

DRAFT National Guidelines for Good Practice in Student Orientation

**5th Annual SANRC FYE CONFERENCE
2019**

22-24 May 2019

Garden Court Marine Parade, Durban

Annsilla Nyar, PhD

SANRC



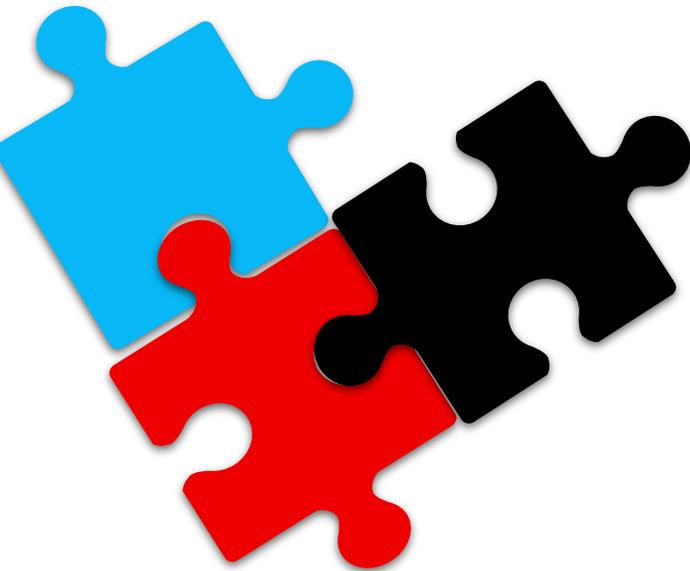
SUPPORTED BY:



Key 'Ice-breaker' Questions

This project is about ***strengthening a national focus on the matter of orientation for students at institutions of higher education in South Africa***; it involves a phased multi-activity approach:

- 1) Preliminary work on attaining project buy-in from orientation representatives/coordinators at SA's universities through platforms such as a biennial Orientation Summit (the first Orientation Summit was held in 2017 at the Annual SANRC FYE Conference 2017)
- 2) Work conducted on *National Guidelines for Good Practice in Orientation*
- 3) Commentary and feedback on proposed draft of *National Guidelines for Good Practice in Orientation*, with endorsement from the national orientation community to result in finalised draft of *National Guidelines for Good Practice in Orientation*
- 4) Partnerships with nationally based stakeholders such as Universities South Africa (USAf)
- 5) Commencement of broad national awareness campaign
- 6) Continuing work on improving practice in orientation at SA's institutions of higher education

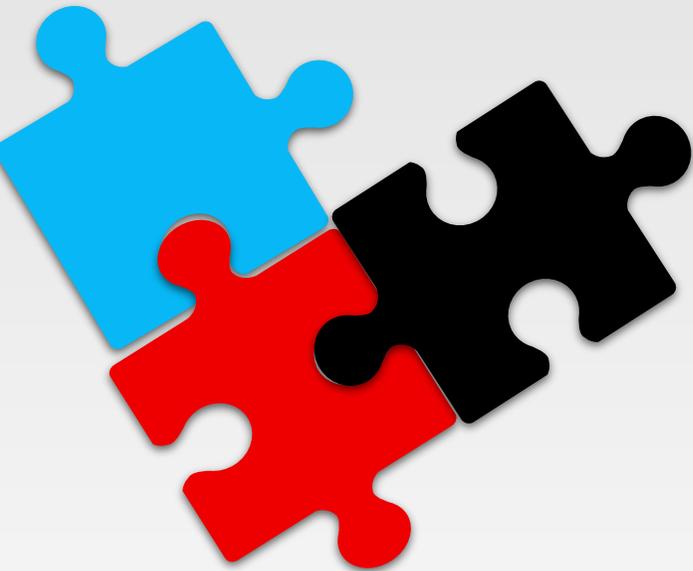


Background to the Project:

Toward a National Orientation Campaign

This project is about *strengthening a national focus on the matter of orientation for students at institutions of higher education in South Africa*; it involves a phased multi-activity approach:

