

# **The Integrated Foundation Year Level 3 Programme and the role of the Student Transition Adviser**

Tracy Butterworth – Student Transition Adviser  
Student and Staff Services

# Session Outline

- University Context
- The unique role of the Student Transition Adviser
- Engagement of students
- Working relationships with Academics and support services
- Benefits and impact
- Lessons learned
- The way forward

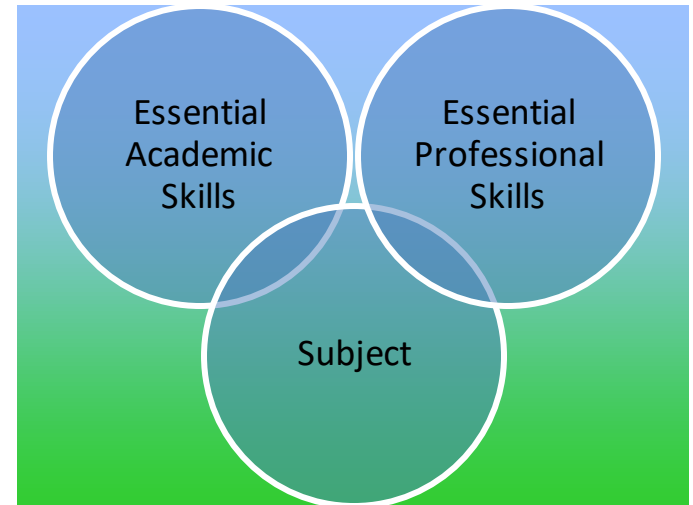
# Our University



- The University of Cumbria was set up in 2007.
- We are dispersed across five campuses ranging from Carlisle to London... with Ambleside and Lancaster in between!
- We have a strong commitment to widening participation - over 60% of our students have a WP profile.



# The Integrated Foundation Year



- The foundation entry is an alternative route into Higher Education.
- Designed for students who may not have the necessary grades for an honours degree programme .
- For students who are returning to study later in life

# Targeting Integrated Foundation Year Students

- September 2015 Carlisle and Lancaster 63 students in total on a limited number of programmes.
- September 2016 Carlisle and Lancaster; expansion of the scheme to 107 students.
- September 2017 Carlisle, Lancaster and Ambleside; further expansion of the programme; figures currently the same as 2016.

# The Integrated Foundation Year programmes 2017/2018

## Lancaster

- 5 Business
- 2 Health and Wellbeing
- 2 Institute of Education
- 2 Sports

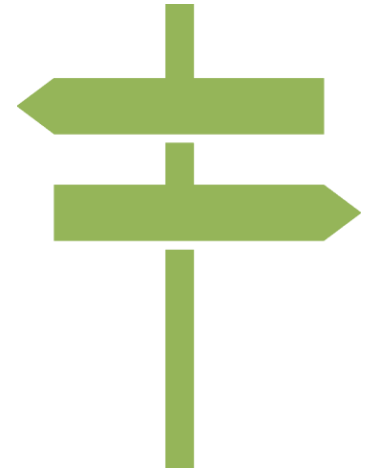
## Carlisle

- 1 Law
- 1 Policing
- 7 Social Sciences
- 2 Health and Wellbeing
- 1 Institute of Education
- 5 Science

## Ambleside

- 3 Conservation
- 2 Outdoor Studies
- 1 Science

# Our IFY



## The integrated foundation year

- Four year undergraduate degree programmes
- Generic modules:
  - Essential Academic Skills semester 1
  - Essential Professional Skills semester 2
- Subject specific level 3 modules in their area of academic interest

## The student transition advisor

- Bespoke support
- 121 advice
- Academic skills delivery on the Essential Academic Skills module
- Signposting
- Personal Development delivery on the Essential Professional Skills module (based on 'Mindset' & 'Mental Toughness' models).

# The Integrated Foundation Year

## Learning at Level 3: The new challenge

### The benefits

- Widening participation
- More time to aid transition to HE
- Reduction in attrition
- Students who study on the Level 3 are “more clued up on how things work and able to support new Level 4 students” (Mark Magas, Senior Lecturer: Pharmacology).

