Different modes of delivery and teaching for diverse students: Which support works the best?

*The students’ point of view*
Personalising the Learning Experience

• Active and student-centred pedagogies allow students to actively construct meaning and knowledge (Mayer 1994, Prince 1994, Freeman et al 2014)

• Active and student-centred pedagogies, suitably supported, give students control to personalize their learning experience so it works for them

• Teacher becomes a “guide on the side” (Alison King, 1993, College Teaching 41:1 pp.30-35)
Student centered learning and teaching

- Flipped classroom
- Personal academic tutors
- Student peer groups
- Student centered examination
Different modes of delivery & teaching for diverse students: which support works best?

- The institutional point of view

The New Student: Flexible Learning Paths and Future Learning Environments, 20./21. September, Vienna

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Communication and liaison

To avoid a mismatch of expectations:
- exchange with the ones who prepare students
- adjust expectations concerning study
- understanding of non-traditional attainments (RPL)

To reach sectors of community where potential learners may be unaware that they could succeed in higher education (examples of recruitment activities):
- talent scouts
- student ambassadors
- targeted recruitment
- ...
Inclusive Support and Skills Provision

Diversity poses a challenge to universities at the point of transition and throughout the first year in particular:
  • heterogeneous prior attainments
  • social integration
  • generic study skill support

Support should be provided for all students without discrimination
Targeting mechanism:
  • diagnostic testing of all students
  • mentoring based methods
  • methods which encourage self-diagnosis and self-reflection
Student-centring and flexibilisation

Heterogeneous student bodies ask for more flexible curricula which allow:
  • **other commitments** (caring responsibilities, employment)
  • **diverse needs** (disabilities)
  • **recognition of** (achieved) **learning outcomes**
  • ...  

Institutions responding to larger and diverse groups of students are well advised to ensure that their approach is „student-centered“ so that students can personalise their learning to their own context
  • **flexible curricula**
  • **binding description of learning units** (time, content, prerequisite, learning outcome, assessment, delivery,...)
  • **technological means**
  • **active learning methods e.g. in small groups** (cohort cohesion)
  • **flexibility in assessing learning outcomes**
Professional staff development

Beside the need of a binding institutional „diversity strategy“ there is evidence to suggest, that diversity can not be managed without investment and training of faculty and support staff

- culture of professional teaching development
- appreciation of engagement in teaching (career path advancements, integral part of a merit framework)
- institutional centre for learning and teaching (introducing a culture of innovation and research-led practice in teaching)
Summing up

The opportunities and issues posed by diversity involve (anyhow):
- negotiated strategies and appreciation of developments in learning and teaching
- communication, exchange, liaison
- flexible entrance procedures
- fair recognition of prior learning
- innovative pedagogical approaches (large groups, heterogeneity)
- more flexible, individualised curricula/learning paths
- a holistic understanding of „new (learning) needs“, quality and a (shifting) student lifecycle
Thank you for your attention!

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