- 1) Preliminary work on attaining project buy-in from orientation representatives/coordinators at SA's universities through platforms such as a biennial Orientation Summit (the first Orientation Summit was held in 2017 at the Annual SANRC FYE Conference 2017)
- 2) Work conducted on *National Guidelines for Good Practice in Orientation*
- 3) Commentary and feedback on proposed draft of *National Guidelines for Good Practice in Orientation*, with endorsement from the national orientation community to result in finalised draft of *National Guidelines for Good Practice in Orientation*
- 4) Partnerships with nationally based stakeholders such as Universities South Africa (USAf)
- 5) Commencement of broad national awareness campaign
- 6) Continuing work on improving practice in orientation at SA's institutions of higher education



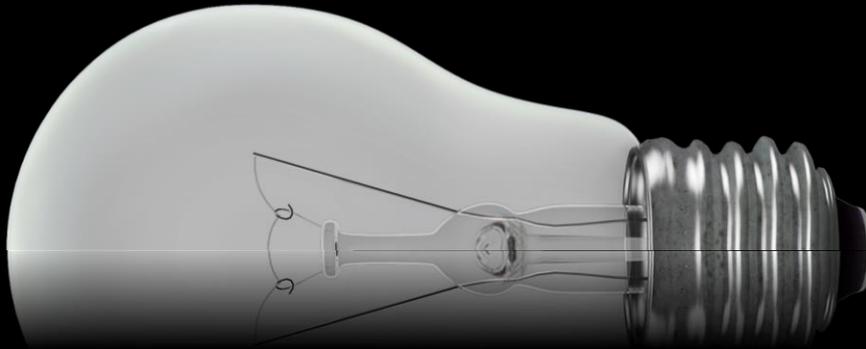
Key Questions:

Toward a National Orientation Campaign



- How much do we know about our current national orientation practice?
- How can we learn more about current national orientation practice?
- How best can we share with each other what we do know about orientation (as it is practiced at each institution as well as nationally?)
- How can South Africa 'catch up' with the international trend in improving orientation practice?
- Are there examples of good practice from which we can learn and enhance our own work in the field of orientation?
- What does the literature on orientation and student success tell us?

Good Practice Strategy #1
Create and commit to a vision
for Orientation



Good Practice Strategy #1

Create and commit to a vision for Orientation

A useful starting point is that of a vision for orientation which is “coherent, well-understood and which can be easily articulated by stakeholders” (Nyar, 2019: 6)

Broad Long-Term Goals for Orientation

Holistic Student Development | Academic Achievement | Student Persistence | Overall, student success

Key Objectives

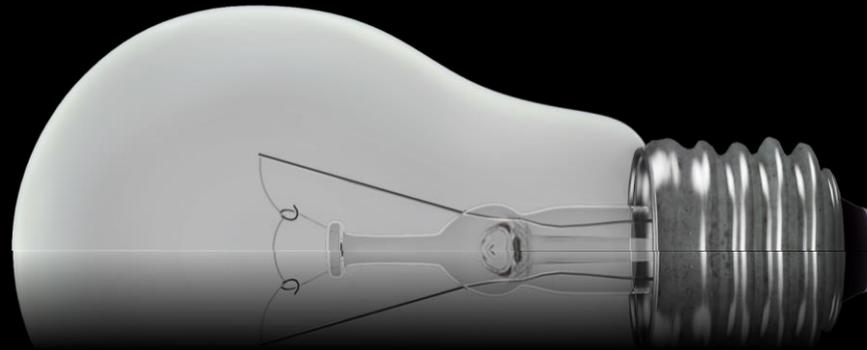
Value: orientation should show students that they are welcomed and valued by the institution

Self-Empowerment: orientation should show students that they are capable of self-directing their own efforts and exercising influence over their own performance achievements

Effective delivery of relevant information: the orientation should aim to prepare students for academic life by
(a) becoming familiar with the services and programmes that can help support students; and
(b) deliver information about courses, timetabling and administrative matters

Creation of supportive relationships and networks: orientation should allow opportunities for students to make connections and form support networks and friendship groups.