### The challenge

- Non-standard entry
- Lower entry profile or break in study
- Additional support required - breaking down barriers to learning
- Struggle with independent study
- Difficulty with the “traditional lecture”

# Students in Transition

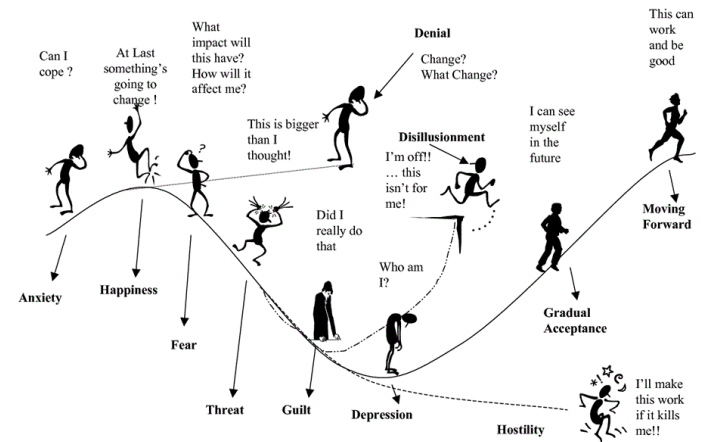
## Why do they leave?

- Imposter syndrome
- Not feeling settled
- Finding the challenge of HE too much
- Feeling like they don't belong
- The wrong course choice
- Financial implications

## How students need to feel...

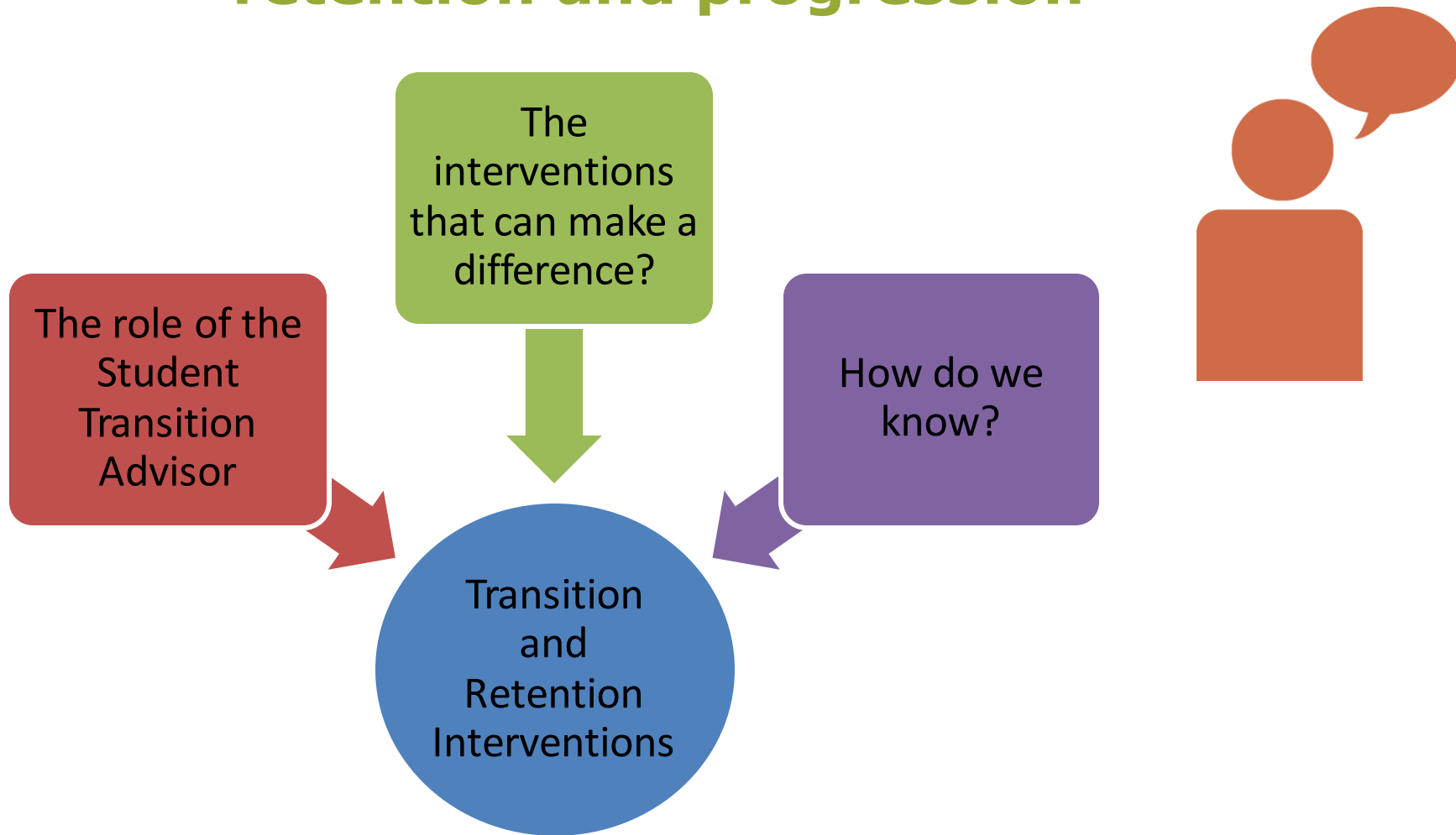
- Supported (with issues such as homesickness)
- A sense of belonging; confident in their ability to succeed
- Challenged.

