Supporting student progression from college to university honours. From issues of identity, pre-entry social networks and knowing how to hand coursework in.

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A substantial body of research into Widening Participation and transition from sub-degree to honours degree supports the perspective that this experience can be stressful and potentially unconducive to retention and success at honours. (Bathmaker, 2010; Bathmaker et al., 2008; Clegg, 2011; Greenbank, 2006; Harrison & Hatt, 2010; Keane, 2011; Parry, 2010; Roberts, 2011). The research discussed in this paper provides evidence drawn from an ongoing 18 month project exploring the challenge facing students negotiating boundaries between FECs and HEIs which exhibit profoundly different pedagogic and cultural approaches. Inspired by local research by Winter & Dismore (2010) which identified how cultural differences between FE institutions and the university have a significant impact upon students’ learning and integration into university life, this project has used primary research to engage and support progression students at an earlier phase of their learning journeys. By understanding and navigating these challenges we are developing information, tools and support networks across both college and university environments.

The transition between sub degree and honours degree requires acute planning and organisation and whilst many good practices exist across universities, this project has looked at identifying where gaps exist and identifying strategies that students find effective. Central to this is the development of a pre-entry network, to engage and signpost students prior to transition. Students have also identified the importance of support within partner colleges to introduce and raise awareness of these tools, and the more challenging aspects of engaging students in developing their identity as university students.
References


