



Student Transitions: Example of transitions practice

Title: Learning Support Services – Glasgow School of Art

Transition(s) the practice supports: Academic Skills development

Abstract: The Glasgow School of Art's learning support and development service provides a variety of workshops, courses and one-to-one study skills support sessions designed to encourage students to think about their learning and develop their own learning strategies and style. The department also has its own website which provides guides to learning and studying in higher education with information specific to those studying at art school.

Description:

As at other HEIs in Scotland, GSA has a robust and substantial Learning Support Service. Where it stands out as offering a unique provision is that it is targeting a student group whose transitions are as much about making and doing as they are thinking. Visual literacies as well as craft base capabilities are part of the Art School students' back story and transitioning into GSA requires a coming to terms with how these strengths fit within the space and time of a creative higher education. Small specialist studio-based pedagogies tend not to easily map onto the learning and teaching regimes of the larger comprehensive universities and the transitions into such a different culture are a key part of what students navigate. Thus Learning Support Services encompass transitions in and through which encounter the 'creative abrasions' of an education centred on creativity.

The Glasgow School of Art's learning support and development service provides a variety of workshops, courses and one-to-one sessions designed to encourage students to think about their learning and develop their own learning strategies and style. The sessions are free and available for all students to attend. Workshops include: *Talking About Your Work* - a workshop to help students prepare for presentations; *Writing About Your Work* - a workshop looking at different types of writing a creative practitioner may have to do, for instance writing artist statements; *Discussion Group* - for ESL students to practice speaking English with through informal discussion of studio practice and exhibition visits; *Get Sorted* – a workshop to help students evaluate and improve their own learning and make best use of feedback ; and *Reflective Writing* and *Extended Academic Writing*. The department also has its own [website](#) which provides guides to learning and studying in higher education with information specific to those studying at art school. Guides include: *Communicating Your Learning* - various types of written and verbal communication guides; *Learning Strategies* – various tips to helps students manage their own learning an a self-directed higher education environment, including planning and using feedback; and *Your Learning* – guides that

unpack the creative learning process in a studio based higher education institution, including peer learning and reflective thinking.

Learning support staff have a good working relationship with staff across the Art School, meaning that they can provide key support at targeted times of the year. This also helps with promoting the workshops as staff often recommend sessions to their students and provide space for learning support staff to introduce what they do at the beginning of the academic year. All workshops and guides are cross-discipline and provide support with skills that all students who are part of the creative practices will need.

Aspiration/ key points/principles:

One of the main aims of the learning support service is to get students to understand what self-directed learning is and the key principles of a creative education, so that students can better support their own learning. The department is focussed less on supporting students to get a good grade and more on helping students to develop awareness of how they learn and strategies to sustain their future learning and their future creative practice.

Observations/ challenges:

It was observed that learning support is embraced differently by different courses. Architecture for instance, perceived as quite a structured discipline, have highlighted the sessions within many of the brief outlines it gives to students and frequently directs students to the services. Fine Art on the other hand, perceived as a more open-ended discipline, are less likely to do this.

Contact details: Audrey Evinou A.Evinou@gsa.ac.uk

All examples provided will be posted to the Enhancement Themes website with the intention of including them in the National Transitions map.