Introductory Higher Education Initiatives: developing self-efficacy

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- 7 Universities
  Enrolment - 85,467

- 14 Institutes of Technology (IOT)
  Enrolment - 80,934

- Letterkenny Institute of Technology
  Enrolment - 3,399
  4% of IOT enrolment
Student Profile

• “Close to home”
• Age profile
• Range of entrance points
• Live at home – Day students
• 1\textsuperscript{st} in family to attend 3\textsuperscript{rd} Level
Research Design

• Theory
  • Retention
  • Self efficacy

• Methodology
  • Self efficacy questionnaires to all business studies first years (n=91) at start of study and end of first semester
  • First semester interventions

• Analysis
  • Averages for each self efficacy scale computed
  • Paired samples t-tests using SPSS
Why this study?

• Retention can be looked at from an Institute point of view or from the student view
  • Institute
    – focuses on retention measures and statistics
    – performance and budget driven
    – what can Institute do to retain students?
  • Student
    – why do students leave/not complete? What can we do to help them stay/persist/perform better?

Talent development model – students can succeed given the right conditions (Braxton, Sullivan & Johnson, 1997) – need to develop a climate that is conducive to students
Why have we chosen to study self-efficacy?

• A student's self-efficacy may play an important role in his or her academic achievement. Schunk (1991) claims that there is evidence that self-efficacy predicts academic achievement.

• Malliari et al., (2012) report that for at least twenty years, self-efficacy has been identified as an important construct in academic learning environments.
Self Efficacy

• Self-efficacy is an individual’s belief in his or her capacity to mobilize the internal resources needed to execute the performances that are required to accomplish a task successfully (Bandura, 1977 - 1997)

• Schunk (1991, p. 207) defines self-efficacy as:
  • "an individual's judgments of his or her capabilities to perform given actions"

• Topham and Moller (2011) explain that self-efficacy is an important determinant in first year student adjustment.
First Year & Self Efficacy

• First year students with high levels of self-efficacy tend to be:
  • more motivated;
  • use more strategies;
  • have higher achievement;
  • and experience less stress and anxiety.

  (Fouladi and Wallis, 2014)

• Zajacova et al., (2005, p. 700) report that academic self-efficacy has a
  • strong positive effect on freshman [first year] grades and credits
  • self-efficacy is the single strongest predictor of grades (even taking into
    account high school academic performance and demographic background
    variables)
First Year Experience @ lyit

- Induction
  - discipline
  - integration

- LCS Module
  - spread induction over semester
  - academic skills

- Firstly
  - mentoring
  - checking in
“International research on student transitions to university highlights the importance of this key period in their academic life, as those who have difficulties with the transition may perform poorly and/or disengage at an early stage from university life” (Gibney, Moore, Murphy and O’Sullivan, 2011, p.352)

- Originally a 3 day session overfilled with meeting staff
- Too much too soon
Learning & Communication Skills

- Webster, B. & Chan, W. (2009) report that better induction into the discipline and into the university were more likely to predict positive student outcomes.

- Standardised Learning Communication Skills modules for all first year students across the Institute.
  - Spread induction over semester
  - Academic writing
  - Groupwork
  - Presentation skills
Firstly

- Mentoring
- Checking in
- Separate from a module
- Introduced in the Business Department in 2015.
- Compulsory for all first-year students.
- Talks, group activities, demonstrations, study-skills sessions and social activities.
- Delivered by *mainstream* business studies lecturers and not by specialist study skills staff.
- Focussed on student transition, progression and retention.
Firstly

• Identify those students who may be *at risk* of non-completion and propose some form of ‘intervention’

• Interventions include
  • ‘checking in with’ the students
  • meetings with students (small group and individual),
  • gathering information from students
    • self-efficacy
    • academic performance
    • attendance
  • small group activities to promote student interaction and a sense of belonging.
Self Efficacy Scales
(adapted from Bandura 2006)

1.0 Enlisting Social Resources
2.0 Academic Achievement
3.0 Self-Regulated Learning
4.0 Leisure Time Skills and Extracurricular Activities
5.0 Self-Regulatory Efficacy
6.0 Meet Others’ Expectations
7.0 Social Self-Efficacy
8.0 Self-Assertive Efficacy
9.0 Enlisting Family and Community Support
What did we find out?

Self-efficacy measures of students entering LYIT:

1.0 Enlisting Social Resources 6.31
2.0 Academic Achievement 6.85
3.0 Self-Regulated Learning 6.58
4.0 Leisure Time Skills and Extracurricular Activities 5.80
5.0 Self-Regulatory Efficacy 7.60
6.0 Meet Others’ Expectations 7.04
7.0 Social Self-Efficacy 8.05
8.0 Self-Assertive Efficacy 7.12
9.0 Enlisting Family and Community Support 5.49
What did we find out?

• Efficacy levels of students were relatively high
• No significant change in efficacy of all students – before and after
• By gender – Female – self assertive efficacy improved (6.43 to-7.41 (p<0.05))
• By entry route – no difference
• By Attend Induction – no difference
• By self efficacy
  1) Enlisting Social Resources (4.66 to 5.41, p<0.05)
  3) Self Regulated Learning (5.43 to 6.46, p<0.05)
  5) Self Regulatory Efficacy (5.48 to 6.48, p<0.05)
What next?

• Institute level rollout
• Longitudinal study
  • Retention of low efficacy students?
  • Assessed too early?
• If it’s not efficacy – what is it?