

Stepping Up to Edge Hill University: the value and impact for students following the completion of a virtual pre-entry module

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Abstract

As learning developers, our main role is to support students in developing their academic skills throughout their time at university. We are particularly interested in students' transition into university and have developed a programme-specific pre-entry module within Blackboard Open Education to support undergraduate students with their transition into their academic programme of study. As part of a pedagogical research project for the Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching in Higher Education (PGCTHE), we have attempted to assess the value and impact of this pre-entry module. Our project employed a mixed methods analysis of a wide range of quantitative and qualitative data, including student conversion data (Quercus Student Records System); module engagement and completion data (Blackboard Open Education); student satisfaction data (Bristol Online Survey); value and impact data from key academic staff (semi-structured interviews) and students (focus group/semi-structured interview and Bristol Online Survey); and a thorough review of associated literature. We shared our preliminary findings at the Association for Learning Developers in Higher Education conference (ALDHE) in Exeter in April 2019. Our research has shown that, although student satisfaction is high with some indication of added value and a positive impact on the students' transitional experience, these are self-reported and we thus conclude that this research would benefit from further exploration and more extensive student, stakeholder and platform evaluation.

Keywords: pre-entry; transition; student experience; Blackboard Open Education.

Introduction

Founded in 1885, Edge Hill University (EHU) is a campus-based university in the North West of England. It is currently ranked Gold in the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) and was Times Higher University of the Year in 2014/15. The provision of centralised academic skills support is managed by Library and Learning Services (LS), one of the largest support departments within EHU, with approximately 130 staff based across three libraries. The academic skills team work with students in one-to-one and classroom-based environments to help them develop their academic writing, information literacy and general study skills. In 2016, we embarked on a project with a small number of academic programmes to develop a pre-entry learning intervention to support students' transition into their academic programme of study. This learning intervention developed into an online pre-entry course called Stepping Up to Edge Hill University (Stepping Up). This article will discuss our findings from a pedagogical research project to ascertain the value of this pre-entry module for students and attempt to assess its impact on the student experience. For the purposes of this research, we have chosen to focus on the English programme, as they have taken part since 2016, and Nursing, who were the most recent programme to join the pre-entry activity.

The module context

The primary aim of the pre-entry module is to support students with their transition into a specific programme of study at EHU in a supportive online environment. Since its inception in 2016, the pre-entry module has expanded to include five programmes: English, Nursing (with two intakes per year), Criminology, History and Creative Writing, with interest from other programmes increasing each year. The module itself, which is currently optional and non-credit bearing, is created within Blackboard Open Education, which offers students a genuine experience of accessing learning materials in a digital environment almost identical to the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) they will use at EHU. As useful as this platform is for creating modules, there are several drawbacks, including design limitations and mobile compatibility. Students are sent an email invitation, distributed centrally by the university's Student Recruitment Communications team, approximately six weeks before their course begins. Objectives of the module include:

- Meeting the academic teams: students become acquainted with their tutors through staff videos, enabling the academics to seem more human and accessible.
- Managing student expectations of the programme: students are introduced to the programme, the wider department, and how that department interacts with the wider university. An overview of learning activities and how they will be taught on the programme is provided, and videos from previous students are used to good effect.
- Introduction to the language of the university: students can often feel overwhelmed with the jargon used at university, so the module outlines some of the terminology students may come across during their EHU learning journey, for example, the difference between a lecture and a seminar.
- What to expect during the first few weeks at university: these can be particularly overwhelming weeks for students with competing social and academic priorities. The module gives an overview of the types of activities in which students can expect to participate during those first key weeks.
- Overview of assessment on the course: whilst it may feel incongruous on a pre-entry course to discuss assessment, we include a light section to help demystify and normalise it as part of university life. This includes the different ways students may be assessed and reassurance about how they will be supported throughout the process.
- Study support: the module introduces students to the range of academic skills support available to them once they are on their programmes, including basic concepts such as notetaking, referencing and research skills.
- Engagement opportunities with other students on the same course: through discussion boards and interactive walls, students begin to develop connections with their peers.

These objectives are split across four key steps and have been designed to include an element of gamification through a series of digital badges (Figure 1) which students receive on completion of each step.

Figure 1. Stepping Up badges.

