

5B Supporting International PGT Students through Informal Learning Spaces

Presenter: Nathalie Sheridan, Student Learning Service

Literature (Briggs et al, 2012) suggests that students experience cultural displacement when entering university. This cultural displacement is intensified if the students are international. English proficiency is strongly linked to academic success of international students according to Young et al. (2012); next to cultural empathy, open-mindedness and social initiative. Others, however (Rienties et al., 2011) have found that the key for this success is academic integration. The majority of authors seem to agree that the transition of international students is strongly linked to learning a new culture, and developing cultural competency and capital (cf. Briggs et al., 2012; Christie et al., 2007; Young et al., 2012) for a successful student experience.

During the last two years, working in student learning development, I have focussed on student transition into university. This presentation highlights some key transitional issues of international PGT students. I will draw from a small research project as Academic Development Tutor in Glasgow Caledonian University, and course evaluation from my role as Effective Learning Adviser in The University of Glasgow.

This session outlines how utilizing local museums, such as The Hunterian, and Kelvingrove, helped to support the development of cultural competences and language proficiency of international PGT students from Health and Life Sciences as well as from Engineering. Exploring learning and teaching strategies based on culture and museums education, such as teaching on objects, and exploring spaces.

References

Briggs, A. R., Clark, J., & Hall, I. (2012). Building bridges: understanding student transition to university. *Quality in Higher Education*.

Christie, H., Tett, L., Cree, V. E., Hounsell, J., & McCune, V. (2007). 'A real rollercoaster of confidence and emotions': learning to be a university student. *Edinburgh*.

Rienties, B., Beusaert, S., Grohnert, T., Niemantsverdriet, S., Kommers, P. (2011) 'Understanding academic performance of international students: the role of ethnicity, academic and social integration.' *Higher Education*. Vol.63. pp.: 685-700.

Young, T.J., Sercombe, P.G., Sachdev, I., Naeb, R., Schartner, A. (2012) 'Success factors for international postgraduate students' adjustment: exploring the roles of intercultural competence, language proficiency, social contact and social support.' *European Journal of Higher Education*, 3:2, pp.: 151-171.