# A Conversation Around Diagnostics and Personalised Approaches to Building Student Success

Luke Millard, Abertay
Colin Milligan, GCU
Heather Fotheringham, UHI
Jack Hogan, Abertay

Resilient Learning Communities

About Enhancement Themes | Resilient Learning Communities | Evaluation of the Enhancement Themes | Completed Enhancement Themes | News & Events | QAA Scotland

Home > Resilient Learning Communities > Flexible and Accessible Learning > Personalised Approaches to Resilience and Community

# PERSONALISED APPROACHES TO RESILIENCE AND COMMUNITY
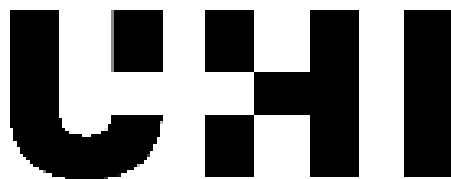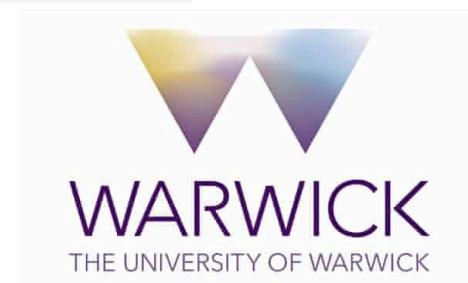
# The conversation structure

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



Resilient Learning Communities

# 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
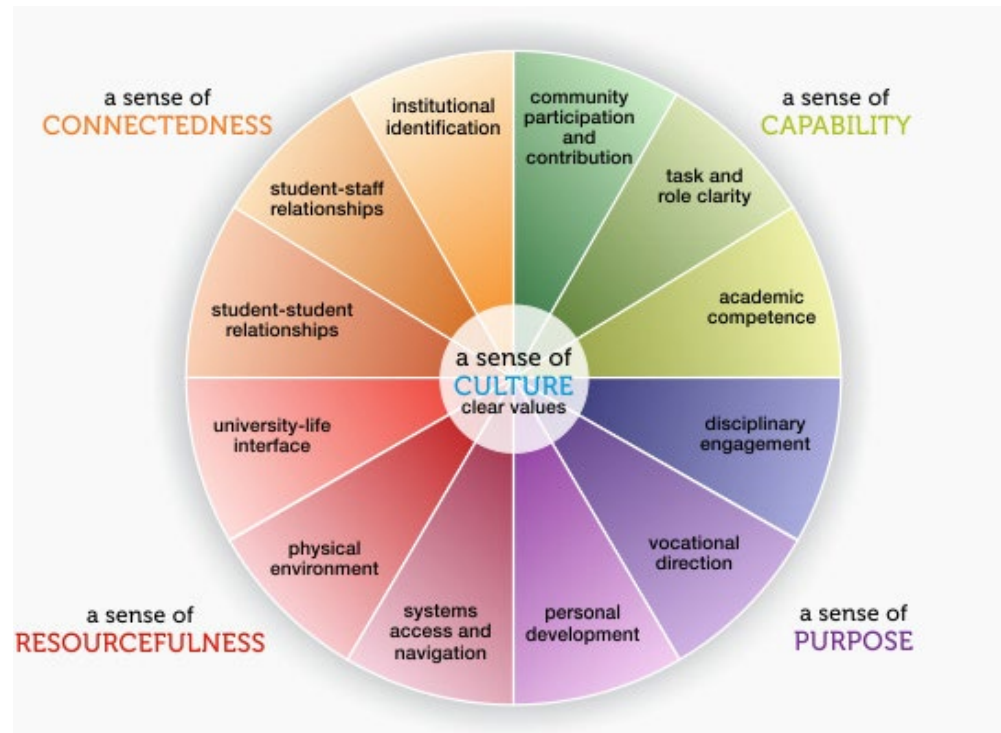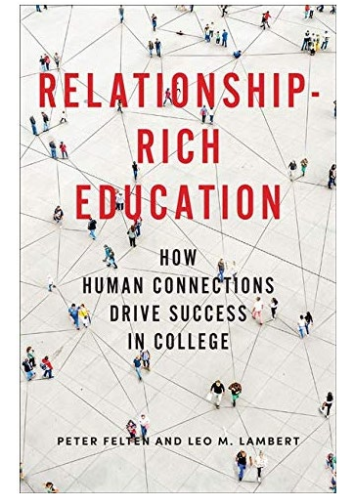- Technological advances – AI and assessment

