



# FYE IN THE UK AND EUROPE

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Chair of the Annual European First Year  
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Previous Head of Student Retention Team  
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# Outline

- A brief history
- EFYE
- Examples of activity for enhancing students' first year experiences
- Outcomes?
- Strategic advice
- Common issues and interests
- Developing research and literature

# Before EFYE: some key moments?

- Influence of John Gardner & National Resource Center for First Year Experience and Students in Transition USA
- UK concerns about retention, and data tracking by HEFCE alongside widening participation (opening access)
- Some concerns about progression and retention in other parts of Europe, e.g. Netherlands and Sweden
- Australian work on retention and FYE
- Higher Education Academy funding for 2 research projects on FYE (2005?): Harvey et al literature reviews and Yorke and Longden national empirical research
- Scottish QAA theme: enhancing FYE
- Institutional strategy (Teesside University FYE strategy in early 2000s)

## **THE FRESHMAN YEAR EXPERIENCE**

M. Lee Upcraft  
John N. Gardner  
and Associates

### **National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition**

- ▶ Founded in 1986
- ▶ Clearinghouse for research, policy, and best practices for all postsecondary student transitions
- ▶ Supporting and advancing efforts to improve student learning and transitions into and through higher education

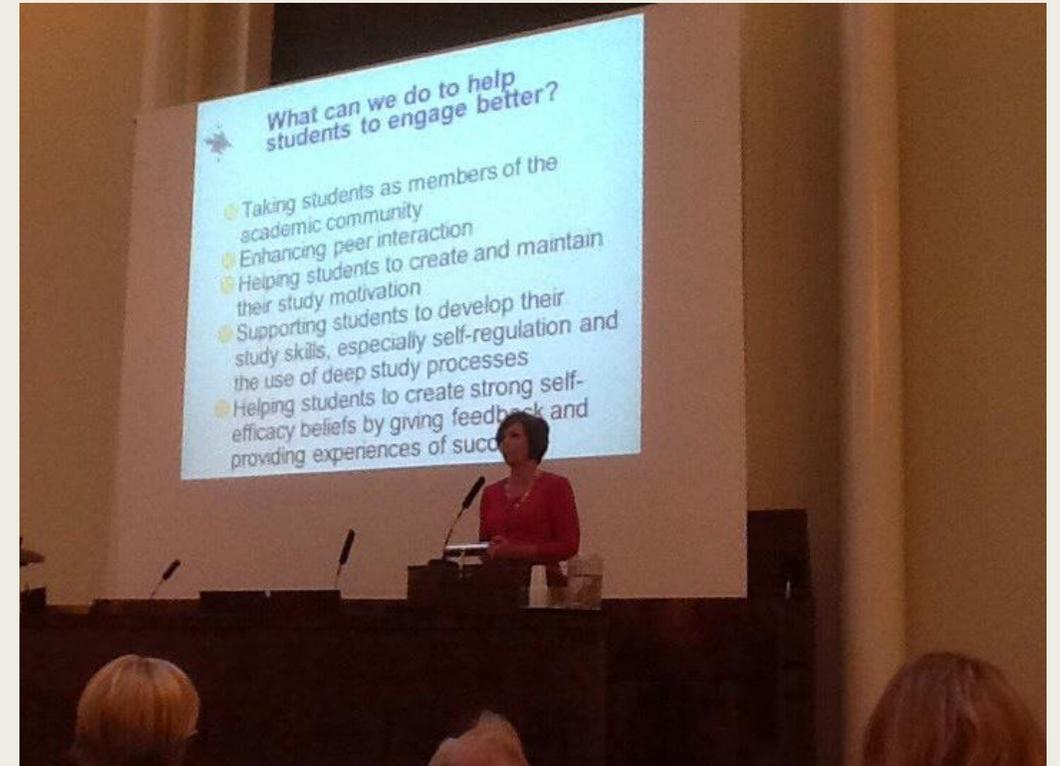
# A European project

- Set up in 2005/6
- Started with a conversation at the IFYE between British and Swedish delegates
- First conference hosted in UK by Teesside university (who had been co-hosts of international event for a number of years) four countries represented
- In 2015/16 now 17+ countries and 2015 conference in Bergen, Norway and 2016 in Ghent, Belgium



# Examples of activity

- Induction/orientation
- Curriculum change
- Support for specific groups
- Transition support
- Community building and discipline belonging
- Peer support
- Personal tutoring, individual/group coaching
- Skills support and development
- Online facilities
- Institutional strategic change? ...



# > positive outcomes

- Students - Evidence of improved retention, greater student satisfaction, improved academic success, increased participation and engagement?
- Staff - engaged staff (support and academic), teaching first years is a joy not a chore, discipline cultures of 'belonging'
- Institutions – improved retention, better scores in satisfaction ratings, advantage for student recruitment?
- For EFYE we are also seeing collaboration across countries And roles, and the motivation that comes from this



# Common ground



- The nature of transitions from pre-experience into HE and diversity of students' pre-experience and lived experience
- Academic cultures
- Student health and wellbeing concerns
- Skills development issues
- For many countries and institutions retention and progression (though we may measure it differently and have different levels, it concerns most of us!)
- Growing expectations from young people?
- Increasing interest in data from institutions and governments?

# Strategic advice ...

- Make connections across staff
- Make connections across ideas/issues/agendas
- Make a financial, as well as an ethical, case
- Be open
- Make sure someone senior is committed to the agenda and involve people at all levels
- And don't forget the students!
- Don't try and transfer an idea wholesale – think about the context carefully
- There is no one perfect fix – but a lot of small things added together, and a 'will' (passion?), tailored to the local context



# Literature?

- UK

Yorke (and Longden) (2005) Harvey et al (2005)

Thomas et al (2013)

Johnston, B. (2010) *The First Year at University: Teaching students in transition* Open University Press

Other names to watch: Foster and Lawther; Ody and Carey; Michelle Morgan, Van de Velden

- Wider Europe

Jansen, E. and colleagues; Van de Mosselear and colleagues; Lindblom-Ylänne; Postareff



# Thanks for your interest

## Diane

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