The Process of Transition



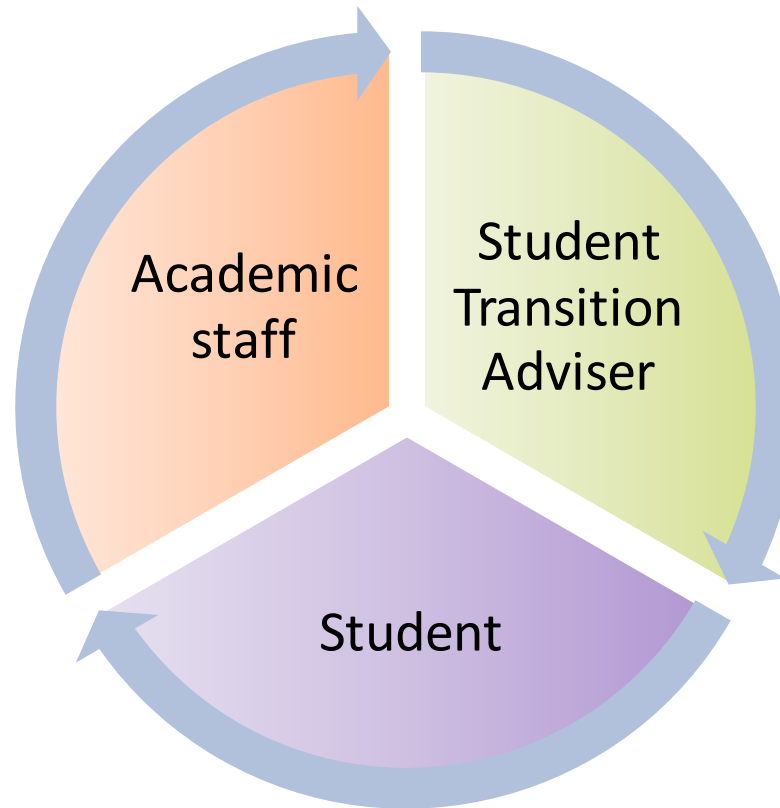
© 2000/3 J M Fisher. A free resource from [www.businessballs.com](http://www.businessballs.com).

# How we support student transition, retention and progression



# Working with Academic Staff

*“Many of the students have profound difficulties with learning for many different reasons. It would be impossible to cater to all of these needs just using the lecture time alone”.*



*“The Student Transition Adviser working with Programme Leaders has allowed me to concentrate more specifically on the subject specific aspects of the modules,”*

# Working closely with the Personal Tutor

- The Student Transition Adviser complements and supports the Personal Tutor.

This is an example of how it works:

*"Given the nature of the IL3 programme and the requirement to monitor and aid students in remaining engaged in their chosen programme, the support of Tracy has been invaluable with regards to both academic and pastoral support of the students, but also support of the Personal Tutor and Course Leader with sharing the administrative burden which is generated. Without the support of Tracy during semester 1 for example (when we had to conduct a seemingly endless number of Progress Reviews and rescheduled tutorials), I would have felt particularly over-loaded. I would not like to have to manage the IL3 cohort (in addition to 3 other year groups) without this support".*

# The role of the Student Transition Advisor



- We provide students with personal and study information and advice.
- We signpost students to other professional services where appropriate.
- We deliver on the generic Essential Academic Skills and Professional Skills modules.
- We help to co-ordinate support for students liaising with a range of academic staff; from programme leaders to module tutors and lecturers.
- The first six weeks are the most important (Yorke 1999)

# The interventions that can make a difference

- Students don't always engage for a variety of reasons; denial; anxiety; unhappiness, fear of failure, homesickness, etc.
- First year (2015) Initial, informal One-to-one's.
- Second year (2016) Referral system from Programme Leaders/Personal Tutors/lecturers
- September 2017 Flagging up system
- Delivery on the generic modules.