Enhancement Themes
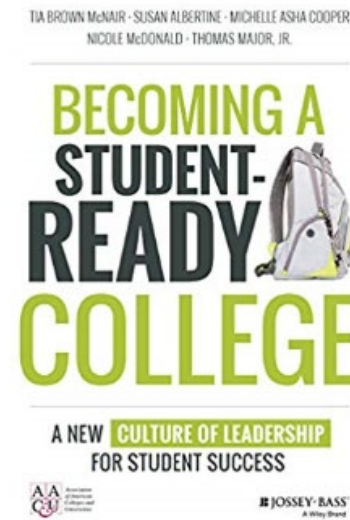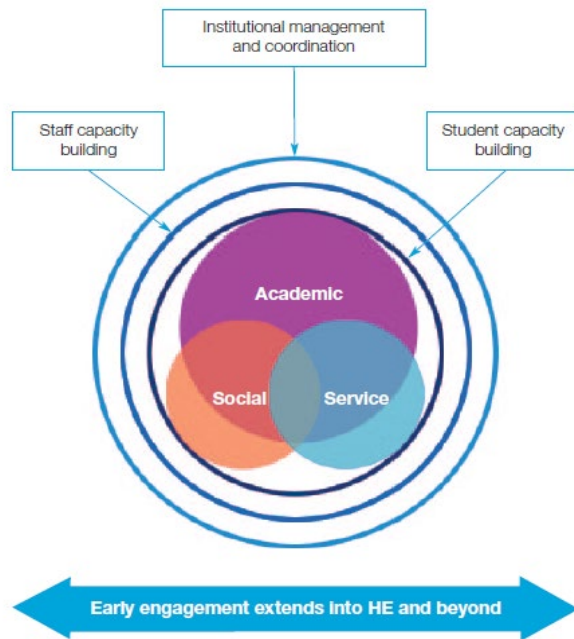
**Resilient Learning Communities**

# Purpose

*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
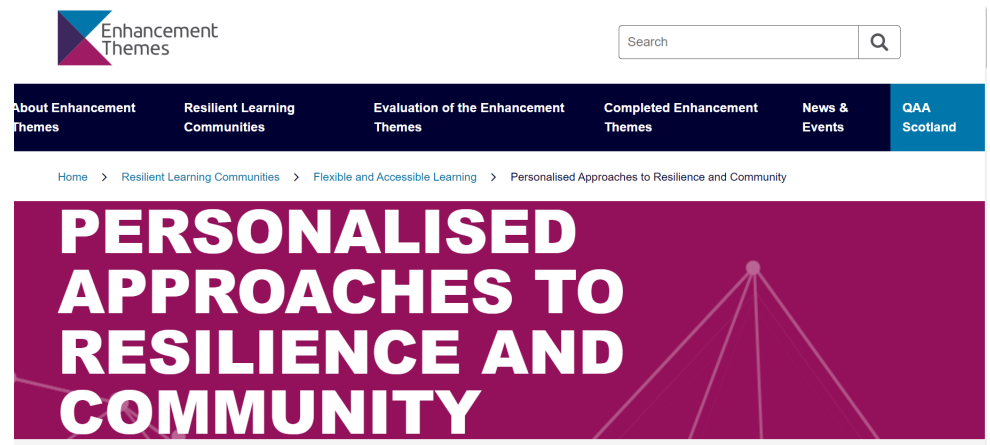
# Building upon .......

- 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
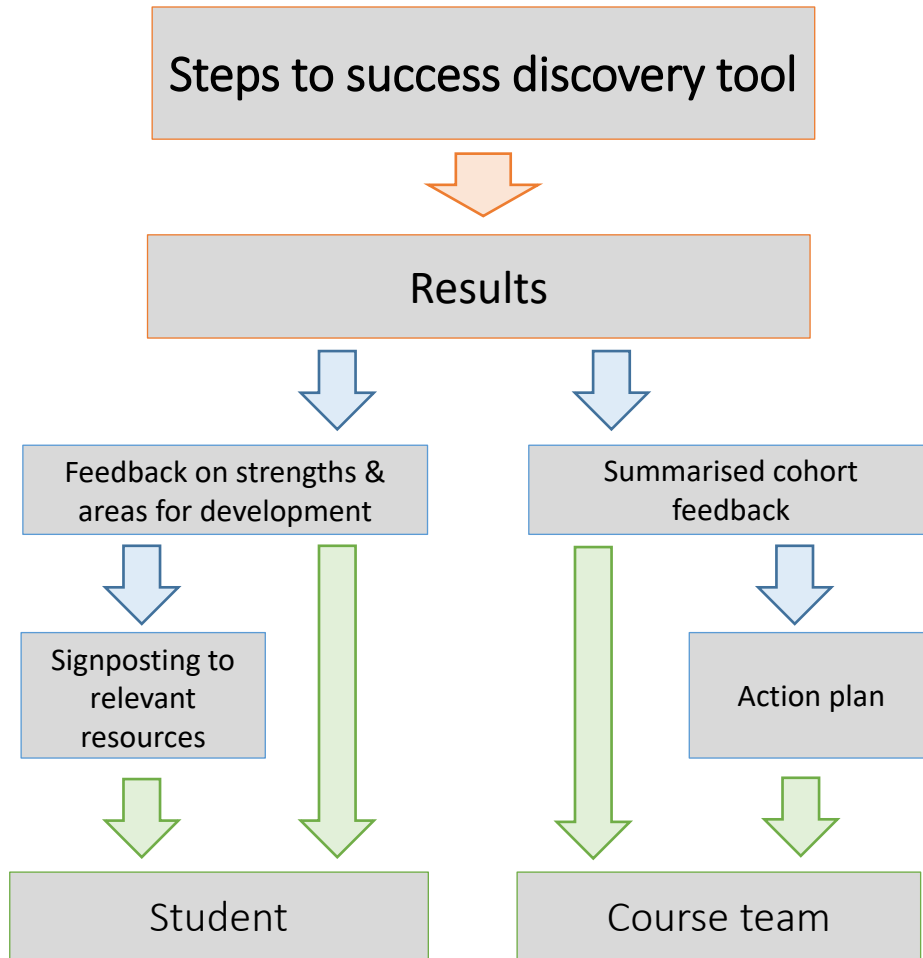


