A Conversation Around Diagnostics and Personalised Approaches to Building Student Success

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The conversation structure

Brief introduction to the PARC approach and the why!

Drawing on QAA PARC Collaborative project
  • The purpose of a diagnostic approach
  • Strengths and weaknesses
  • Evidence and products required to engage sceptics

Institutional approaches, successes and challenges:
  • BCU, Abertay, Warwick, UHI

A developmental conversation on:
  • The potential for Diagnostic approaches
  • How this can be best supported
Drivers for a diagnostic approach

- Pandemic and disruption for new students
- Institutional imperative – retention and graduate level outcomes
- Moral imperative to enable our students to succeed
- Personalisation of the student learning journey
- Learning gain legacy – BCU, Warwick etc
- Technological advances – AI and assessment
To enable and enhance student success through personal reflection and engagement with diagnostic tools and the associated institutional development opportunities.

- Recognise context of each institution
- Recognise the institutional drive – student retention, EDI and attainment gaps, employability
Building upon ……

- McMillan and Chavis (1986)
- Lizzio (2010)
- Thomas (2012)
- McNair et al (2016)
- Felten and Lambert (2020)
Starting the Conversation – a challenge
Birmingham City University model

Steps to success discovery tool

Results

Feedback on strengths &
areas for development

Signposting to
relevant resources

Summarised cohort
feedback

Action plan

Student

Course team

• Cohort level:
  • Informing course design, content and delivery, additional support requirements at cohort level and development of resources.

• Student-level:
  • Building resilience. Providing students with recommendations and avenues for support, developing confidence in abilities and an awareness of areas for development.
July 2020, Senate approved the recommendations of a University working group that it should initiate developments that would see a microcredential framework implemented for students in September 2021.

This would see the first-year existing electives (20 credits) being replaced with a new suite of microcredentials.

A University development group, drawn from across Abertay, placed an emphasis on students utilising a microcredential framework to personalise their own development journey as they prepared themselves for their future careers.

The focus was on preparing students to be successful academically and socially within the Abertay community.
Year 1 Microcredentials

ABE 101 mandatory for all first-year students.

Includes a strengths based diagnostic in ABE 101 that directs students to other microcredentials that may address perceived weakness.

Transitional, developmental and programme related?

Normalise engagement with professional services and development
Abertay Discovery Tool

• Identifying student strengths and areas for development
• Feedback for each section with links to support services
• Programme level reports (Available by week 4, term 1)

Sections Include:
• Studying at University (Study habits, expectations, independent learning etc)
• Academic Writing & Mathematics (Writing, reading, referencing, basic numeracy skills)
• Digital Skills
• Employability Skills (Career registration)
• Wellbeing
Abertay Discovery Tool

Abertay Discovery Tool: Academic Skills Feedback

Congratulations on using the Abertay Discovery tool to start mapping your route to success at University. This section is focused on Academic Skills.

This report outlines the areas of strengths that were indicated by your answers and areas that you might like to focus some time and energy on developing. Please note, this is a starting point, not only should you begin to develop these areas, but also use feedback and self-reflection developed throughout this module and others to identify other skills that would benefit from this module.

Remember, Abertay is here to support you!

Academic Writing
As you move through your university career you may encounter unfamiliar writing styles or requirements. These should be in the form of essays, reports, or reflective writing to name a few. You have demonstrated an understanding of the differences. To build upon your knowledge, Abertay provides a wide range of resources for you to access when you need them. Find out what’s available at: Abertay Discovery Tool.

Searching and Evaluating Sources
In your studies you will need to use different searching techniques to find sources for your work. Abertay Discovery Tool provides help on searching techniques. You have demonstrated an awareness of how to do this. There are several models and resources available when considering searching and evaluating. You may benefit from looking at the models and resources available on your course.

Academic Reading
You have demonstrated an understanding of being a critical thinker. This includes reading and writing critically and is a key skill for university and your future career. Critical thinking, or critical analysis, is the evaluation of information or ideas on a topic. You may want to find more out about Academic Reading: Abertay Discovery Tool.

Referencing
Referencing may be something that you have started to think about before. You have to develop your referencing skills. There are lots of resources available, so familiarize with the software:

- Harvard FastEva
- APA FastEva
- Chicago FastEva

Mathematics
Throughout your degree this will depend on the module you are studying. This module is an introduction to the programme leader to the module.

Abertay Discovery Tool: Programme Report

The best output of the Abertay Discovery Tool is to make sure that you are comfortable with the Mathematics module. You have demonstrated an understanding of the different aspects of a successful mathematics course.