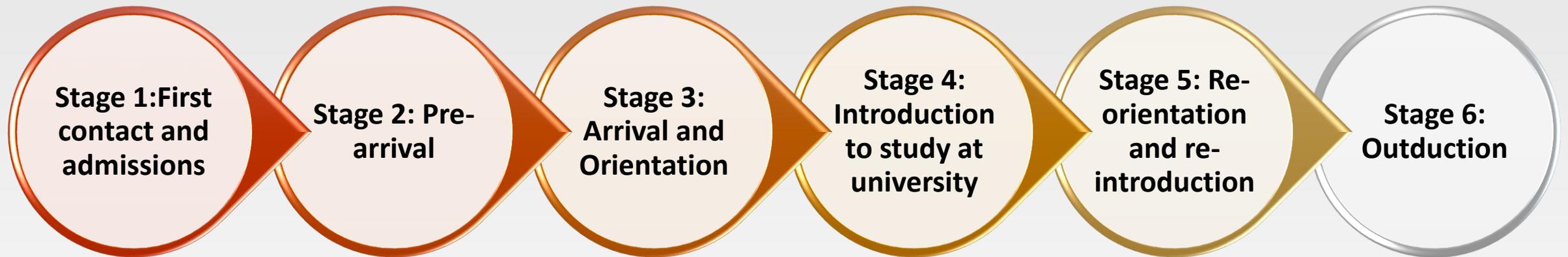
**Good Practice Strategy #2:
Adopt a Staged View of
Orientation**



Good Practice Strategy #2: Adopt a Staged View of Orientation

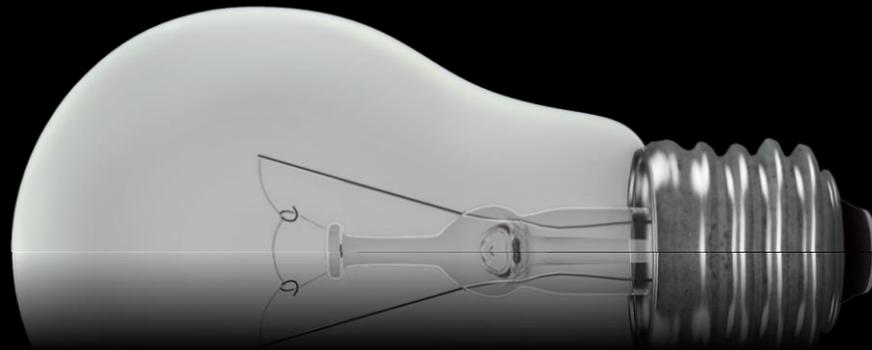
Student Experience Transitions (SET) Model

From: Morgan, M. (Ed) (2012) Improving the Student Experience: A Practical Guide for Universities and Colleges. Routledge: London



This is in synergy with the idea of **extended orientation**

Good Practice Strategy #3: Balance
the academic and non-academic
components of orientation



Good Practice Strategy #3:

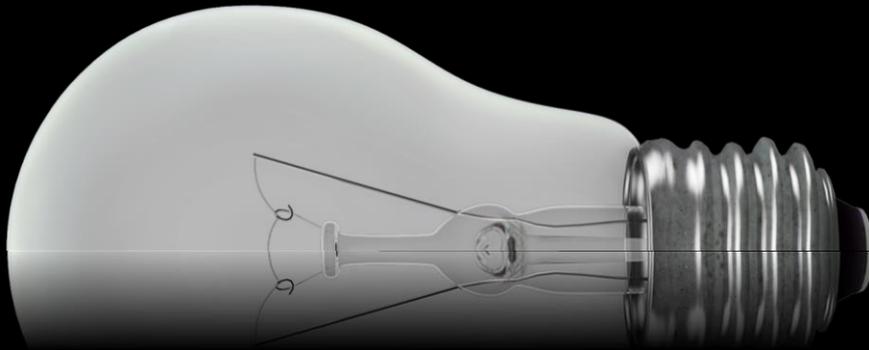
Balance the academic and non-academic components of orientation



Where should the emphasis be—fun and socialising or academic preparation and study skills?