- Cohort level:

  - 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.

# The Abertay Context

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

**ABE101 - Being Successful at Abertay**

**ABE102 - Successful Writing at Abertay**

**ABE103 - Digital Skills for University and Beyond!**

**ABE104 - Dundee and Me**

**ABE105 - Research and enquiry skills**

**ABE106 - How to sell your ideas!**

**ABE107 - Planning your future career**

**ABE108 - Welcome to the CommuniTAY**

**ABE109 - Wellbeing tools and tricks**

Abertay University

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 STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION

# Abertay Discovery Tool

**My Success**

- 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

0 of 5 Topics Completed

0%

Overview  ✓

# Abertay Discovery Tool
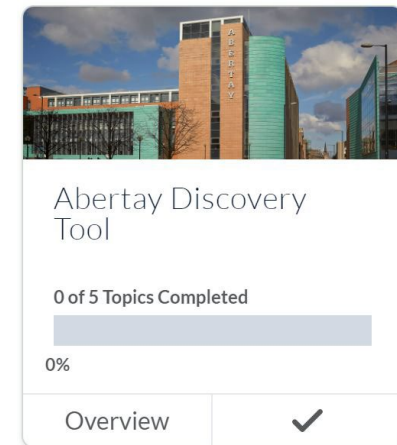
**My Success**

## 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 development.

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 could 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 Writing (abertay.ac.uk).

### Searching and Evaluating Sources
In your modules you will need to use different searching techniques to find sources for you to critically analyse as part of your assignments. 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 finding out more about Searching (abertay.ac.uk) and Evaluating (abertay.ac.uk) your sources.

### Academic Reading
You have demonstrated signs 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.ac.uk).

### Referencing
Referencing may be something that you have started to think about before. It is vital to writing academically, so develop your referencing There are lots of resourc different referencing sty familiar with the referen

- Harvard (All prog
- APA (Psychology
- OSCOLA (Law Pro

### Mathematics
Throughout your degree this will depend on the provide you with resourc programme leader to se

## Abertay Discovery Tool: Programme Report

Based upon results of the Abertay Discovery Tool in ABE101 – Being Successful in Abertay this report provides an overview. The report is split into strengths and areas for development identified from across 5 sections on the different aspects of a successful university career:

1. Studying at University
2. Academic Writing & Mathematics
3. Digital Skills
4. Employability Skills
5. Health & Wellbeing

AbLE Academy are available to support programme teams in developing cohort activities based upon the results. For further consultation please email Jack Hogan (j.hogan@abertay.ac.uk), Lecturer in Academic Practice.

### Programme Information
**Programme:** BSc (Hons) Computer Games Applications Development

**Programme Leader:** Andrei Boiko

**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 recognised 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 or 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 effective 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 PDFs etc.

Most students indicated good knowledge of using online communication tools. This included the use of Microsoft teams and emails. It is strongly recommended to encourage students to access the support on the intranet for using emails and calendars.

### 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 supporting 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 and recognised they needed to improve. It is encouraged to clearly specify the level of mathematics required on the programme of study and the support available from the programme team. Students can also be referred to the Learner Development service.

# Impact so far...

**My Success**

| Module Title | Number of Students | Engagement | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | Submission Rate | Pass Rate |
| ABE101 – Being Successful at Abertay | 714 (100%) | 95% | 96% |
| ABE102 –Successful Writing at Abertay | 410 (55.7%) | 93% | 95% |
| ABE103 – Digital Skills for University & Beyond | 355 (48.2%) | 91% | 98% |
| ABE104 – Dundee and Me | 191 (26%) | 90% | 100% |
| ABE105 – Research & Enquiry Skills for the Digital Age | 310 (42.1%) | 92% | 100% |
| ABE107 – Planning your future career | 490 (66.6%) | 94% | 98% |
| ABE108 – Welcome to the CommuniTAY | 92 (12.5%) | 100% | 96% |
| ABE109 – Wellbeing tools & tricks | 278 (37.8%) | 91% | 98% |

# 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.

Post entry with HN students

Development of PEAT

PARC

Use of PEAT with staff

Pre entry for PG students

# Intended consequences

- Increased use
- Keep on institutional priority list
- Alignment with retention work

# Unintended consequences

- Community of Practice (PARC)
- Community of practice (UHI)
- Link to microcredentials

# 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?**