1. Studying Mathematics
2. Academic Writing & Mathematics
3. English Skills
4. Employability Skills
5. Health & Wellbeing

Abertay Academy is available to support programme teams in developing cohort activities and work identified from above sections on the different aspects of a successful mathematics course.

Programme Information
Programme: A6 (Hons) Computer Games Applications Development
Programme leader: Ibrahim Abubakr
Division: Games Technology & Mathematics
School: Design & Informatics

Strengths
Overall, students on this programme showed a good level of knowledge and approaches of independent learning.

Students had a good level of understanding of the role that feedback plays at university. Students recognized that the role of feedback is to help them develop their subject knowledge and transferable skills.

A good range of activities to prepare for classes were identified. This included completing the recommended reading on pre-work, discussing content with peers, and looking over notes from learning materials.

Students showed a good level of confidence in their academic writing abilities. Some students described previous experience of academic writing although not at university.

Students had a good level of knowledge on how to effectively work in teams on a range of digital environments.

Most students indicated good knowledge of using key computer software packages for academic work. This included Microsoft Office, the use of PPTs, etc.

Students indicated good knowledge of using online communication tools. This included the use of Microsoft Teams and email. It is strongly recommended to encourage students to access the support on the internet for using email and other applications.

Areas for development
Some understanding of the role of referencing was shown in the referencing questions. To reinforce the importance of referencing, it is recommended to provide links to materials available for the appropriate referencing used on the programme of study.

Students described some confidence in their basic mathematical abilities but indicated that they needed to improve. It is encouraged to clarify the level of mathematics required on the programme and the support available from the programme team. Students can also refer to the Learning Development service.
# Impact so far...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module Title</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
<th>Engagement</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Submission Rate</td>
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<tr>
<td>ABE101 – Being Successful at Abertay</td>
<td>714 (100%)</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABE102 – Successful Writing at Abertay</td>
<td>410 (55.7%)</td>
<td>93%</td>
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<tr>
<td>ABE103 – Digital Skills for University &amp; Beyond</td>
<td>355 (48.2%)</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABE104 – Dundee and Me</td>
<td>191 (26%)</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABE105 – Research &amp; Enquiry Skills for the Digital Age</td>
<td>310 (42.1%)</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABE107 – Planning your future career</td>
<td>490 (66.6%)</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABE108 – Welcome to the CommuniTAY</td>
<td>92 (12.5%)</td>
<td>100%</td>
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<tr>
<td>ABE109 – Wellbeing tools &amp; tricks</td>
<td>278 (37.8%)</td>
<td>91%</td>
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Warwick’s Model

- The model aims to help students on professional courses engage with a process of employing skills and strategies to meet academic and professional demands of their programme through developing five aspects of academic, professional, motivational, social and emotional resilience.

- The model focuses not only on the outcome but also the learning process happening over time. The model aims to go beyond more traditional, individualistic approaches by helping students develop knowledge, skills and experiences suitable for both academic and professional settings in collaboration with others.

- The model is not to concentrate on individuals' strengths; it is to provide focus for supporting students on professional programmes.
Design & Delivery

- The modules are designed to help PG students on professional programmes build their awareness of the skills and practices that will help facilitate five aspects of resilience.

- Students initially take self-quizzes to identify their learning needs. They are then directed to online resources to learn about skills and strategies, apply skills and strategies, and build their personal and group toolkit.

- Each module is designed using the following principles:
  - Personalised with the self-quiz, personalised plan and tool kit;
  - Interactive with the reflection activities and problem-based scenarios;
  - Enabling students to develop the modules’ resources in collaboration with other participants.
UHI developments

- Post entry with HN students
- Development of PEAT
- Use of PEAT with staff
- Pre entry for PG students

PARC
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Intended consequences</th>
<th>Unintended consequences</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increased use</td>
<td>Community of Practice (PARC)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Keep on institutional priority list</td>
<td>Community of practice (UHI)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alignment with retention work</td>
<td>Link to microcredentials</td>
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Moving to a conversation

Our work is exploratory, we are trying to understand the space, so would like your input.

- Some questions to discuss over the remaining time.
- Work in groups/tables.
- We will pick up on one key theme from each group.
Conversation:
If we want to foster **Resilient Learning Communities**

RLC Key Question(!) 2:
- Do you know your current and future students?
- How will they want to learn?
- How can we gain a clear understanding of their needs?
- What information do we need to enable us to best support their learning?

How can a PARC like approach help you to achieve this in your specific institution/context?