The Four Steps



Methods

We know from our previous evaluation data that students report high levels of satisfaction with the module. To investigate whether Stepping Up has any value or impact for students completing it, we employed a mixed methods analysis of a wide range of quantitative and qualitative data including student conversion data (Quercus Student Records System), module engagement and completion data (Blackboard Open Education), student satisfaction data (Bristol Online Survey), value and impact data from key academic staff (semi-structured interviews) and students (focus group/semi-structured interview and Bristol Online Survey), and a thorough review of associated literature.

Literature review

A known key factor influencing students' learning experiences is the quality of their transition into university (Cole, 2017; Meehan and Howells, 2018), whether this is direct from further education (FE) or after a break in study. There is a significant amount of literature discussing how best to support students during their first few weeks and months at university (Knox, 2005; Fergy et al., 2008; Thomas, 2011; Ribchester et al., 2014; Cole, 2017; Brunton et al., 2018; Kubincova et al., 2018; MacFarlane, 2018; Pennington et al., 2018; Tchen et al., 2018). We know that experiences during the first semester may be

critical in a student's decision to continue or discontinue studies (Kyndt et al., 2018), and that retention is closely linked to the quality of the first-year experience (Cole, 2017). Given the volume of research within this area, it is not surprising that there is no agreed definition of transition in higher education (HE). Gale and Parker define it as 'the capability to navigate change' (2014, p. 737), while Meehan and Howells describe it as a 'process rather than an event' (2018, p. 3). Regardless of the definition, most agree there is an expectation for students to adapt to a new academic culture that is emotionally demanding; emphasises self-reliance, independent learning and autonomy; and allows for an immersive experience in which students can take charge of their own learning (Anderson et al., 2016; Breeze et al., 2018).

There is a growing body of literature discussing what interventions can be used at the pre-entry stage to support students in their preparation for university. It was noted that students who participated in a pre-entry programme reported higher self-efficacy and satisfaction compared to typical route students (Knox, 2005; MacFarlane, 2018; Pennington et al., 2018). Several studies found that engaging with a pre-entry programme may have positively influenced students' academic self-efficacy and satisfaction. This is an attribute discussed frequently with many citing it as pivotal to students' positive experiences (Knox, 2005; MacFarlane, 2018; Pennington et al., 2018).

Pre-entry programmes are highlighted as initiatives that help develop academic preparedness and confidence, and foster a sense of belonging (Knox, 2005; MacFarlane, 2018; Pennington et al., 2018). They also support students with the emotional and academic impact of preparing for study at HE level (Fergy et al., 2008). However, most of the pre-entry programmes discussed in the literature are not mandatory, with students only ever invited to take part. As a result, self-selection bias may occur in which it is highly motivated students who choose to engage (Knox, 2005).

Another key theme that emerged from the literature was the importance of managing students' expectations of studying at university level, as it is these expectations that can inhibit or facilitate successful transition (Cole, 2017). Expectations develop from a variety of sources and are described as the interaction of our experience with our anticipated environment (Cole, 2017). Expectations can develop from students interacting with materials provided at school or college, online and digital information, or visits to the

university during open days and recruitment events, many of which present a positive and optimistic view of student life. Several studies highlight the importance of managing student expectations of the programme of study itself, as well as life at the university, and advocate being more transparent with students about what will be expected of them on the course (Coertjens et al., 2016; Cole, 2017; Breeze et al., 2018; Meehan and Howells, 2018). Several studies also suggest that universities should clearly articulate the transition jump and be clear about how students will need to adjust their learning strategies in order to thrive at university (Ribchester et al., 2014; Cole, 2017; Breeze et al., 2018).

There is agreement that integration into the discipline is key, and students should be introduced to a disciplinary mindset and perspective as early as possible (Meehan and Howells, 2018; Breeze et al., 2018; Kubincova et al., 2018). Meehan and Howells (2018) report that students have a readiness to belong to the academic community they are joining and a desire to be fully engaged with their learning (Anderson et al., 2016). Several authors also argue that academics need to create an environment that nurtures trust, belonging and inclusion (Cole, 2017; Meehan and Howells, 2018), and relationships between students and academic staff should crucially be formed as early as possible (Coertjens et al., 2016; Kubincova et al., 2018; MacFarlane, 2018; Meehan and Howells, 2018). University lecturers were often described as distant and unapproachable, and opportunities to learn more about academic staff were welcomed by students, who benefited from seeing academic staff as more human and approachable (Breeze et al., 2018).

