



Student Transition and Success through Cross-School Collaboration

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Background:

This study expands the idea of curriculum alignment to include not only modules and programmes, but also to ensure alignment across sectors, from Further Education (FE) Institutions (schools and colleges) to Higher Education (HE) Institutions/ Universities. Outcomes from a study by Ladwa and Nzekwe-Excel (2017) reveal that there is a lack of awareness of what academic preparations pupils from schools and colleges have before commencing their HE study. Students with vocational qualifications struggle in particular with transition into HE study. Over 80% of the identified perceived problems to learning were Guidance-related and Personal & Social-related, while most of the actual identified problems to learning in HE study were Academic-related. Therefore, this study stresses the idea of raising awareness and promoting a better understanding of educational standards and provision across sectors. The study essentially promotes collaboration across sectors (FE and HE Institutions) for the purpose of adequately equipping students academically and enabling them transit seamlessly into their HE study. This study further propose that collaborative courses or teaching sessions between FE and HE staff may be tailored to meet the requirements of specific students just before they transit into higher education.

Process:

- ❖ Academic events to capture perceptions of staff from both Secondary (FE) and Tertiary (HE) sectors on academic challenges faced by first-year students with particular focus on students with vocational qualifications & how to effectively support them.
- ❖ Tailored academic orientation support sessions delivered in secondary schools, targeted at students in their final-year of secondary education to capture their 'voice' on their 'concerns' and 'expectations' in their higher education study.

Ongoing Proposal & Implementation Plan:

- ❖ Setting up professional networks between the secondary and tertiary institutions.
- ❖ To facilitate university/ HE widening participation schemes (with significant involvement of academic staff) with the Secondary or FE /6th form sector in order to achieve a curriculum that is aligned across sectors in much the same way that modules and programmes are within universities.
 - ❑ HE institutions can be more flexible in moulding their provision to accommodate the skills and capabilities that first-year undergraduate students arrive with.
- ❖ Devise a strategy for the measurement & evaluation of the above initiatives over defined time frames, capturing the perceptions of both staff and students on the effectiveness of the initiatives on the students' academic performances as well as the institutions' inclusion practices.

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