



Teesside
University

Inspiring success

Enhancing university infrastructure to improve retention

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- What we know and why infrastructure is key
- How do we address retention and success at the level of infrastructure
- Some questions to think about



What we know about retention & success

Student engagement and 'belonging' are key

'At the heart of successful retention and success is a strong sense of belonging in HE for all students. This is most effectively nurtured through mainstream activities that all students participate in'

Enhancing first year experience and supporting transition points make a difference

Interventions in the academic sphere are key to making a difference in retention and 'engagement and belonging is especially important at an early stage'

Teaching and learning matter

'The academic sphere is the most important site for nurturing participation of the type which engenders a sense of belonging'.



‘Specific interventions cannot be recommended over and above each other. Rather **the institution, department, programme and module should all nurture a culture of belonging through the way they function and relate to people.**’

Thomas, L. (2012) *Building Student Engagement and Belonging in Higher Education at a Time of Change: a summary of findings and recommendations from the What Works? Student Retention & Success programme* (Paul Hamlyn Foundation, Action on Access, HE Academy)



So how can we do it?

- *Centrally managed high quality data, which is understood by key leaders, and used at every level*
- Mapping, and understanding, the whole student lifecycle – in a partnership with staff and students, and being wary of breaking up responsibilities
- *Strategic leadership of retention and success*
- Placing a high institutional value on learning and teaching
- *Celebrating success and sharing good practice across the institution*
- Working on ensuring that retention and success are everybody's business



Some questions to think about

- Does your institution nurture a sense of belonging and student engagement from the 'top'?
- *How well do you know your data? And what happens when poorly performing departments, programmes or modules are identified?*
- How is good practice in learning and teaching (which impacts on belonging and success) shared and valued?
- *Are all staff involved in encouraging student engagement, retention and success? And is it linked to staff recognition and reward?*
- How are you working to maintain an ongoing commitment to student engagement in your institution?