# Evaluation of impact

## Student Feedback

- BOS Survey; 2016 and 2017 (over 60% response rate)
- Transcripts
- One to one interviews.

“The student transition advisor has helped me by engaging with my academic progress throughout the year”

“Her door was always open and once I recognised that I realised that she was a valuable resource”.

# Impact of support for progressing Integrated Foundation Year Students

- More awareness of services available that they themselves can use, as well as for signposting other students
- Increased Confidence
- Improved academic skills
- Supporting others – self worth
- Gained a good grounding in their subject area and will know the academic staff.

# Impact of engagement for students with the Student Advisor

- Improved retention and progression;  
**44 out of 60 (73.3%) in 2015/2016**
- Increased Confidence
- Becoming part of the University community
- Articulating and translating University “speak”
- Becoming Peer Mentors



# A Formula for Retention Checklist

## The 'Retention Formula'

$$\text{Retention} = AC + EId + (E + C).PaC + ExS$$

**AC** = Appropriate Course Choice,

**EId** = Early Identification of vulnerable students

**(E + C)** = (Early and Continuous)

**PaC** = Proactive Contact

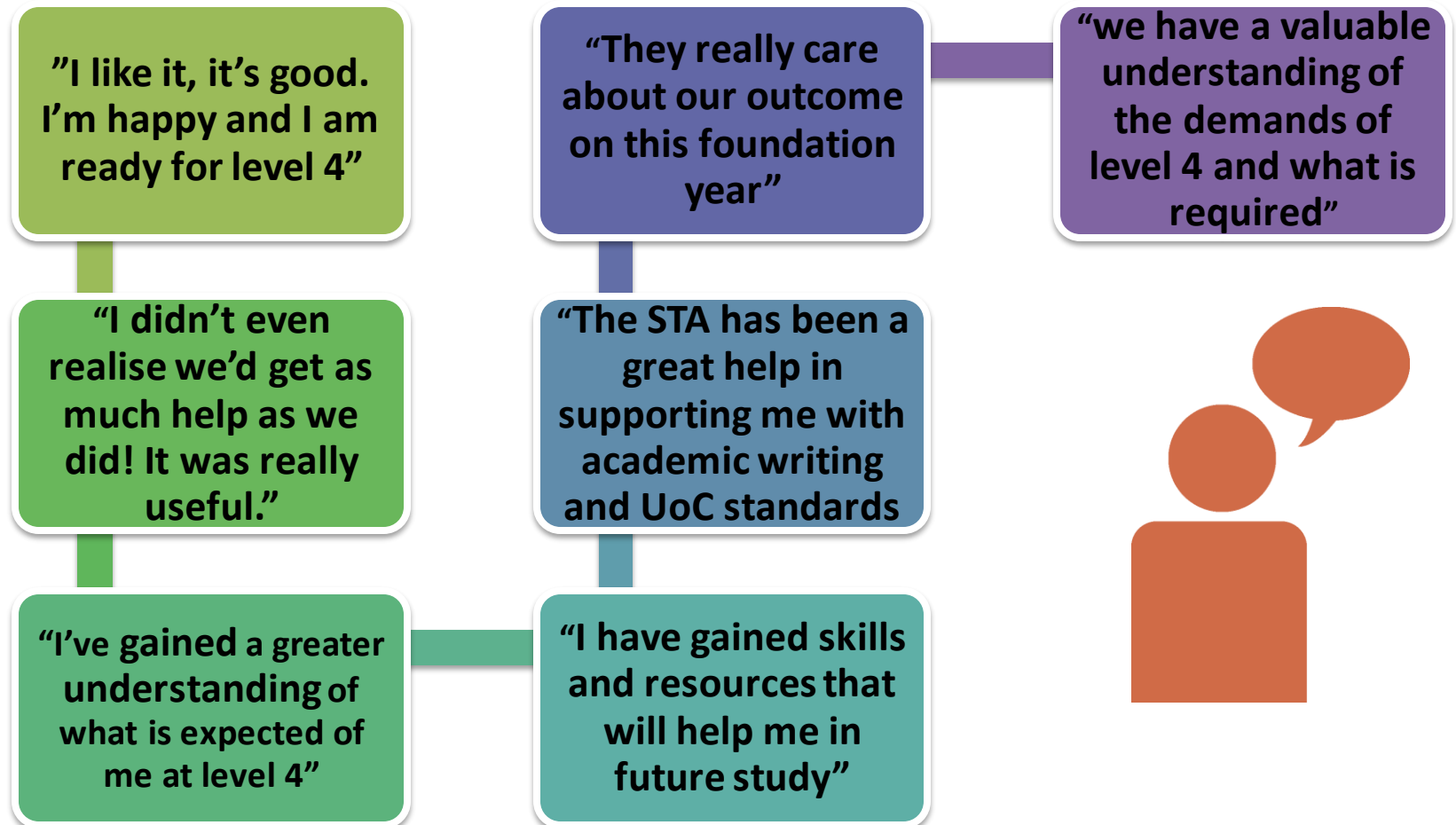
**ExS** = External Support

(the Simpson-Seidmann formula...?!)

<http://www.authorstream.com/Presentation/ormondsimpson-403840-formula-retetion-student-retention-dropout-attribution-persistence-formula2-narrated-education-ppt-powerpoint/>

# How do we know?

## Some feedback from our students



# Feedback from some of our Academic staff

**“Our level 3 STAs are accessible, flexible and committed to addressing the needs of their students.”**

**“I would like to see the STA support extended to level 4. The jump from college to university is very difficult for many students at level 4.”**

**“Both STAs are experienced teaching professionals, able to exercise their judgement to the benefit of students, lecturers and the organisation. They provide a multi-layered support service which is vital for Level 3 students.”**

# Lessons learned so far

- Within the student experience the foundation year is likely to contribute towards a happier experience for our students