A range of key skills and attributes for students to consider when starting university were referred to across a wide range of research:

- Motivation: intrinsic motivation – which compels students to participate in activities, not because of external reward, but because the activity itself satisfies an ‘innate psychological need for competence, relatedness and autonomy’ (Cole, 2017, p. 542) – was viewed as an important factor. A lack of motivation was found to be the main indicator for students dropping out of their first year in HE (Kyndt et al., 2018).
- Self-efficacy and emotional resilience: those with a belief in their own ability to achieve are more likely to engage in autonomous learning and excel at university (Cole, 2017). Emotional resilience is described as crucial during the first few weeks

and months of study, with good emotional resilience helping with academic success and ultimately increased retention (Anderson et al., 2016).

- Growth mindset: several studies discussed the concept of a growth mindset, the importance of developing skills for self-directed learning and empowering students to take charge of their studies (Fergy et al, 2008; Coertjens et al., 2017; Cole, 2017; MacFarlane, 2018). A quantitative study by Wagner and Brahm (cited in Coertjens et al., 2017) showed that students who are afraid of failing their courses have a lower probability of passing their first year.
- Developing a learner identity: as an HE student this can contribute to successful student transition (Anderson et al., 2016). A learner identity is described as social as opposed to personal and is brought about by the 'immersive experience' of university and new connections with fellow students (Anderson et al., 2016).
- Becoming part of a learning community: most researchers agree that being an active part of a community and having a sense of belonging were helpful in supporting transition. Students who develop a connection with other students and academic staff, their surroundings and the subject they are studying are more likely to feel they belong (Meehan and Howells, 2018). Students who feel part of a network of social learning relationships with lecturers and fellow students have an increased feeling of connectedness and more confidence in their ability to learn (Anderson et al., 2016).
- Academic skills: several scholars felt it was important that academic support should complement the course (Fergy et al., 2008; Breeze et al., 2018; Kubincova et al., 2018). Two elements were cited as particularly important to introduce during transition activities: research skills (information gathering, note taking, research methods) and academic writing (essay, report writing, referencing) (Fergy et al., 2008; MacFarlane, 2018).

As the literature has shown, these key attributes are vital to a successful transition, but this is a challenge for one small pre-entry module to address. A pre-entry intervention of any description should form part of a broader holistic offer, ideally driven and framed by the academic programme.

Research Findings

Academic staff value and impact evaluation

As part of our research, two semi-structured interviews were held with the key academic leads from the English programme (26th February 2019) and Nursing programme (3rd March 2019). The project leads agreed a set of open questions, and the following is a summary of the academics' responses, with the topics of the questions highlighted in bold.

English and Nursing leads both stated that their main reason for wanting to be involved with pre-entry was to support student transition and help students feel a connection before they arrived. Given the diverse backgrounds of their students, the Nursing department were keen to be involved, and, as they were often being asked about pre-arrival or preparatory activities, this suggests that their students are already highly engaged. On the other hand, the English department were keen to encourage a growth mindset by asking students to reflect on their existing skills, to let them know what support would be available to them to help them build on these, and to reduce any pre-arrival anxiety.

There was agreement that the most important part of the pre-entry module was making contact with the students before they arrived, and both programme leads felt the staff and student videos were essential in bridging this gap. The videos allow students to meet their tutors and hear existing students talk about their experiences, which the English lead felt offered aspirational role models for new intakes. The Nursing staff were very engaged in discussion-board activities on their pre-entry module and highlighted these as useful tools to encourage the students to engage with each other before they arrived

In terms of the main benefits of the pre-entry module for students, both academics agreed that this was creating a sense of belonging and community. Throughout the interviews, both Nursing and English leads also suggested that the introduction of academic skills at this stage was also important in order for the students to relieve any anxiety or nerves and to reinforce a learning community. The main benefits for the departments were unquestionably supporting retention and a successful transition. Both programme leads were pleased with the levels of engagement from their students and the perception was one of success.