Good Practice Strategy #4: Give students the information that they need to know at the right time



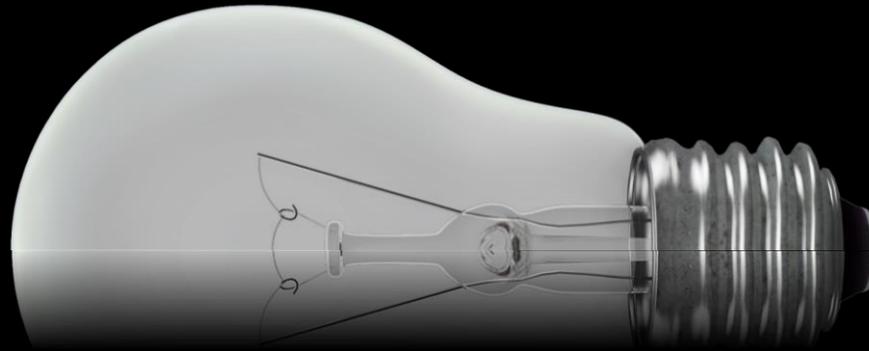
Good Practice Strategy #4:

Give students the information that they need to know at the right time



- Students are typically bombarded with information during the orientation period
- The transmission of information at the right time, i.e. **when it can be most usefully absorbed by students**, is of key importance to orientation

Good Practice Strategy #5: Help students to form healthy forms of social capital at the institution

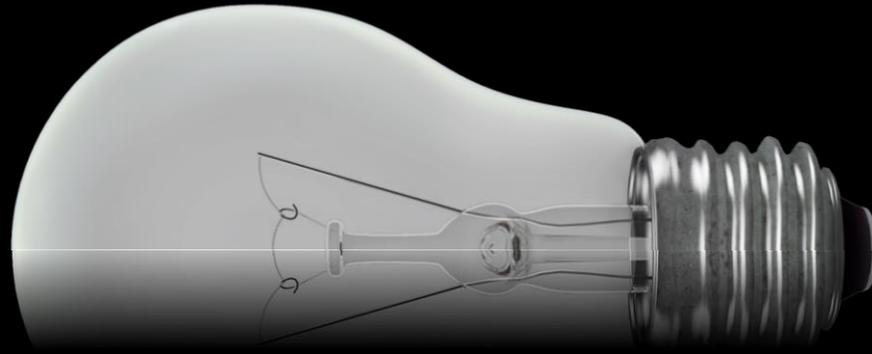


Good Practice Strategy #5: Help students to form healthy forms of social capital at the institution



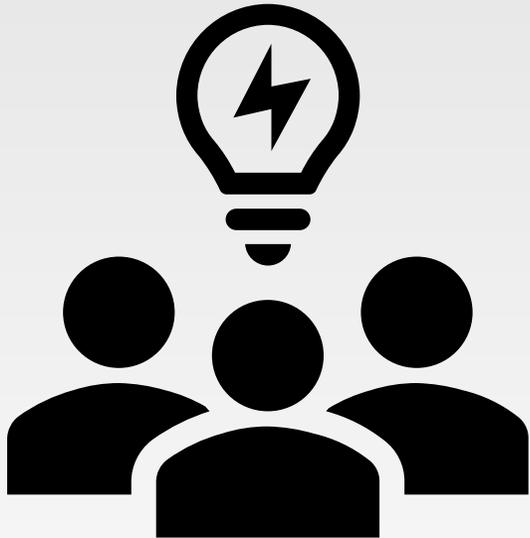
- ❑ Healthy forms of social capital help students to fit in/belong and allow them to meet the staff and other students with whom they will be interacting over the course of their studies
- ❑ Initiation or ‘hazing’ is often misrepresented as part of orientation/can be considered an unhealthy form of social capital

Good Practice Strategy #6: Help students to experience what academic learning is really like



