Case Study: Orientation
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Students as Partners in their induction: A social identity approach

Student-generated induction: A snowball group discussion technique is combined with the use of interactive classroom technologies (clickers). Students are invited to record their personal concern about starting at university. Those personal views are shared in small groups. Each group discusses the pool of individual views and chooses one to share with the rest of the class. Each item chosen by the student-groups is posted to the screen and embedded in the voting software. Each individual then votes on their personal preference. The process generates a digital chart as a representation of their shared concerns. Students thereby generate their own induction agenda.

Sessions typically take between 1-2 hours. They have been repeated for different year groups to support and chart the shared journey from induction through transition (and beyond). Tutors supplement conversations and add additional information about which students may be unaware.

The digital output is a representation of collective experience at a particular moment in time. It defines the social context by communicating the common ground within the group to each member. The issues raised are often predictable (e.g. concerns about money or making friends) but having students tell each other about concerns is qualitatively and psychologically different from being told ‘these are probably the things you are most worried about.’ Visualisation can help reduce anxieties about being the only individual with a particular concern to support a sense of group-membership and well-being (Jetten, Haslam et al. 2009). Logistically, it combines socialisation with department-specific induction.

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