session concludes with consideration of discussion outcomes and implications for staff development, including the case for employing differentiated support mechanisms according to the transition type(s). We will argue that many of the approaches employed to support student transitions and enhance the student experience are just as important and applicable to academic staff. We will present a preliminary model of these parallel universes, featuring not only transitions, but personalised learning and employability agendas, all situated within the context of institutional and government imperatives.

Session Activities and Approximate Timings

- 10 minutes: Setting the scene – transitions.
30 minutes: Scenario One – scenarios, world café activity.
30 minutes: Scenario Two – scenarios, small group discussion.
15 minutes: Presentation of model, conclusions and implications.
5 minutes: Questions.

References

Bloxham, S., Twiselton, S. and Jackson, A. (2005) (eds.) 'Challenges and opportunities: developing learning and teaching in ITE across the UK', *A selection of conference papers*, presented at St Martin's College, Lancaster, 19 May 2005.

Boyd, P. (2010) 'Academic induction for professional educators: supporting the workplace learning of newly appointed lecturers in teacher and nurse education'. *International Journal for Academic Development*. Vol. 15, No.2, pp. 155-165.

Chappell, C., Scheeres, H., Boud, D. and Rooney, D. (2009) 'Working out work: integrated development practices in organizations' in J. Field, J. Gallacher and R. Ingram (eds.) *Researching Transitions in Lifelong Learning*. London, Routledge, pp. 175-188.

Field, J. (2010) 'Preface' in K. Ecclestone, G. Biesta and M. Hughes (eds.) *Transitions and Learning Through the Lifecourse*, London, Routledge, pp. xvii.

Harman, G. (2003) 'Australian academics and prospective academics: Adjustment to a more commercial environment'. *Higher Education Management and Policy*, Vol.15, No.3, pp.118-138.

Kahn, P. (2009) 'Contexts for teaching and the exercise of agency in early-career academic: Perspectives from realist social theory'. *International Journal for Academic Development*, Vol.14, No. 3, pp. 197-207.

Krause, K. (2005) 'The changing student experience: Who's driving it and where is it going?' Keynote Paper: *Student Experience Conference (Good Practice in Practice)*, Charles Stuart University, Wagga Wagga, New South Wales, 5-7 September 2005.

Tinto, V. (2008) 'Preface' in K. Tokuno *Graduate Students in Transition: Assisting Students Through the First Year*. Columbia, SC, National Resource Centre for the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition, University of South Carolina.