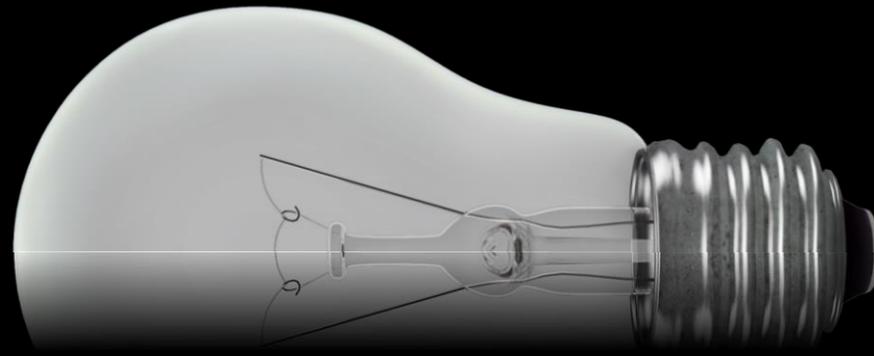
Good Practice Strategy #6:

Help students to experience what academic learning is really like



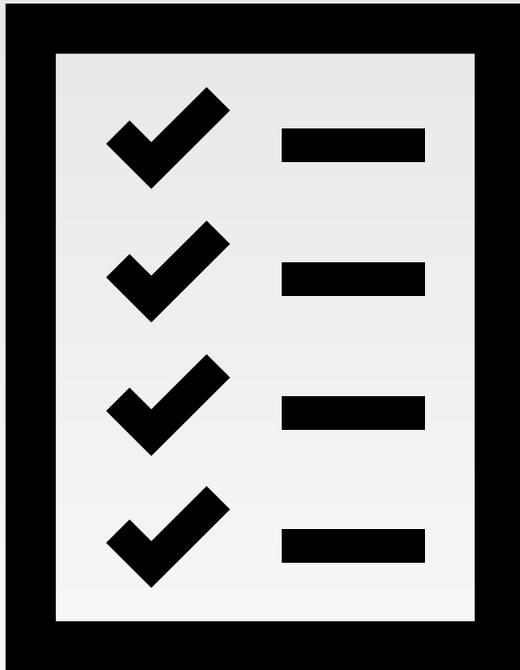
- ❑ Not withstanding institutional interventions to address issues of academic under-preparedness, it is often argued that orientation should be able to **give students an understanding of the expectations and requirements of academic learning**/it should be among the first steps in building the academic confidence of students
- ❑ Orientation can utilise pre-arrival academic activities for students.

Good Practice Strategy #7: Pursue
the continued professionalisation
of the field of orientation



Good Practice Strategy #7:

Pursue the continued professionalisation of the field of orientation



- In line with the goal of professionalisation of orientation, orientation should be viewed as a professional and high-skill activity for institutions
- Investment of resources is key
- Focus on self-assessment

New Student Induction Checklist-Source:

Nottingham Trent University. New Student Induction: Guide for Staff (2016)

	Does your induction...	Link to induction principles:
1.	Provide opportunities for students to develop friendship groups and support networks?	(1) To have opportunities to start making friends and building support networks
2.	Provide opportunities to sample/practice normal first-year learning?	(2) To understand what learning is like in university; (3) To experience authentic learning and have some reassurance that they can cope
3.	Provide students their first tutorial during induction week?	(1) To have opportunities to start making friends and building support networks; (2) To understand what learning is like in university; (3) To experience authentic learning and have some reassurance that they can cope
4.	Integrate the pre-arrival task into the induction programme?	(1) To have opportunities to start making friends and building support networks; (2) To understand what learning is like in university; (3) To experience authentic learning and have some reassurance that they can cope
5.	Last as long as a normal teaching week?	(5) To have a course induction that allows time for other commitments
6.	Use second or final year students, for activities such as campus tours?	(1) To have opportunities to start making friends and building support networks; (2) To understand what learning is like in university; (3) To experience authentic learning and have some reassurance that they can cope; (4) To be reminded of how their course will benefit their future plans
7.	Minimise the number of guest lectures (preferably integrate them into normal teaching at other appropriate times later in the year)?	(5) To have a course induction that allows time for other commitments
8.	Treat the induction week as the first week of induction and induct students to new elements and concepts throughout the term?	(1) To have opportunities to start making friends and building support networks; (4) To be reminded of how their course will benefit their future plans; (5) To have a course induction that allows time for other commitments



Thank You