



## Student Transitions: Example of transitions practice

**Title:** Researching First Year Students' Academic Self-Efficacy and Buoyancy- Supporting transition into and throughout first year of higher education

**Transition(s) the practice supports:** This study measures and identifies the challenges confronting first year students at Edinburgh Napier School of Computing as they transition into higher education and through their first year.

**Abstract:** HESA statistics show that Computing students have the lowest rate of continuation into second year. This study attempts to understand computing students' experience as they transition into and through their first year of higher education. It focuses on assessing students' academic buoyancy in the face of the everyday minor adversities and challenges that first year students are confronted with, through evaluation of their self-efficacy and resilience by comparison with outcomes at the end of first year.

**Description:** According to HESA statistics, 9.5 % of the first year computing student cohort of 2012/13 did not continue onto second year (Higher Education Statistics Agency, 2015). In addition, Edinburgh Napier University across all subjects experiences relatively high non-continuation rates in comparison with other Scottish HEIs at 8% in 2012/13 (Higher Education Statistics Agency, 2015). Therefore, this study has been designed to investigate whether there is an association between computing students' own evaluation of their self-efficacy and their academic outcomes, in order to inform the modification of the transition strategies of the School of Computing.

Self-efficacy is an important component of resilience, and is defined as a person's beliefs concerning his or her ability to accomplish a certain task successfully (Bandura, 1977). Self-efficacy is a crucial notion in this study as it is correlated positively to students' perseverance and effort (Bandura, 1986) and academic resilience and academic achievement (Johnson, Taasobshirazi, Kestler, & Cordova, 2015) (Allan, Mckenna, & Dominey, 2014). Consequently, a self-efficacy instrument has been designed in line with Bandura's guidelines (2006) using criteria elicited from existing first year students, and has been administered at the very beginning of the academic year 2015/16 to all students of the first year cohort. This particular moment corresponds to the 'shock stage' in the first year students' transition process. The instrument will be administered again in April 2016 - when the students have progressed onto the 'adjustment stage'- and matched against students' outcome. As a self-efficacy instrument, it has been devised in the context of the School of Computing, but it can be used by Schools of Computing in other HEI's.

The data analysis should yield unique results towards understanding the computing students' first year into higher education and their experience and buoyancy during the 'shock stage' and 'adjustment stage'. It is hoped that this study will help understand how effective the current transition strategies devised by the School of Computing are at supporting first year students. This instrument could be used by other HEI's School of Computing towards measuring and improving their first year's transition strategies.

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