- Positive working relationships with academic staff are vital but not always easy to establish due to time constraints
- Good communication between academic staff and advisers is vital
- Early alerts – the sooner the better.



# How September 2017 is looking for Integrated Foundation Year students

- A new student-led maths club in Carlisle (The maths café)
- Promotional film in the making by students for students to raise awareness of Mental Health and Wellbeing Services
- A new Forensic Science Society
- A number of students will become Peer Mentors



# Discussion and sharing of Best Practice

Thank you for listening  
Any questions?

My question to you:

**Transition**  **Retention**  **Progression**

**What works?**

**Do *you* have any good examples of Best Practice that you would like to share?**

# Bibliography

John Fisher. 2012. *The Process of Transition*. [ONLINE] Available at:  
<http://www.businessballs.com/personalchangeprocess.htm> [Accessed 23 May 2017]

Eunice Lumsden, Heather McBryde-Wilding and Hannah Rose. 2010. *Collaborative practice in enhancing the first year student experience in Higher Education*. [ONLINE] Available at: <http://nectar.northampton.ac.uk/3462/1/Lumsden20103462.pdf>  
[Accessed 1 June 2017]

Janelle Papay. 2010. *Schlossberg's transition theory*. [ONLINE] Available at:  
<http://www.ict-21.ch/com-ict/IMG/pdf/Schlossberg%E2%80%99s-Theory-for-Adult-Transition.pdf>  
[Accessed 1 June 2017]

Dr Julie Hulme. 2013. *Mind the gap: transitions into higher education*. [ONLINE] Available at:  
[https://www.hw.ac.uk/services/docs/Julie\\_Hulme.pdf](https://www.hw.ac.uk/services/docs/Julie_Hulme.pdf) [Accessed 23 May 2017]

Mantz Yorke, 1999. *Smoothing the transition into higher education: what can be learned from student non-completion?*  
[ONLINE] Available at:  
<http://www.aair.org.au/app/webroot/media/pdf/JIR/Journal%20of%20Institutional%20Research%20in%20Australasia%20and%20JIR/Volume%209,%20No.%201%20May%202000/Yorke.pdf>

Tracy Butterworth  
Student Transition Adviser  
Integrated Foundation Year  
University of Cumbria  
Fusehill Street  
Carlisle  
CA1 2HH  
01228 616170  
[tracy.butterworth@cumbria.ac.uk](mailto:tracy.butterworth@cumbria.ac.uk)