The final questions in the interview focused on the value and impact of the pre-entry module and links to student retention. These were undoubtedly more difficult for the academics to answer, as there was no substantial supporting evidence, but both had received positive feedback from staff and students. The Nursing department reported that their students had fed back that they felt more comfortable with their transition because of the module, and English tutors reported that their students were very engaged and enthusiastic on course commencement. The English and Nursing leads both raised the issue of the non-compulsory nature of the module, but whereas the English lead was happy that engagement levels demonstrated a commitment from their students, the Nursing lead raised concerns that some students may feel disadvantaged if they did not take part. Neither academics could confirm a direct relationship with completion of the pre-entry module and student retention, but both were pleased to be a part of the initiative.

Student engagement and conversion

To establish whether there were any links between module engagement and student conversion to degree programmes, we investigated further within the data available from English September 2017, English September 2018, Nursing March 2018 and Nursing September 2018 intakes. English and Nursing students were invited to take part in Stepping Up via an email containing their subject-specific course link and access instructions (Figure 2). 92% (502) of the invitations sent were opened, leaving only 8% (46) unopened. There was a slightly higher percentage of Nursing students who opened the invitation, which we believe was influenced by academic staff promoting the course through events such as a pre-arrival coffee morning.

Figure 2: Invitation Engagement Data

	Sent invitation	Opened email	Did not open email	Accessed module
Eng Sep 17	57	48 (84%)	9 (16%)	45 (79%)
Eng Sep 18	102	92 (89%)	11 (11%)	48 (47%)
Nur Mar 18	141	132 (94%)	9 (6%)	86 (61%)
Nur Sep 18	248	231 (93%)	17 (7%)	161 (65%)
	548	502 (92%)	46 (8%)	340 (62%)

Module completion rates were similar across Nursing and English, with an average of 45% (152) completing the full course (Figure 3) and both September 2018 intakes seeing a

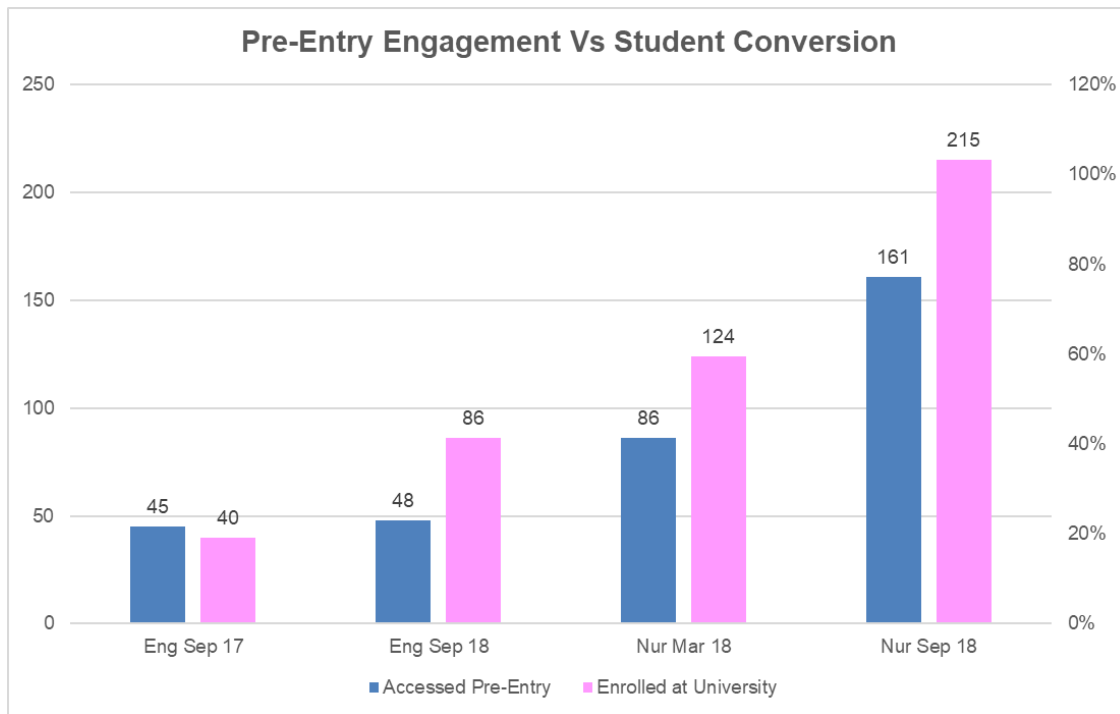
higher completion rate for both subjects. However, it is possible more students completed the full module than the data indicates owing to design limitations within the Blackboard Open Education platform. The platform relies on a manual action (selecting a 'completed' button) by the students to record a positive completion of each step. The students can complete the full module without ever selecting this option, but the platform does not have the capability to record this engagement. For this reason, any ambiguous engagements were recorded as follows: students who indicated they had completed Step 4 but omitted to indicate completion of an earlier step were considered a completion; if Step 4 had not been indicated but Steps 1, 2 or 3 had, these were identified as a part completion; and if none of the steps were indicated as complete this was recorded as enrolment only.

