

Session title: Beyond belonging - building mattering into programme design

Session type: Workshop (60 mins)

Presenter: Professor Rebecca Hodgson, University of Manchester

Session summary:

Much focus is placed on belonging, but arguably what has more impact on student and staff wellbeing is knowing that we matter. 'Mattering' in higher education can be defined as approaches and interventions which show that the university cares, and that students and staff matter as individuals. This practical workshop will use a research-based framework and evidence informed recommendations, providing participants with tools to design and manage programmes to enhance both student and staff experience.

Session outline:

As universities, we want to support all our students as effectively as possible - their mental health and wellbeing, their experience, and their outcomes. Alongside this, we are under increased scrutiny and pressure to meet OfS B3 and TEF benchmarks, especially in relation to awarding gaps and disparities in experience and outcomes. The resultant pressures on staff can manifest both in terms of a sense of duty and responsibility towards our diverse students and their needs, and a pervasive sense of being measured against internal and external metrics and performance indicators. In a post-pandemic workplace, creating the conditions for staff to cope effectively with these pressures is essential.

This workshop aims to provide an 'on the ground' practical exploration of 'things that work' in terms of creating a positive experience for both students and staff. The effective design, management, and organisation of programmes is paramount for student experience, a prerequisite of which is a supportive and inclusive work culture centred on 'mattering' that provides the conditions for colleagues (and thus students) to thrive.

Programme design recommendations and evidenced based interventions are supported by my co-authored Advance HE literature review on student success (access, retention, attainment, progression), with the creation of positive and supportive cultures underpinned by a theoretical framework of mattering and self-efficacy drawn from my earlier empirical research.

Outline of the workshop:

0-15mins: What is mattering? Overview of empirical basis, summary of student success literature review and resulting evidence-based recommendations.

15-20mins: Questions and initial comments.

20-40mins: Participant group task: applying concepts and ideas to their own programmes. Where is mattering already evident, for students and staff? How could it be further enhanced? Use of technology to create summaries that can be shared during and after the workshop.

40-55mins: Feedback and discussion from task.

55-60mins: Summary and close.

References:

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- Elliott, G. C., Kao, S., & Grant, A.-M. (2004). Mattering: Empirical Validation of a Social-Psychological Concept. *Self and Identity*, 3(4), 339-354
- Hodgson, R (2017) *New lecturers' journeys: the formation of the academic in higher education*, Sheffield Hallam University, Sheffield
- Hodgson, R (2018) A new model for academic identity, The 6th International Conference for Academic Identities, Hiroshima, Japan, 19-21 September 2018 <http://rihe.hiroshima-u.ac.jp/en/2018/09/9-19en/>
- France, M. K., & Finney, S. J. (2009). What Matters in the Measurement of Mattering? A Construct Validity Study. *Measurement and Evaluation in Counselling and Development*, 42(2), 104-120.
- May, V. (2011). Self, Belonging and Social Change. *Sociology*, 45(3), 363-378