Figure 3. Pre-entry module engagement.

	Accessed module	Enrolled only	Part completion	Full completion
Eng Sep 17	45 (79%)	20 (44%)	11 (24%)	14 (31%)
Eng Sep 18	48 (47%)	14 (29%)	7 (15%)	27 (56%)
Nur Mar 18	86 (61%)	59 (69%)	10 (12%)	17 (20%)
Nur Sep 18	161 (65%)	34 (21%)	33 (20%)	94 (58%)
	340 (62%)	127 (37%)	61 (18%)	152 (45%)

To further explore a possible relationship between pre-entry engagement and student conversion, we mapped a comparison of those who had been sent an initial email invitation and had accessed the pre-entry module, to those who had been sent an initial email invitation and had fully enrolled at EHU (Figure 4). This data was sourced from the EHU Quercus Student Records System and from Blackboard Open Education.

Figure 4. Pre-entry engagement vs student conversion rates.



At first glance the data suggests engagement with the pre-entry module may impact on student conversion with good pre-entry engagement and student conversion observed for English September 2017. However, the following year saw an increase in students enrolling on the degree programme but only slightly more students engaging with the pre-entry module (Figure 4).

It is also evident from the data that a higher percentage of students who had engaged with the pre-entry module (87%) went on to fully enrol at EHU; however, only 53% of those completed the full module (Figure 5). However, this could be coincidental evidence, as students who are taking part in an optional pre-entry module may be considered to already be highly engaged. The number of students who registered but subsequently withdrew from their programme of study, who cancelled, or who had no record is higher for those who merely enrolled on the pre-entry module (7%) compared to those who fully completed it (5%).

Figure 5. Pre-entry conversion data.

Pre-entry	University programme of study			
Enrolled only	Registered	Withdrawn	Cancelled	Unknown/No record
Eng Sep 17	10 (22%)	1 (2%)	0	9 (20%)
Eng Sep 18	8 (17%)	0	2 (4%)	4 (8%)
Nur Mar 18	13 (15%)	1 (1%)	0	3 (3%)
Nur Sep 18	30 (19%)	2 (1%)	0	2 (1%)
	61 (18%)	4 (1%)	2 (1%)	18 (5%)

Pre-entry	University programme of study			
Part completion	Registered	Withdrawn	Cancelled	Unknown/No record
Eng Sep 17	10 (22%)	1 (2%)	0	0
Eng Sep 18	7 (15%)	0	0	0
Nur Mar 18	8 (9%)	2 (2%)	0	0
Nur Sep 18	31 (19%)	2 (1%)	0	0
	56 (16%)	5 (1%)	0	0

Pre-entry	University programme of study			
Full completion	Registered	Withdrawn	Cancelled	Unknown/No record
Eng Sep 17	13 (29%)	0	0	1 (2%)
Eng Sep 18	27 (56%)	0	0	0
Nur Mar 18	55 (64%)	2 (2%)	1 (1%)	1 (1%)
Nur Sep 18	85 (53%)	7 (4%)	1 (1%)	1 (1%)
	180 (53%)	9 (3%)	2 (1%)	3 (1%)

Student satisfaction, value and impact evaluation

Student satisfaction

To gain a deeper understanding of students' motivations for taking part in the pre-entry module, we needed to engage with them directly. We already knew from existing substantial satisfaction data that they had enjoyed taking part in the module. A short satisfaction questionnaire, using Bristol Online Surveys (BOS), has been embedded within all pre-entry modules since 2017, and 164 students have provided feedback. Through analysis of the most frequently used words and themes in free text responses, we were able to understand the key differences students indicated having experienced after taking part in the pre-entry module (Figure 6).

Figure 6. Student satisfaction themes.

Some free text responses that succinctly summarise the overarching themes from the student responses include:

It has put me at ease and made me less worried about starting. (March 2018)

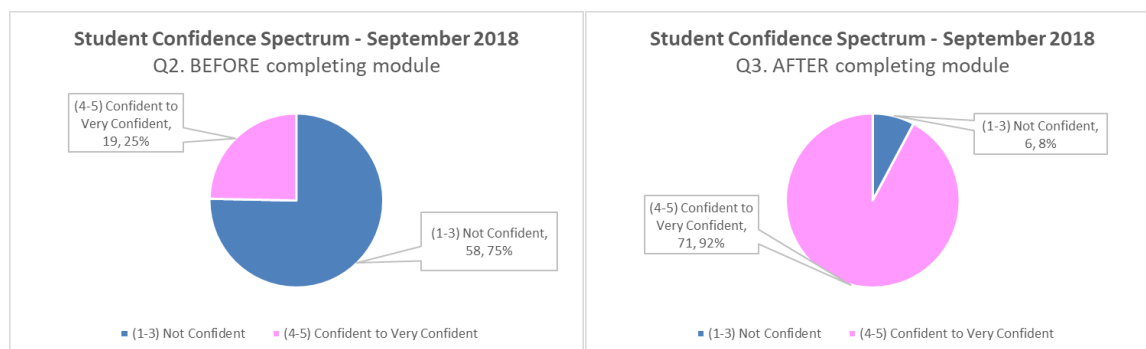
Since completing the Stepping Up module I feel very confident that once I start university that there are things that my lecturers and personal tutor can assist me. Also, I fully believe that if I was ever in any difficulty that I could ask for help and use the [Learning] services when I need further support with essay writing or study skills. (September 2018)

Completing the Stepping Up module has given me more confidence on completing the whole experience of 'uni'. It has assured me that I will be fine throughout my experience as there are lots of different places and people that I can go to for advice when I'm struggling. It has explained what is expected of me in great detail and it has explained how I can produce work that is the best of my ability. Another thing is that it has also started to teach me about all the different words that I will be using though out [sic]s my course as well as increasing my knowledge on how to reference. (April 2019)

We also conducted a series of semi-structured interviews with students who had taken part in the September 2017 pre-entry module. Feedback from these indicated that students had been keen to know what to expect when they arrived on campus; they found the information contained in the module comforting and reassuring; they felt there was a significant time gap between A-Levels and starting university, and that the module helped to ease their apprehensions; they described accessing the module as getting in the right mindset and thinking about academic work again; and they found their first weeks at university less daunting because of the feelings of familiarity provided by the staff and student videos.

With regard to English and Nursing, 28% (59) of the students who took part in the September 2018 pre-entry module completed the final evaluation survey. 88% (59) of these students enjoyed or enjoyed very much completing the module, and 100% (59) would recommend it to other students starting at university. In September 2018 an additional confidence spectrum question was introduced to the survey, and the results saw a significant self-reported increase in students' confidence on completion of the pre-entry module (Figure 7).

Figure 7. Student confidence spectrum



Value and impact

Our pedagogical research project now needed to focus on assessing the value and impact on student behaviours and attitudes towards their transition. In compliance with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), only students who consented to take part in further evaluation activity via the September 2018 Stepping up to Edge Hill University Evaluation were contacted. This limited further research to 53 Nursing and 7 English students. These

60 students were invited to take part in a focus group on dates in April and May 2019, with a £10 Amazon voucher provided as an incentive to those who attended. Despite reminder emails issued closer to the events, only one student contributed to a focus group (3rd May 2019), which we will henceforth refer to as a semi-structured interview. A subsequent Stepping Up to Edge Hill University - Value and Impact Feedback Survey 2019 was distributed in May 2019, and again only one student provided feedback via this method.

The semi-structured interview and survey asked the same questions, with the semi-structured interview able to offer more clarity and explore in more detail than the questionnaire allowed. Both students completed the Stepping Up to Edge Hill University English 2018 pre-entry module, were female and from the North West region. Age was the only variant with the semi-structured interview attendant indicating that she was 25+ and the survey respondent indicating she was 18-25. The semi-structured interview student identified herself as a mature student and, in addition to completing the pre-entry module, had also taken part in the university's Foundation Certificate Fastrack: Preparation for Higher Education programme. No further demographical data was requested for the purposes of this research.

A brief demonstration of the pre-entry module was provided during the semi-structured interview, which assisted with subsequent questions, but was not included in the survey. As a result, the survey respondent focused her feedback on an alternative pre-entry activity provided independently by the English Literature department. Whilst this focus invalidated this student's contribution towards the specific evaluation of the Stepping Up module, we were able to use their feedback in evaluating more general pre-entry support. Both responses suggest that, although the students enjoyed completing the module, it was not a particularly memorable activity. Alternatively, with so much happening during the induction period, it is difficult for students to remember individual activities as separate entities, especially when there is overlap with other pre-entry initiatives.

Although the pre-entry module is optional, both students completed all four steps, with the semi-structured interview student citing her age as the main reason for taking part, as she had not studied for a significant period of time and wanted to familiarise herself with university life. The survey respondent, although referring to an alternative activity, wanted to be prepared for her course and thought it would ease transition from A-levels to

university. The semi-structured interview student felt there were a couple of elements missing from the pre-entry module, most notably key logistical information such as a course timetable. As a mature student with family commitments, she felt it would have been useful to know in advance the weekly structure including examples of evening classes. The student would also have liked to have been given more detail about the reading expectations of the course to better prepare and manage her study time.

Both students agreed that engaging with the pre-entry activity helped them in the period before they started university, and that it eased their transition into the course. They understood more about what would be expected of them during lectures, seminars and assessment activities. The semi-structured interview student, who had previously completed FastTrack, said that she would have managed without completing the pre-entry course, but did find it useful. Having previously focused on an Education pathway, she felt that this course allowed her to engage with the English department and understood more about their feedback process as a result.

In terms of the impact of pre-entry support, both students felt more prepared and less anxious about starting their course. The staff videos were highlighted as a positive element within the module, as they allowed them to 'meet' their tutors before they arrived. Once the students did arrive, the pre-entry module was discussed by their tutors, but again this was not regarded as a memorable activity by the students.

Conclusion and recommendations

Our research has shown that student satisfaction with the Stepping Up to Edge Hill University pre-entry module is generally high. However, whilst there is some evidence to suggest a relationship with student conversion onto the programme of study, it has been difficult to identify a direct correlation owing to a wide range of variables. The research found some indicators of added value and a positive impact on the students' transitional experience, but these were self-reported, and at this stage there is limited robust evidence to support a connection between the pre-entry module and, for example, improved student retention.

The study has shown that a successful transition can be supported by pre-entry activity, but this should form part of a broader holistic offer driven and framed by the academic programme/department in order to support the development of a disciplinary mindset and the creation of a learning community. Our research suggests the Stepping Up to Edge Hill University pre-entry module would benefit from the implementation of the following:

- **A review of key stakeholders and their roles and responsibilities.** The literature shows that pre-entry activity is most effective when it is framed and integrated into the academic programme so as to ensure a disciplinary mindset from the beginning. This requires significant commitment from academics within the programme and relies on strong collaborative working relationships between academics, learning developers and other professional support services.
- **A review of the mode of delivery of pre-entry information.** Our pre-entry module provides students with a similar experience to our VLE, which is why Blackboard Open Education has so far been the platform of choice. We need to assess alternative options to delivering key pre-entry information that encourages students to engage with the module, the university and each other, and ensures they have agency. Whatever mode of delivery is chosen, information should be provided in a mobile and dynamic way, and the platform should allow for intuitive content design.
- **A review of content.** The content of any pre-entry activity needs to match the essential skills and attributes identified in the literature: motivation, self-efficacy and emotional resilience, academic skills, growth mindset, and developing a learner identity. Content also needs to provide open, honest and realistic key logistical information about the programme of study. Wider opportunities for peer to peer engagement should also be investigated. This recommendation would benefit from further research with EHU students to ensure content matches expectations.

Overall, the findings from this small-scale pedagogical research project do provide evidence that there is some value to the Stepping Up to Edge Hill University pre-entry module; however, this was a limited research project focusing on two academic programmes, and further exploration, with more extensive student evaluation data, is required to investigate the impact of the pre-entry module further.

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